

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, September 17, 1957.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Walter Duncan) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

COUNCIL BY-LAWS—UNSIGHTLY CHATTELS AND STRUCTURES.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Has the Minister of Roads a reply to a letter sent to him by the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation on a matter of procedure relating to unsightly chattels and structures?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—Yes. Cabinet considered this matter yesterday, and has had under consideration whether this difficulty should be dealt with by a model by-law or by legislation. The decision at the moment is that a draft amendment shall be drawn up by the Parliamentary Draftsman for further consideration by Cabinet with a view to having a direct amendment of the Act.

HILTON BRIDGE.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Some time ago in this Chamber I drew attention to the condition of the Hilton Bridge and to the accidents that had occurred on it. Since then two more serious accidents have occurred on the bridge. Will the Minister of Roads inform me what consideration the Government has given to making the bridge safer for traffic?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I rather anticipated this question. It is correct that a dangerous position occurred on the bridge last week-end that might have resulted in a very dangerous accident. It is admitted that the bridge is in a bad state of repair. The position at the moment is that repairs to the southern third of the bridge are in hand and two-thirds of the roadway is available for vehicular traffic. After repairs have been completed to this section the northern third will be repaired, leaving the other two-thirds open for traffic. Finally, the centre third will be treated similarly. The edge of the roadway has a kerb line which is now indicated by steel stakes and red lights. In connection with the dangerous position created by a heavy truck late last week, I point out that clear indicating signs were placed there that the road was closed except for one-way traffic, and for the driver of a very heavy truck to proceed along

the footpath was, to say the least, a very risky proceeding, and I am very glad nothing serious occurred. Motorists are from time to time still driving across that bridge despite the notices, and the police now propose to take action against offenders. The bridge is in a bad state of repair, and I can only hope due publicity will be given to the fact that the signs are there and to the danger of the bridge so that the public will take notice, otherwise accidents will occur there for which the Government cannot be held responsible.

STATE BANK REPORT.

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the annual report of the State Bank for the year ended June 30, 1957.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The President laid on the table the Auditor-General's Report for the year ended June 30, 1957.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 557.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—Before dealing with the Bill I would like to express my appreciation to the Acting Leader of the Council, the Hon. C. D. Rowe, for fully explaining the details of the proposed expenditure. The Minister and the Government recognize the importance of such measures as this. The Opposition is not unmindful of the courtesy extended by the Minister. Although we disagree with him at times that does not lower our estimation of or respect for him. He is following in the highest degree the excellent standard set by the Chief Secretary, Sir Lyell McEwin. My remarks apply equally to the Minister of Local Government.

The Bill provides for expenditure of £24,905,000 on capital works and services during 1957-58. This will be met out of the £23,530,000 to be received by the State as its share of Loan Council borrowings during the year, supplemented by repayments to the Loan Fund estimated at approximately £2,460,000 for 1957-58. The State will also receive £4,000,000 under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, and this money will be allocated to the Housing Trust, the State Bank and building societies for housing purposes. The total expenditure of Loan capital monies will therefore be £28,905,000. When

I entered Parliament in 1924 the sum provided for Loan expenditure was £3,782,000. Railways was the highest item with £1,031,000. Compare that with the Bill before us today. The amount provided for harbours was £361,000; sewers and drainage, £130,400; waterworks, £635,000; buildings, etc., £87,300; construction of roads, £18,000; Advances for Homes Fund, £800,000; settlement of discharged soldiers on the land, £600,000; loans to producers, £52,000; and loans for fencing and miscellaneous items, £67,500. I quote these figures to show the increase in Loan expenditure over a period of 33 years.

In the Loan Estimates provision is made to assist producers. I think manufacturers who are operating under difficult circumstances should receive some consideration. I have referred to this matter on previous occasions in order to fight for an industry. We assist in many ways to help industries, and I express the opinion that when we see any industry dying out by unfair methods being introduced we should come to its aid. In the proposed Loan Estimates mention is made of loans to producers of £175,000 to assist distilleries, milk factories, fruit-packing houses and co-operative societies. I have raised the question of assisting manufacturers in the interests of the economy of this State, and I support the proposed assistance to the people I have mentioned. Although this Government is sympathetic, I think the time has arrived when something definite should be done to protect an industry that has been built up by private enterprise over a period of many years without assistance.

Australia is losing 25 per cent of the Colombo and Malaya flour trade to France, and already trade with Aden and Port Sudan is drifting away. France is now quoting Indonesia, Colombo and Malaya at £3 to £4 per ton under Australian prices. The milling industry of the Commonwealth is recognized as a three shift industry of 120 hours a week, and the average period of working is 67 hours a week. The running trade for local consumption is 40 hours a week. In addition to that the industry has to face up to a huge expenditure because of bulk handling appliances and the replacement of worn out machinery. That can be overcome in two or three different ways. We guarantee a fixed price of 14s. a bushel for wheat to the producer. Wheat has fallen below that price, and the consumers of Australia are asked to make up the difference. The question of subsidies has been raised. I do not expect the farmer to

make any sacrifices, because he is entitled to the cost of production and a little more. The Federal Government has refused to do anything in this matter, so we see a trade that has been built up over a period of many years going by the board. There is only one way to meet the position. If we see a dying industry, no matter what industry, the Government should be prepared to come to its assistance. For many years the people have benefited because of the export markets, but the position has now entirely changed because of the circumstances I mentioned.

An amount of £670,000 is provided for advances to homes, and in addition £600,000 will be available from the Commonwealth, making a total of £1,270,000. No-one can say that that is too much. Despite all the houses that have been provided over the years, we are still lagging. For loans to producers, £175,000 is made available to assist in the provision of distilleries, milk factories, fruit-packing houses and other co-operative societies. In this respect, South Australia cannot afford to sit back and do nothing, and as far as possible we should make every effort to retain industries already established.

An amount of £75,000 is provided for advances to settlers for the erection of houses and farm buildings, the clearing of land for pastures and the purchase of farm plant. This is well worthy of our support. We should assist the man on the land to get the necessary accommodation and amenities, not only for himself, but also for his employees. For buildings, plant and so on for the Lands Department, £23,000 is provided. This department has done a very good job, and instead of spending large sums on land surveys, as in the past, it is now undertaking this work from the air, which enables the officers to get a better prospect of the position. To enable the reclamation of swamplands and provide for irrigation, £300,000 is provided. Nearly half of this amount is for the electrification of pumping stations, and £100,000 is a contribution from Loan for the restoring, removing or resiting of the levees erected to protect properties during the recent disastrous flood. No-one can object to this proposal.

