LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, November 11, 1958.

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

QUESTIONS.

MISREPRESENTATION BY SALESMEN.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I ask leave to make a short statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Following the arrival of a group of migrant from Holland an article appeared in the *News* of Thursday, November 6, under the heading "Salesmen Described as Preying Vultures" and it said *inter alia*:—

Insurance and car salesmen who have been boarding the Melbourne Express to travel with European migrants coming to South Australia were today described by a migration officer as "preying vultures." . . . He said agents intent on making easy money were cutting holes in the life savings of many new arrivals.

In view of the seriousness of that charge—although, of course, there are many reputable insurance companies and car salesmen—and the racketeering, hi-jacking formula being adopted by these unscrupulous individuals, will the Government consider bringing down legislation to compel these people to register in the same way as land agents and business agents?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I have not seen the article but I will investigate the matter.

RETRENCHMENTS AT ISLINGTON.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—Has the Minister of Railways a reply to a question I asked recently concerning rumours of proposed dismissals at the Islington workshops?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I am assured by the Railways Commissioner that there is no truth in the alleged rumours of dismissals from the workshops at Islington.

AJAX HOSPITAL MEDICAL BENEFITS COMPANY.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I ask leave to make a short statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—Last Thursday, when passing through Quorn, my attention was drawn to the operations of the Ajax Hospital Medical Benefits Company to which a number of people in that district have subscribed. I have letters in my possession which indicate that, although the company intimated to some people that through shortage of staff it was unable to meet commitments and to others that funds would not permit it, the company was still collecting subscriptions. Will the Attorney-General instruct the Crown Law Department to inquire into this matter?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—I also have received letters from people regarding this company, and the circular which the company sent out to its members indicating that it could no longer carry on has also been brought under my notice. It does appear that this company was continuing to collect subscriptions when it was unable to meet its liabilities as they fell due and I have already referred the matter to the Crown Solicitor asking him to investigate the position.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—This was dealt with in another place.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—It has been mentioned in a good many places. I believe that the Bill now before the other place dealing with this type of association will prevent any organization that is not financially stable from carrying on, and will put an end to these unfortunate incidents that have occurred.

CHELTENHAM-PORT ADELAIDE BUS FARES.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Has the Minister of Local Government a reply to the question I addressed to him on October 30 with reference to the proposed increase in fares on the conversion of the Cheltenham-Port Adelaide tram service to buses?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I informed the honourable member last week that I expected to have an answer today, but owing to other engagements this morning I was unable to contact the Minister of Works, who may have the information with him. I will see that it is available tomorrow.

"U" TURNS IN KING WILLIAM STREET.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—Has the Minister of Roads a reply to my question recently concerning "U" turns in King William Street?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I was not aware that a reply was expected. I think I said that I would take the matter up with the City Council. I have had discussions already with certain of its members, but I have nothing of interest to report to the honourable member at the moment.

MISREPRESENTATION BY ADVERTISEMENT.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—I ask leave to make a brief statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—My question relates to misrepresentation by advertisement. A full page advertisement appeared in the *News* on October 7, 1958, under the name of "Griff's Cut Price Furniture Sale." It stated:—

Doors open at 9.05 tomorrow. Chrome suite, 10 guineas, £1 deposit. You cannot afford to miss one of the dozens of clear out chrome suites. Sorry! No phone or mail orders. Shop in person—save in pounds.

A reputable constituent of mine, with a number of other citizens, was on the doorstep on the morning following that advertisement waiting for the store to open, and the person who approached me was the second in the queue. He was told that there were no kitchen suites left. Only one person was ahead of him and he did not make a purchase. When the salesman was pressed for an answer he stated that there were only two tables priced at 10 guineas and the chairs had to be purchased separately. Also advertised was a lounge suite for 12 guineas, but not one of these was sold on the day. When pressed to be shown the suite advertised, the salesman showed these people two which, it was alleged, had been sold the night before. The price ticket on them showed 29 guineas and I am told by my constituent that there was none at 12 guineas. Is there any law in this State covering misrepresentation? If not, will the Government consider introducing such legislation for the protection of the community in general?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—It would appear to me that no offence has been committed for I do not think it could be proved that anyone was defrauded or that anyone lost as a result of the advertisement. I have had my attention drawn to several similar advertisements where people on arrival at the premises concerned have been informed that the terms and conditions available were different from those advertised. They have been caused some inconvenience and probably certain expense in getting there. I believe that it should be obligatory on business people to observe the rule of truth in advertising, and I shall be happy to look at the position to see if any action should be taken to protect the public.

HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Minister of Health) obtained leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Hospitals Act, 1934-1952.

MENTAL DEFECTIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1603.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—When explaining this Bill the Minister said:—

A mentally sick person should not be regarded as a mental defective. His illness is in many respects the same as a physical illness and is often cured by suitable treatment.

Many people are mentally sick, and if they submitted to voluntary treatment in the early stages they would be cured. A mentally sick person should not be regarded as a mental defective, and in that respect I support the Bill and commend the Government for introducing it. I had the pleasure of reading the report of the Superintendent of Mental Institutions (Dr. Birch). I commend that very valuable report to honourable members, and I think it is one on which Parliament should act. I have the highest regard for Dr. Birch and Dr. Salter and other people associated with that department. Dr. Birch has often given evidence before the Public Works Committee and has proved to that committee that he is a very worthy public servant. He is a man who is held in very high regard, and Parliament should not hesitate in giving him any assistance he requires.

Clause 5 amends section 33 of the principal Act, which deals with the method of transferring a patient to an institution. As the Minister mentioned in explaining the Bill, people often refrain from taking action because they think that a stigma will be placed on the family, and I think this legislation will go a long way to removing that stigma. Clause 7 deals with children who are certified. I maintain that children should not be placed in institutions with hardened criminals. It is a great pity that we have no place where people suffering from mental sickness can be sent; if we had such a place I think it would be in the best interests of the public. It is no use sending mentally sick people to gaol, and anything the Government can do in this respect will have my full support.

We know that some people have been cured, and that is no doubt a credit to the institutions and the people conducting them. A total of 1,648 people have been certified as mental

defectives and admitted to Parkside Mental Hospital, and 42 have been admitted as voluntary boarders.. At Northfield Mental Hospital 813 patients have been certified and 36 admitted as voluntary boarders. At Enfield, 12 have been admitted as voluntary boarders. Admissions to mental hospitals for the year ended June, 1957, were as follows: Parkside, voluntary boarders, males 23 and females 40, making a total of 63; Northfield, 99 males and 56 females, making a total of 155; Enfield Receiving Home, 111 males and 132 females, a total of 243. It is noticeable that most of those going voluntarily for attention are females. The number discharged from Parkside during the year was 320, of whom 37 were voluntary boarders. Of that number the percentage recovered or relieved was 71 per cent. We are happy to know that the treatment extended to people in this institution pays dividends. There were 200 discharges from the Northfield Mental Hospital, including 109 voluntary boarders, and the admissions to that institution were 200 males and 73 females, a total of 273. Of that total, 115 were admitted as voluntary boarders. The number discharged from Enfield was 462, which included 247 voluntary boarders. Of this number 416 were recovered or relieved.

That is a very splendid thing. I compliment the authorities on the splendid work they are doing, and I hope the House will unanimously support the Bill. I support the second reading.

The Hon. E. ANTHONEY (Central No. 2)—I have great pleasure in supporting this Bill and heartily commend the Government for introducing it. I think this legislation was a little overdue, and I base that statement on the remarks of the Director-General of Medical Services in his report when he said:—

> The treatment of our patients in the State's hospitals is in accordance with most of the recent advances in psychiatric practice throughout the world, but we still have a legislation which is an anachronism in name, scientifically inaccurate and socially unacceptable.

They are very strong words for the director to use. This legislation is a step in the right direction. We are not merely altering the title of the legislation, but in a way we are altering the whole concept of mental illness, which is a most distressing and painful illness.

Shakespeare once said that it was difficult to minister to a diseased mind. The treatment meted out to the so-called insane has often been far from humane, and some very terrible stories have been told of the treatment of inmates of these institutions in days gone by. However, a great reform has taken place during the last few years. In the past a stigma has been attached to a mentally sick person, but there is to be a complete new look in this matter. Although many of these people are cured of this mental illness, the stigma often remains and their own people will not take care of them and frequently there is no place for them to go. Clinics established for out-patients are doing valuable work in restoring these people to normal mental health. The problem has become much better understood and our treatment is in line with modern scientific advancement. The care of the mentally sick is engaging the authorities throughout the world. I understand that after three years' inquiry a special committee in Great Britain recently issued a report on this subject that contained important recommendations. It is pleasing to know that the percentage of intake into our mental institutions is lower than that in any other State, and that the number suffering from this illness is diminishing. I am sure that the Bill will meet with the wholehearted support of all honourable members.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (LONG SERVICE LEAVE) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1603.)