An amount of £200,000 is set aside for South-Eastern drainage. This question has been before Parliament as long as I can remember, but still much work remains to be done to protect settlers who have been involved in heavy expenditure for many years. For afforestation and timber milling £1,000,000 is included. Shortly the new Mount Gambier

mill will come into operation, which I think will prove a money spinner to the Government. The large amount of £2,200,000 will be available for the Railways Department, which has modernized its service by the introduction of diesel locomotives. I have often wondered whether as a result of its improvements the department is getting more people to use its services. Although a very good service is provided on the Port Adelaide line, from observations I would say that the travelling public do not appreciate it and there are fewer people travelling—in spite of the prosperity about which we hear so much.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—More are travelling on the Port Road now.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly. The buses provide a very good service. People today appear to be tired and will not walk and are prepared to pay a little more for bus fares, rather than support the railways. If the present seasonal prospects continue, I think the Government will find it difficult to make ends meet. It might become necessary before the end of this financial year to have Supplementary Estimates to meet a deficit.

The annual report of the Public Works Standing Committee was tabled in this Chamber today. If members read it they will see how impossible it is to carry out all the works recommended. It is useless for the Government to refer projects to committees if it is not possible to carry them out. That, to my mind, is only window dressing. People are promised that certain works will be put into operation when it is not possible to commence them. In passing I refer to a few schemes recommended by the committee a few years ago but which have not been commenced yet; these are:—

Proposed sewerage system.	Estimated cost. £	Date of estimate.
Gumeracha . . .	45,000	Aug. 21, 1951
Mount Gambier .	237,000	July 11, 1950
Naracoorte . . .	96,100	July 5, 1950
Port Pirie . . .	535,000	June 30, 1949
Victor Harbour .	119,800	July 19, 1950
Port Augusta . .	181,800	Oct. 30, 1950
Port Lincoln . .	170,000	June 17, 1949

The Hon. L. H. Densley—They all had to be referred back to the districts, didn't they?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No; it cannot be expected in many cases that councils can afford to pay for these schemes. Since the dates the schemes mentioned were recommended costs have increased by over 100 per cent, and where is the money coming from to implement them? I stress that it is no use misleading people into thinking that they will

get these things, because it will be many years before they do. On September 16, 1948, the Public Works Standing Committee recommended the construction of a reservoir on the South Para River and the laying of a pipeline from Mannum to Adelaide. A second progress report, recommending the installation of an additional pumping unit in each of the pumping stations on the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, was presented on June 26, 1956.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Hasn't that work been carried out?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, at double the original estimate. The original estimate was about £4,000,000 but the pipeline has already cost over £9,000,000. How far will we get with the £28,000,000 in these Estimates? When the Myponga scheme was recommended a few years ago the estimated cost was £3,000,000, but it will probably be about 80 per cent more now.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Are the increased estimates referred back to the committee?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. The departments concerned simply say that costs have increased.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Isn't an inquiry made into that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is for the Government to say whether it accepts or rejects the recommendation. It is impossible for any Government to meet the position today with the limited finance available. In these Estimates £5,400,000 is provided for water-works and sewers. The construction of a 48in. main in lieu of a 34in. main from the Barossa reservoir to Sandy Creek will cost £110,000. The departmental engineers said that all that was wanted was a 34in. main but, because of the phenomenal increase in the use of water, it is now necessary to construct the bigger main.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Doesn't that show a lack of foresight on somebody's part?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not criticizing anyone because our public officers, who have done outstanding work, recommended what they thought was right in the circumstances. The committee recommended four years ago that the Myponga reservoir and trunk main to the metropolitan area, together with a pumping station to supply Yankalilla and Normanville and booster pumps to supply Willunga and McLaren Vale, should be constructed. The estimated cost at August 7, 1953, was £3,036,600 but what will be the cost now?

The Hon. E. Anthoney—That report is not worth the paper it is written on, is it?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I would not say that, because the Government is acting on it, and it realizes the cost will be about £5,000,000. The committee also recommended enlarging the Tod River trunk main to the Hundred of Cummins at an estimated cost of £39,400, a new water supply system for Blackwood and Belair and adjacent areas at an estimated cost of £683,100, and a water supply for the Hundreds of Burdett, Ettrick and Seymour at an estimated cost of £72,400. I realize that water schemes are necessary, but the cost will be much greater than the original estimates.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Then what is the use of the reports?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not think projects should be referred to anybody unless there is a possibility of the work being carried out. The Estimates provide for an expenditure of £2,600,000 for school buildings. Projects to be commenced are the Salisbury high school (woodwork and domestic arts centres) to cost £32,000; Enfield high school, estimated cost at May 4, 1955, £147,700; Findon and Marion High schools, £40,000; Unley high school constructed at Urrbrae, £357,000; Mitchell Park boys technical school, £125,000; and Vermont girls technical school, £105,230. These are either in the course of construction or have been completed as school accommodation is an urgent matter because of the terrific increase in the population in the last few years. Although many schools have been built there is still not sufficient accommodation for children.

The Estimates provide for an expenditure of £3,700,000 on hospital buildings. The Public Works Standing Committee is waiting for a report from the Director-General of Medical Services on what is proposed. Certain works are held up because the Government saw fit to send these people overseas to see what was doing in other parts of the world and with a view to saving money. We will have to await their reports. With regard to harbours, we were told that it was urgent that a bridge should be constructed to replace the Jervois Bridge, which was 75 years old and likely to collapse at any time, and that that work will now cost over £1,000,000. It is proposed that the Harbors Board will spend £1,030,000 this year. This will include the construction at Port Adelaide, on river frontages west of Birkenhead Bridge, wharves for the accommodation of intrastate shipping,

and on the frontage of the northern side of the Port River, east of the said bridge, pens for the accommodation of tugs at an estimated cost of £806,000. The question of the Jervois Bridge is one of urgency.

The Hon. C. R. Story—Nearly as urgent as the one on the River Murray.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not know if it has been decided that there will be one over the River Murray, but it has been decided that there should be one to replace the Jervois Bridge. Several sites were suggested, and it is a question of whether the expense is warranted. On one of the sites proposed it would have cost about £100,000 merely to acquire the land. Naturally, when there is a committee dealing with these things the first consideration is the economy of the State. I hope the Government will not lose any time in commencing the new bridge at Port Adelaide.

A recommendation was made for a new prison establishment at Cadell. Another site had been suggested but residents of the area objected and after taking evidence the committee decided to recommend Cadell. An amount of £20,000 was set aside in the Loan Estimates for this purpose and I hope the Government will consider making an early start on the project.

The sum of £6,980,000 is provided for the Architect-in-Chief's Department. I have said before in this Council that the Government should consider sending a senior officer of this department overseas. It has very competent officers, and if my memory serves me right it is about the only department that has not sent a representative overseas.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—What for?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—To gain experience. Representatives of many of the other Government departments have been overseas for that purpose. The Architect-in-Chief's Department is a very responsible one, and I think a fair amount of money could be saved if one of its senior officers went overseas to have a look around. The Public Works Committee has often referred projects back to the department's officers for reconsideration and they have always paid attention to any suggestion of the committee. If laymen can make suggestions technical officers and men of very high qualifications should be qualified to do likewise.

The Mines Department stands very high in the estimation of the public because it has achieved much over a period of years. The

sum of £125,000 is provided for that department, and I think that money will be well spent. An amount of £40,000 is set aside for fishing havens. I think the fishing industry is another one that is going back. The question of building havens at mostly country seaports has been under discussion for many years, and it is such an important industry that more urgent consideration should be given to it.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—Does the honourable member know what percentage of our fish is exported?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The whiting goes to Melbourne and the crayfish goes to America. If anyone is deserving of a reasonable price for fish surely it is the man who catches it. The fisherman is not doing as well as he should be, because there is a big difference between what he gets and what one must pay for fish. I am not criticizing anyone in that respect because I do not know who is to blame, but I know there is a big difference in the prices.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Fishermen are doing very much better under the co-operative system.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I understand that is so, and we should encourage them all we possibly can. I draw honourable members' attention to a number of recommendations which I have referred to and which appear in the Thirtieth General Report of the Public Works Committee which was laid on the table of the Council today. That report includes details of recommendations in respect of the following subjects:—

Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science (Central Sterilizing unit).

Gumeracha Sewerage Scheme.

Barossa Reservoir to Sandy Creek Water Main.

Salisbury High School (Woodwork and Domestic Arts Centres).

Enfield High School (Including Woodwork and Domestic Arts Centres).

Findon and Marion High Schools (Woodwork and Domestic Arts Centres).

Myponga Reservoir and Trunk Main.

Port Pirie Hospital Extensions.

Hundred of Cummins Water Supply.

Blackwood and Belair New Water Supply System.

Supreme Court Building (New Wing).

Mount Gambier Sewerage System.

Naracoorte Sewerage System.

Port Pirie Sewerage System.

Victor Harbour Sewerage System.

Hundreds of Burdett, Ettrick and Seymour Water Supply.

Port Augusta Sewerage System.

Port Lincoln Sewerage System.

Intrastate Shipping Wharves and Tug Berths, Port Adelaide.

New Unley Boys High School.

Mitchell Park Boys Technical School.

Vermont Girls Technical School.

Millicent to Beachport Railway.

Wandilo to Glencoe Railway.

With regard to the last two items, it is very difficult to close railways that have been in operation over a great many years. What happens is that the Transport Control Board makes a recommendation, but these railways cannot be closed unless the recommendation has the approval of the Public Works Committee. I do not think it would hurt if one or two more railways were closed down, because they are run at colossal loss. If people want other means of transport and are not prepared to patronize the railways they cannot have it both ways. The Wandilo-Glencoe line would have cost £65,000 in the course of the next few years for the relaying of that seven or eight miles section.

The report contains a number of interim reports dealing with fishing havens, augmentation of metropolitan water supplies, bulk handling of wheat, Royal Adelaide Hospital (new casualty block), Port Pirie harbour improvements, and the Dry Creek sewage treatment works. The last-named project will cost a great deal of money, and no evidence has yet been submitted to the committee. Other interim reports deal with the Glenelg sewage treatment works extensions, and the Millicent water supply. With regard to the latter project, the people of Millicent could not agree amongst themselves, and when there is a difference of opinion in a town it is difficult to do anything. The committee is taking this matter up again and will deal with it in due course.

Other interim reports include the Port Adelaide girls technical school, hundred of Hutchison water supply, plan for development of Port Adelaide, country sewerage schemes, Glenelg and Brighton foreshore improvements, electrification of metropolitan train services, duplication of Woodville to Henley Beach railway, Leigh Creek coal steam drying plant, drainage of River Murray irrigation areas, Gawler and Salisbury and new town north of Salisbury water and sewerage schemes, hundreds of Mobilong, Monarto and Freeling water supply, Morris Hospital alterations and additions, and last, but not least, a bridge across the River Murray.

I point out to honourable members that the Public Works Standing Committee is a non-political body, and during my 27 years as a member I have never heard politics mentioned. Every member is desirous of doing the best he can in the interests of the State. As to the proposal for a new bridge over the Murray, the committee first has to decide whether one is necessary, and, if so, where will be the best site to serve the most people. We have had suggestions from various councils that one of six or seven sites should be decided upon. This presents a serious position to the committee. There has been a delay in arriving at a decision because we are waiting upon two departments to supply information as to the potentialities of the surrounding country. Until that information is available, the committee will not be in a position to come to a decision. It has an open mind on the question, but is of opinion that all the information possible should be presented before a decision is made. I have offered a few opinions this afternoon, and hope any criticism has been constructive. It is of no use of any Government trying to reach the sky, when one must know that that is impossible. I hope that the public works to which I have referred will receive the Government's favourable consideration. I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY (Central No. 2)—I am sure that we all listened to the honourable member with a great deal of interest. He is always worth listening to when he is dealing with the work of the Public Works Standing Committee, with which he has been associated for so many years. He brings much experience to bear when dealing with these reports, and the information he gives is not only interesting, but very valuable. The Bill seeks our consent for the Government to borrow about £22,000,000—allowing for repayments of about £2,000,000. As representatives of the people and trustees of the public purse we should closely analyse the State's financial position. Comparisons are always odious, although they can be tremendously interesting. For instance, when Mr. Condon and I entered Parliament the State was spending less than £1,000,000 a year on the Education Department and when the vote reached £1,000,000, members were almost aghast at the tremendous sum provided. This Bill commits us to an expenditure on this department of £6,000,000, and I trust that it will be wisely spent.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Have we not progressed?

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—Yes, and very rapidly, and that is what is causing the trouble. Materials and labor have not been able to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the State, although I suppose that is all to the good. We want more population, but this creates great difficulties. On the question of Loan commitments, over the last five years South Australia borrowed annually £25,000,000. This carries with it a very heavy interest bill, running into millions, and this has a bearing upon every taxpayer. The loan burden has reached about £320 for every man, woman and child. Under the heading "Public Debt Charges" the Auditor-General in his report for the year ended June 30, 1956, mentions that the public debt charges amounted to £11,888,283, an increase of £2,004,326 compared with the previous year, being £1,327,480 for additional interest and £676,846 for additional sinking fund contribution. It would be comforting to the taxpayers to know that at some time the State debt could be liquidated by the provisions under the National Debt Sinking Fund.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—You are an optimist.

The Hon. E. ANTHONY—While we are paying some debts off, we are accumulating others, and at a very much faster rate and it would appear that we shall never catch up. I am glad to see that during the past year the Government has been able to contribute £3,000,000 towards the liquidation of the State debt. Since 1927 South Australia has contributed nearly £40,000,000 towards the liquidation of its debt. The financial agreement was drawn up because of the keen competition between the States for loan monies, which forced the rate of interest up. Some States were perhaps fortunate to get loan monies at a lower rate than others, but it was felt that there should be a central body to co-ordinate applications and thereby provide all the States and the Commonwealth with loan money at a uniform rate of interest. In that respect it was a very wise agreement.

Mr. Condon referred to works which had been recommended by the Public Works Standing Committee, but which had not been carried out. I agree with him that it is folly for the Government to continue to refer works to this committee unless it is intended that they should be undertaken. The present procedure is a complete alteration of policy. When I was a member of the committee no work was referred to it which the Government did not intend to proceed with, but today it is

common, as Mr. Condon has shown, for works to be referred to the committee which I am certain the Government would never have a chance to undertake. Why should the committee be burdened with such inquiries? As the honourable member pointed out, the estimates are often awry because of the time lag after a proposition is recommended. Possibly the cost would be doubled within three years. I cannot understand the object of the Government in referring works to the committee which are not to be carried out, unless it is window dressing, and I do not accuse it of that. In effect, it amounts to saying, "We are making an inquiry, but God only knows when you will get the job done."

Some Government departments are purely spending departments, as no revenue comes from them. I have in mind the Education Department. Although indirectly it is of tremendous value, it involves the Government in huge expenditure. I am sure that every Minister would look forward to the time when someone could invent elastic sided schools so that they could expand with the growing demand for accommodation. It is difficult to estimate school requirements with the population growing so rapidly. Schools built today are sometimes soon entirely inadequate, even within 12 months. For instance, a high school built in my district three or four years ago has now to be doubled in size, and in the interim many portable classrooms had been included. It is difficult to estimate the requirements of the State in regard to hospitals, schools and other public services which the Government is trying to provide. It is a big job, and I congratulate the Government for meeting its obligations, particularly in regard to water supplies.

It was a courageous thing for the Government to say that it would be necessary to spend a great deal of money on better water supplies to meet the future needs of industry, because this involved a great expenditure. However, if we did not have the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline, I hate to think what would happen; I do not think industry could carry on without it. We must not overlook the fact that the Government has been very wise in pushing ahead with important reservoir and water reticulation schemes. Although they are tremendously costly, and more is being provided for the department, the expenditure is all necessary. When travelling around the suburbs now one can see the implementation of the water distribution system. Larger mains are being installed, and these are necessary. We all remember that last summer many people were

entirely without water, but owing to the expeditious action of the Government I hope we shall not have similar trouble again this year. When these items are being discussed individually, an opportunity will be given to deal with them in more detail, so with these few general remarks I indicate my support of the Bill, trusting that the money Parliament is providing will be wisely spent and that every inquiry will be made by every committee that has anything to do with these matters into the costs and into any possible savings that can be made.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY (Central No. 2)—I join with Mr. Condon in thanking the Attorney-General for his lengthy explanation of proposed expenditure. He dealt very fully and minutely with the Government's proposals, and it is some gratification to the House to know that the expenditure was examined carefully before the final decision was arrived at, but we must remember that the final decision was for £24,000,000, which is a lot of money. Like other members, I cast my mind back over a period of years and selected 1947-48, when the Loan Estimates amounted to £5,863,000. That is only 10 years ago, yet this year the estimated loan expenditure, plus the amount provided by the Commonwealth for home building, is £27,000,000—five times as great. We all know the explanation is the big increase in wages and costs of materials, and the reduced value of money has resulted in astronomical figures having to be used in our ordinary current way of life. Our population has increased and is still growing rapidly by immigration and natural increase, and these people have to be catered for because it is the responsibility of the Government to provide the facilities to which everybody is entitled. Secondary industry has grown and the Government has agreed to share portion of the responsibility, which means that loan money must be made available. There is a tendency towards obtaining better accommodation and a better way of life. That is resulting in increased costs, not only to the Government, but to all industries. School buildings are now much better and more expensive than the wooden buildings that were once built.

The Hon. C. D. Rowe—Wooden buildings give much better accommodation than most people imagine.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I agree, and I also think their lasting qualities are better than people believe. The schools now being constructed are a credit to the Government and the designers, and will meet demands for decades ahead, so the better type buildings

are perhaps justified. The demand for hospitals is growing tremendously. Whether the race is becoming frailer or we are living longer, or whether we are having more medical attention, it is a fact that hospital accommodation now required is greater than it used to be. The people expect it, and the Government is doing its best to provide it, which I think is right because the health of the community cannot be neglected. The quality of hospitals now is very much higher than it used to be, and this is reflected in the loan expenditure.

The Government has taken to itself the privilege or the obligation of supplying electric power to the city and to as many country areas as possible. Although this is very expensive, the people in the country need electric power to provide proper amenities. However, it is regrettable that a portion of this expenditure cannot be met from revenue so that we will not be throwing a debt on to posterity. I listened to the Federal Treasurer giving his Budget Speech a fortnight ago and was struck by the difference between the approach of the Federal Government and that of State Governments. The Federal Government is spending £122,000,000 yearly on capital works, and this all comes from revenue. It is true that the Commonwealth has the money, and I do not suggest that the work is not justified. The Snowy River scheme is costing £30,000,000 a year from revenue, and this money is provided by taxpayers throughout Australia. The Commonwealth also gets £119,000,000 from revenue which it lends back to the States and charges interest on it. There is something wrong in the set-up between the Governments for this to be allowed to continue. I would say it is an aftermath of our transfer of taxation powers to the Federal Government and the failure of that Government to restore the States' taxing powers or come to some arrangements with State Governments.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think the basis of the trouble was the financial agreement between the Governments in 1924?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—No, the arrangement then was good. I hope the Treasurer of this State will do his best to have this anomaly rectified. I call it an anomaly because the Commonwealth Government can spend hundreds of millions on capital works from revenue whereas this State has to borrow money for development and pay interest indefinitely for it.

Clauses 4, 5 and 6 have all been mentioned by other speakers and deal simply with the

borrowing of the money, the issue and application of money from the Loan Fund amounting to £24,905,000, which is the amount which will be actually expended under this Bill. Clause 6 provides for the expenses in arranging the loan. It is interesting to note that in the last year Loan money to the extent of over £960,000 had to be provided for the maturing of a loan in England over and above the amount of the loan, because of the exchange provision. Looking at statistics which have already been quoted, our total State public debt is now £276,000,000. It is true, as Mr. Anthony has mentioned, that redemption is going on, and the sinking fund amounted last year to £3,115,000, of which the Commonwealth supplied £600,000 under the Financial Agreement. Actually, the Commonwealth does provide some assistance for the finances of this State.

Looking at the average Loan figures, we find that we are at present paying £10,500,000 in interest yearly and that works out at an average rate of approximately 3½ per cent, quite a modest rate of interest compared with the current rate for loan money of 5 per cent. The Federal Treasurer recently mentioned that he was concerned at the extent of maturing loans in the next year or two. Looking up our own loans, I find that we have £42,000,000 of Loan money maturing next year. We had £25,000,000 last year but it was not all redeemed. About £14,000,000 or £15,000,000 of that money was taken on short term loan and, of course, has to be converted next year. I presume that the National Debt Sinking Fund will take up a portion of that £42,000,000, but by far the greater portion of that money will have to be redeemed and a reinvestment obtained. Borrowing money and the spending of Loan money is a responsibility, because loans do fall due and have to be paid.

Mr. Condon dealt in detail with almost the whole of the schedule. I do not propose to do that, but will divide it into two or three headings and groups. Housing is one of the main items, and the amount provided for that is approximately £2,000,000. Waterworks and sewerage are mostly connected with homes, although they have some connection with industry. Nearly £7,000,000 is provided for the Architect-in-Chief's Department. That money is for schools and hospitals, and some for police and other Government buildings, and is the result of increased population.

Another group consists of instrumentalities which the Government runs for the benefit of

the people. Transport comes under that heading, and we find that the railways are absorbing £2,200,000, the Tramways Trust £500,000, the Harbors Board £1,000,000, but roads, perhaps the greatest form of our transport, absorbs only £15,000, which is a very desirable state of affairs. That is because roads have only developed as main highways over the last decade or so; they were built through the Commonwealth grant and our taxation of the motor industry which provide millions of pounds yearly for the reconditioning and improvement of roads. That is a very desirable method of financing the activities of the State. However, the position is most deplorable with regard to the other items I have mentioned. We have to provide £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 a year to finance the railways operation. The Tramways Trust, a very flourishing activity a decade or so ago, is now subsidized under this Bill to the extent of £500,000. As we all know, a subsidy is given annually from the revenue of the State to assist the trust in its operations.

The Harbors Board will absorb £1,000,000 this year. I am pleased that the board usually meets the interest and sinking fund rates that are necessary to provide for the liquidation of its debt. I wonder how long we will be able to handle the road position as we are now doing. I visited America this year, and one of the astounding developments that I saw was not railway or tramway development but the road development, which is staggering. Whether we will be able in the future to continue handling our road expenditure from revenue I do not know. I hope we can, but the durability of the modern conception of roads nowadays makes me doubt whether it is possible. I hope the Minister of Roads can always present the Loan Estimates with only £15,000 annually for roads.

The sum of £3,800,000 is provided from the Loan Fund for the Electricity Trust. I think that trust also provides a small amount towards loan expenditure from direct borrowing and will do so again this year. The trust has shown tremendous growth since the undertaking was taken over by the Government. Heavy expenditure, great development and a very big loan bill are involved. It does not show here, nor am I able at this moment to examine what steps are being taken for the redemption of this loan, but I hope that there is adequate depreciation allowance on a wasting asset that is represented by very large expenditure on fast moving machinery which may in this atomic age become redundant, so that the State will not be in a position at some later date of having

to provide for the redemption of this money which it is borrowing.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—That is why its charges are so high.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—It is whether its charges are too low that concerns me. I have heard it claimed that South Australia has the lowest cost of electric current in Australia. There may be reasons for that but they may be disastrous reasons, and that is why I mentioned it.

The sum of £500,000 is to be provided for River Murray weirs, dams, locks, etc. That, of course, is the expense of damming the waters of the River Murray, and I think it represents expenses in connection with the Hume Reservoir or the storage of water at Lake Victoria. This is entirely an expense on the general public in South Australia and the Loan stands at present at £4,264,000.

The Hon. E. Anthoney—How does it come into these Estimates?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—By the increasing of the loan for weirs and locks by £500,000. The interest on that and also the amount that is not fully recovered by rates has to be met by the taxpayers. Last year £210,000 of revenue was used to pay interest on the original loan and make up the deficit on the expenses of handling the locks and other equipment on the River Murray. Referring once again to the Federal Treasurer's statement, I notice that an amount of £575,000—again from revenue—was the share of the Commonwealth Government to the River Murray Waters Commission, but we have to meet our share out of loan money on which we pay interest. There seems to be something wrong in the financial set-up between the Commonwealth and the States and I commend the Treasurer for his strong action, which I hope will continue, to have the position put on a more equitable basis.

The Hon. C. R. STORY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

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

MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 561.)

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—I support the Bill, which continues the operation of the principal Act for another three years. The legislation was first passed in

1941 and the Premier said that because of lack of shipping, and particularly refrigeration space, there was dislocation to our overseas markets, so control was necessary. It was a war-time measure, but it has proved useful since then, and Parliament would be well advised to continue it. In his second reading speech the Attorney-General said that the British Government had subsidized egg production for some years. Last year it paid out £35,000,000 in subsidies. Egg production in Great Britain has increased from 556,000,000 dozen before World War II to 830,000,000 dozen in the year ended May 31 last. As Great Britain is producing more eggs our market will not be so secure; therefore, it is necessary to continue the legislation to ensure orderly marketing and to protect both the egg producer and consumer.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—I support the Bill, which extends the operations of the board for another three years. I pay a tribute to the work of this board, which consists of six members. There are three representatives of producers, one of the wholesalers, one of the retailers, and the Chief Poultry Adviser.

The Hon. C. R. Cudmore—The consumers do not seem to have much representation on it.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—They have a representative, but I do not know his capabilities. No industry is subject to such violent fluctuations as the egg and poultry industry. On July 19 last the Minister of Industry was questioned about a subsidy being paid because of the collapse of the overseas market but he said the Commonwealth Government would not grant such support to the industry. This means that the board has a limited overseas market in which to operate. The return to the producers from the export of eggs is about £4,100,000 per annum and to lose it would be detrimental. In 1951 the Commonwealth Government launched a campaign towards expanding the egg industry and it set a target of 500,000 cases of eggs and 10,000 tons of frozen whole eggs for the United Kingdom. Within two years that target was exceeded.

Morally the Commonwealth Government, under the present circumstances, should come to the aid of the egg industry. Last Saturday afternoon I attended a field day at Salisbury conducted by the Red Comb Association. It was enlightening to hear remarks by Professor Stewart from California about the egg industry there. He said it was flourishing and that the people working in the industry had to

stand on their own feet. Every producer should be able to stand on his own feet, but with the fluctuating markets we have in Australia it is difficult for it to be done. There has been much discussion on how the industry could be made more profitable. The battery system of producing eggs has been mentioned. At Salisbury we saw something along these lines and I feel that its adoption must mean the production of more eggs. It is possible to tell which hens are laying and which are not. There are single and double bird cages, and each bird has its own ration of food. It does not have to compete with other birds for food, and is not subject to feather picking. There is also protection against the diseases to be found in the industry. If the system were adopted many more producers would remain in the industry.

The Hon. J. L. Cowan—Is it a humane system?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I think it is more cruel to keep birds under some of the conditions now existing. This is an important Bill and must be passed soon so that the legislation can operate from October 1 next.

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

TRAVELLING STOCK ROUTE: HUNDRED OF WINNINOWIE.

Adjourned debate on consideration of the following resolution received from the House of Assembly:—

That it is desirable that that portion of the travelling stock route in the hundred of Winninowie, containing 258 acres, extending south-easterly from Kays Crossing to the northern boundary of section 124 in the same hundred, as shown on plan laid before Parliament on August 21, 1956, be resumed in terms of section 136 of the Pastoral Act, 1936-1953, for the purpose of being dealt with as Crown lands under the provisions of the Crown Lands Act, 1929-1944.

(Continued from September 4. Page 558.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—In his explanation the Attorney-General said that the Stockowners Association and the District Council of Port Germein raised no objection to the resumption of the land. He pointed out that there would be a benefit from a production point of view and that the control of vermin and noxious weeds would be assisted. The Opposition does not oppose the motion.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern)—I support the motion. Whilst returning from the Quorn Show on Saturday I inspected the

land in question and I agree with the District Council of Port Germein that if it were leased it would be revenue producing to some extent and noxious weeds and vermin could be controlled. The Stockowners Association has no objection to the proposal. It would be in the best interests of the State to lease the land as proposed.

Motion carried.

WATER RATES REMISSION BILL.

Second reading.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Attorney-General)

—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its object is to enable the Government to remit, either wholly or in part, the water rates payable under Division II of Part V of the Irrigation Act, 1930-1946. The decision as to whether any rates should be remitted will be in the hands of the Minister. It is intended that remission will be granted in cases where, owing to the floods, settlers did not receive the benefit of the irrigation services provided by the Government. The remissions will be limited to the financial year 1956-57. In cases where the settler, after paying his water rates account for 1956-57, is granted a remission under this Act, the Minister is given the power to apply the amount remitted in payment of some other debt owing by the settler to the Government, or to make a refund.

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

MARRIAGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 551.)

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—The object of the Bill is to raise the minimum marriage ages from 12 and 14 years to 16 and 18 years, respectively, for girls and boys. Those who have already spoken on the Bill have created much interest, and I feel sure that their contributions have been enlightening. This is one of the most important things in our social life for which we are called upon to legislate. I was particularly interested to hear the speech of Sir Arthur Rymill, who gave a considered legal opinion, and I expect as a result of his speech and the interjections of the Attorney-General that we shall have the pleasure of hearing another speech from the legal angle from Mr. Cudmore. These gentlemen are members of the legal profession and we look to them for guidance in this important legislation. Few Bills have caused so much

interest both inside and outside of Parliament, which signifies its importance. It vitally affects our social life, when one considers that marriage is the most important event in a person's life. The vows taken in the marriage ceremony are very binding, although sometimes they are taken lightly.

The number of divorce cases occurring in this State are alarming, especially when we realize that 624 marriages were annulled last year. It has been stated that one in five women is pregnant when she approaches the altar. That is hard to believe, but from records it would appear to be true. That is one reason why I believe this Bill is long overdue. Young people generally have to marry because they get into trouble. Many babies are born illegitimate, and this is very sad because the child is the victim. It faces the world without a known father, and I do not think there is anything worse from the child's point of view. It is distressing, because so much stigma is attached.

I think that Mr. Densley made an excellent speech. He referred to the importance of the proper upbringing of children by the parents, who do not always set a good example. There are numerous temptations confronting young parents. We have the baby bonus, which the mother can obtain, and also child endowment, but to many these apparently are not satisfactory these days, so the mother as well as the father goes out to work and the children become more neglected under those circumstances. Many years ago it was very rare for a mother to work, but today it is common. Children cannot be brought up as well as they should be without the constant attention of the mother.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Don't you think that hire-purchase has much to do with that, as the mother has to work to try to meet payments?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—Many things can be attributed to it. Many people are leading a different type of life compared with the past. I consider that the ages of 12 for girls and 14 for boys are too low for marriage. What would such children know about the responsibilities of life? Even at 16 and 18 they are not in a position to undertake responsibilities. For many years there has been an average of 22 females and 19 males under 16 and 18, respectively, who have married. Last year I had an experience which proved to me that there is need for someone to make a decision under certain circumstances surrounding such cases. Both parents had given their consent to the marriage, but when there was disagreement on

the sectarian side the parents of the boy withdrew their consent. Finally, the Chief Secretary had to give a decision. Such cases are rare. I agree with previous speakers that with children under the ages of 16 and 18 the Chief Secretary should consult the parents before deciding whether there should be a marriage, but they are not mentioned in the Bill. I hope that point will be clarified. Where the parents cannot agree to a marriage, someone should give the decision, but where the parents can come to an agreement, the marriage should proceed, and that should be provided for in the Bill.

Before arriving at his decision the Minister must consider the relevant facts, such as the maturity of the parties, their character and the prospects of the marriage being successful. It would be difficult to arrive at a decision without consulting the parents. They would know more about the children. I hope the Bill will provide that the parents must first be consulted by the person giving the decision. With all due respect to the Chief Secretary, I believe a magistrate would be in a better position to come to a decision. In any case, whoever gives the decision, there should be no publicity. I believe a magistrate could hear such cases in camera, although we heard today that that was impossible. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, which is vital not only to the young people concerned, but to the public in general and the State.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—I support the second reading but intend to support the foreshadowed amendments and if they are not carried I intend to vote against the third reading. This Bill, which sets out to raise the marriage age to 18 for boys and 16 for girls, is to my mind an unnecessary interference with the rights of parents. I have studied the Act, and on numerous occasions I have signed documents for people under 21 who wished to marry, some of whom were below the ages we are talking of now, and whose parents decided they should be married. If the parents are happy about their children being married, I do not think anyone should interfere.

I compliment Mr. Densley on his contribution to this debate. He put the views of those who oppose the Bill as it stands in a masterly fashion. Although I have only been in this Chamber a short time, this is the second measure of this nature that has been before us. The last Bill was thrown out, and although I have been told that there was much controversy outside the House then, not one person has spoken to me about the matter. There

appears to be no demand from the general public for any interference with the Act. When a young couple get married, they usually do so to enjoy one another's company, to make a home and to beget children. It is their responsibility to teach their children right from wrong, to help them conduct themselves in a proper manner, to see that they are educated to the best of their ability, and if they have the aptitude, to send them to the University. If they have boys, it is their duty to teach them to take part in school sports and to continue playing sports after leaving school. It is also their duty to see that they follow an occupation to which they are best suited, and to guide and advise them in the younger days of their lives. It is their responsibility to bring the children to a standard of maturity, yet when a decision is to be made on when they should leave the home, this Bill will take away their responsibilities.

The Hon. C. R. Story—What if the parents have failed in their responsibilities?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—I know that unfortunately some people do not bring up their children properly, but I think the percentage is small, so why should we take away the rights of the great majority who carry out their responsibilities? I think that would be a wrong step. If I wished my children to marry I would resent it most bitterly if someone told me that they could not be married. I do not think the Bill is necessary. I do not agree that boys of 14 or girls of 12 should marry; I think the ideal age for a boy to marry is about 22, and if a girl can wait until she is 21 before she marries, she should do so. I object to the part of the Bill that takes away from parents the right to make a final decision on when their children should be married. I hope this Council will at least see fit to accept the foreshadowed amendments, which will make the Bill somewhat more acceptable and will ensure that it does not interfere with the rights of parents.

I have nothing against the present Chief Secretary, who I think would be able to give a decision on this matter as well as anyone could, but I have known some Ministers who I would not like to have the final say over my children's future. However, I think the best person to give a decision is a special magistrate sitting in camera or in chambers, whatever is the correct expression. I have been told that, because of the provisions of the Evidence Act, a special magistrate cannot have the final say, but if Parliament desired that

a special magistrate should be the deciding authority, it should alter the machinery. If that Act prohibits us from doing what is in the best interests of the children, it is our duty to remove the legal technicality.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE secured the adjournment of the debate.

AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 560.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1).—I support the second reading. When listening to the Minister's speech I was of the opinion that the measure was another of the "remedial" Bills that the Government introduces from time to time for the purpose of correcting drafting errors in legislation that has been passed or for validating practices that have grown up despite legislation. The Bill is certainly that, and can be regarded as a means of adapting the provisions of the Act to present-day principles and practice of auditing as well as present-day scope and magnitude of financial operations.

In this connection, of course, we have to be guided by those who are competent or well versed to express an opinion, whether from the Auditor-General's Department or from the Parliamentary Draftsman's Department, on any amendments that the Government or the Civil Service acts upon. For the most part there is nothing to object to in the amendments submitted, but I want to say, and I think every member will agree, that any Bill dealing with the auditing of public accounts and perhaps touching upon the financial policy of the Government of whatever political complexion it may be, if only in the slightest degree, should not be done in a cursory manner but should be considered with the fullest implications of the matters before us in the amending Bill.

I regard this Bill as an opportunity to discuss in full the matters I have mentioned. In the first place, the Audit Act in one form or another has been with us for a number of years. Its chief purpose was to authorize the setting up of a Government department that could act as a watchdog over receipts and disbursements of the Public Service as a whole. Its activities can be given under two main headings; firstly, if a department said that a certain amount of money had been spent on any particular item, finding out whether that amount was actually spent, and secondly, that the department had the authority to spend

it. The very existence of the Act places in the hands of the Auditor-General, as custodian of the expenditure, the important duty of watching over the expenditure of the State which we as representatives of the various electorates pass from time to time. The Auditor-General's Department keeps a record. All other Government departments also keep an accounting system designed to ensure what we might call an internal audit capable of being checked by the Audit Department. I have often wondered how much this inter-auditing and accountancy is costing the State, whether it is worth while, and whether the Auditor-General's powers should not be further enlarged. It should be noted that the authority of the Audit Department has at least imposed a uniformity on the accounts of the various departments and no doubt, things being as they are, has resulted in keeping down the cost of the accounting service.

I think honourable members appreciate that the Auditor-General's Department is not so much concerned with whether it is a good thing that money should be spent on this or that project, or in this or that direction, and it is precisely on this point that I feel there should be some independent body, such as an accounts committee, which could fulfil this function. Honourable members will recollect that on three occasions I have moved in this Chamber for the setting up of a public accounts committee. I have given the details of what operates in the Commonwealth sphere and in the other States, and I have been told by the responsible Ministers that all the necessary powers are contained in the Audit Act and are exercisable by the Auditor-General. However, I pointed out this afternoon that it does not come within the province of the Auditor-General as to what money is spent on this or that project. It comes within his province to see whether money has been spent with the authority of the Parliament, how much has been spent and whether the money has been accounted for. The Audit Department is merely concerned with whether the entries have been made in the correct manner and, if the money has been spent allegedly under a certain authority, it has been properly authorized; also that if a certain amount of money has been received by way of fees or taxes, the record corresponds with the actual amount received. I think that is where the Audit Department commences and ends.

I pay a tribute to the Auditor-General of this State, because I think he is one of the

most efficient Auditors-General in the Commonwealth. That applies also to his very able officers, and I think it applies generally to departmental officials in this State. We seem to be particularly blessed by having a good civil service, but there are occasions when we have measures before us such as this in order to bring in amending legislation to give them the necessary protection. In view of the great complexity of the public service and the multitude of individual transactions that may be involved, I can appreciate the desire to limit the nature of the audit under certain circumstances, and that is what this amending legislation is attempting to do. As I have said, in this kind of topic we have to rely on the assurances of those best qualified to recommend such relaxations.

What I desire to emphasize at this point is that the system of accounting, as I understand it, as laid down by the Audit Department and employed by the various other departments, should be such as to reduce to a minimum the opportunities for defalcation on the part of those handling money on behalf of the Government. In this I have no wish to cast any reflections on members of the public service or for that matter on any person whose books are audited by the Audit Department, such as district clerks, etc. I merely mention that one of the duties of the department should be to ensure, as far as humanly possible, that the system of accounting is foolproof. I have no doubt that the department keeps a watchful eye on this. It has occurred to me that the Auditor-General should have power, if he does not possess it already, to prescribe the form of accounting and handling of money in other than departmental activities, such as the Tramways Trust, the Abattoirs Board and other semi-Government departments, laying down a definite policy in line with other parts of the public service.

Reference to the forms in which accounts are presented and kept leads me to deal with the Loan indebtedness of the various departments which are authorized to spend available Loan funds. To take a specific example, I had occasion to examine the last few reports of the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board in regard to loan expenditure, and in one instance there appeared to be a discrepancy between the Auditor-General's statement of the position and the board's own statement. This is an example of an organization whose accounts are not, for some reason, audited by the Auditor-General's Department. I hasten to say that I

am not suggesting that those responsible for the conduct of the Abattoirs Board are guilty of something sinister in their financial activity. What I am suggesting is that if there were a properly co-ordinated system of accountancy, similar to the Public Service, applying to these boards which receive Government loans and which in effect are spending Government money, these discrepancies or alleged discrepancies would not occur.

Turning to the Loan Estimate figures for the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board for 1955-56, we find that according to the Government the board owed the Government £412,386 at June 30, 1955. In the board's report for 1954-55 we read the following:—

	£	£
Advances by the Treasurer of South Australia . . .	746,000	
Advances from other sources	12,000	758,000
Less repayments by the board		465,614
Net		<u>£292,386</u>

If we assume that the £12,000 mentioned is included in the repayments and the balance of £292,386 is all owed to the Government, there is a discrepancy of £120,000. For the year 1956-57, the official statement of the position was that at June 30, 1956, the total indebtedness of the board to the Government was £507,275, whereas the board's own accounts showed it to be £407,275, analysed as follows:—Capital borrowings £878,000, less repayments to date £470,725, leaving £407,275 secured by debentures to the Treasurer of South Australia. There may be a perfectly simple explanation of these apparent discrepancies, but it would be very much more satisfactory if there were no apparent discrepancies, so that it would be much easier for members of Parliament, who in the main are not qualified accountants but laymen, to understand the figures appearing in these accounts and, what is more important, to rely on their accuracy.

There are two or three other aspects that I would like to mention. The Auditor-General's Department does not audit the accounts of the Abattoirs Board. I am not making an attack upon the board but I merely mention the fact that the Auditor-General should lay down a policy for all these boards which are operating and carrying out a Government instrumentality. During the last few years a total of £525,000 has been appropriated to the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board. The Public Purposes Loan Bill authorizes the Treasurer to spend

amounts so appropriated on the items mentioned. That Act also authorizes the Treasurer to spend or refrain from spending.

The PRESIDENT—Order! I am afraid the honourable member has been very close to the wind for a good while.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—With great respect, I am mentioning these points in a review of the activities of the Auditor-General because the amending legislation deals with his particular appointment and his activities. We cannot tear the whole of the activities of the Auditor-General from its context unless we cover all these things, and I am pointing this out to lead up to a point which I think will be appreciated later. I know, of course, that the Public Purposes Loan Bill can also authorize the Treasurer to spend or refrain from spending amounts appropriated to various items. I think it is somewhat farcical to appropriate any particular amount to any particular item, because the Treasurer can lump the whole of the amounts into a pool and under the Public Purposes Loan Bill he can spend or refrain from spending a certain amount on a particular project. For instance, if Parliament determines that £250,000 should be spent on a bridge over the River Murray, the Treasurer under the Act can say that he will not spend it on the bridge but that he will spend it, for instance, on a deep sea port in the South-East.

The PRESIDENT—Order!

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I point out that only some extraordinary circumstances should justify the appropriation to any item of an amount which is not actually set aside for that item. The Auditor-General should have power to say that the amounts appropriated by Parliament for certain items should be spent on those items.

I now come to clause 4 dealing, as the Minister said, with the annual leave of the Auditor-General. At first, taking merely his explanation, I regarded the amendment as doing what he said it did, but on consulting the Act I received the impression that it did not in fact achieve the purpose stated. Section 7 (2) of the Act is concerned with circumstances under which the Auditor-General is deemed to have vacated his office. This seems a strange manner in which to provide for his annual leave, and I do not think it was ever intended to do so. As a matter of fact, I have been unable to ascertain why this provision has been

included in section 7 (2). When the Bill including it was originally introduced in the House of Assembly about 1924 the Minister merely stated that the section contained the usual provisions for that purpose and in Committee, the clause, together with 29 others, was passed *en bloc* without any discussion. The paragraph refers to leave granted by the Governor, and implies that he has power to grant the Auditor-General leave. Where that authority is, I do not know, but I assume it exists somewhere independently of the clause being discussed.

Whatever the position, any employee of the Government has to apply for leave and, in principle at least, that leave is granted by the Governor. In other words, all leave granted, whether by statute or otherwise, is granted by the Governor. The Auditor-General is in no different position in this regard from any other Government employee. Therefore, I do not see why any amendment of the section is necessary for the purpose of ensuring that the Auditor-General shall be entitled to three weeks' annual leave. All he has to do is to apply for it, just the same as any other Government servant. The provisions of section 7 (2) are essentially penal, and as to the particular absent without leave provision, it is somewhat severe.

The implications I have mentioned are supported by the reference in the section to 28 days' discontinuous absence. If this section does in fact refer to annual leave, what is there to stop the Auditor-General from taking that amount of leave? I think the idea expressed is that if the Auditor-General neglected his duty to the extent of absenting himself from his duties (which means dereliction of duty) unless he has received permission from the Governor, that is a ground for his dismissal. Instead of making the amendments to the section, a separate section should be included in the Act defining clearly the rights and privileges of the Auditor-General with regard to leave. The Attorney-General must admit that it should not be included in the section which contains the penal clause for the dereliction of duty. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. C. R. CUDMORE secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.07 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, September 18, at 2.15 p.m.