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—The Bill contains two main clauses and they deal with long service leave for public servants and school teachers. At present the maximum long service leave for public servants is 365 days after 41 years' service. An employee could reach that maximum at the age of 55, 56 or 57 and this is a point that has perturbed me for some time. During the balance of his service he is entitled, under the present law, to no additional long service leave, but because of his experience, having reached maturity in judgment, he should be entitled to additional leave for the years served until his retirement. Therefore, I am pleased that the amendment extends the maximum leave for public servants to 450 days after 50 years' service.

About 10 years ago, as secretary of the United Trades and Labour Council, I introduced a deputation to the Premier requesting that the leave should be so extended. Several other deputations have since waited on the Government, including one, I believe, to the present Minister of Industry. It goes to prove that

if we keep asking for what we believe is right, sooner or later we shall meet with success, even if it is in the session prior to an election. My only criticism of the amendment is that the right to the additional leave should be retrospective. Those who left the service in the last two or three years are denied a possible additional 90 days' long leave to which, in my opinion, they should be entitled.

It may not be possible to apply retrospectivity in all things, but in this case the Government should have given some thought to retrospectivity and thus righted one of the wrongs done to public servants in the last few years. I cannot see why there should be any distinction between the long service leave rights under the Public Service Act and those under the Education Act. I should like the Minister to say why public servants are entitled to a maximum of 450 days' long service leave whereas teachers are entitled to only 270 days. I support the Bill.

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

INDUSTRIAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1605.)

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY (Central No. 2)—This short Bill increases the annual remuneration of the President and Deputy-President of the Industrial Court. One disadvantage of being paid under an Act of Parliament is that any alteration to remuneration has to be brought before Parliament. It is right that increases in the salaries of these two gentlemen should be favourably considered, but this procedure delays somewhat the adjustment necessary to keep them in step with other increases made from time to time. That, I take it, is the reason for this Bill being retrospective to July 1 of this year.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—What do you suggest as an alternative?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I do not suggest anything. Our courts stand high in the regard of Parliament and of the public. These gentlemen are appointed by Parliament and, therefore, can be removed only by Parliament. I do not advocate an alteration in the procedure; I merely mention their disadvantage in the matter of salary adjustment. The Arbitration Court has a far greater effect on the national economy than has any other court. The responsibility given to its President and Deputy-President is tremendous.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—That responsibility is often not fully recognized.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Possibly. If we tot up the decisions given by the Arbitration Court over the years, I think we shall find that they have altered the face of our economy very much. It is true that we appoint men of repute who, we feel, are competent to judge a case on the evidence brought before them. I have not heard of either side appealing to the court having any feelings of disrespect for the court in South Australia. Consequently, the remuneration of these gentlemen should be commensurate with the trust and confidence they hold in the public mind. I am sure that the Council does not object to the proposed increases in salary.

I often wonder whether we shall ever reach the end of Arbitration Court proceedings. Over the past 50 years there have been innumerable Arbitration Court hearings. I have often thought it is a great pity that we cannot settle down to something stable and constant and accept that as a basis for getting our cost of living on an even keel, thus lessening the necessity for so many expensive court hearings. The wages board's decisions still operate in this State. While the Federal Court has to some extent overshadowed the State Court, many people are still under State awards. We must have men widely read and prepared to keep in step with the times and to study the conditions that are affecting the economy of the country. Consequently, we have no objection to these increases, which I think are modest in view of the power and authority of these men. I support the Bill.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE (Minister of Industry)—I will say a few words, mainly upon comments made by Mr. Shard during his second reading speech. Their import was that some top ranking civil servants in this State have been given additional duties so that they can be provided with additional salary. By interjection at the time, I indicated that the reason was not the additional salary involved but the peculiar abilities and aptitude needed for the work given to them. For instance, Mr. Shard mentioned the appointment of Mr. Pearce, Under-Secretary, as Chairman of the State Bank Board. Obviously, with his knowledge as Under-Secretary he could bring much detailed knowledge, and has in fact brought it, to the management of the State Bank.

Similarly, Mr. Drew, the Under-Treasurer, who has been given duties in connection with the Electricity Trust, is an efficient officer who

has managed the trust with great credit to himself and satisfaction to the State. Perhaps the best example was the appointment of Mr. Bishop, the Auditor-General, to the Board of the Savings Bank. I cannot imagine anybody more competent or more likely to be helpful to the Savings Bank than Mr. Bishop. For this reason I think there is ample justification for the appointments that have been made.

I do not wish to add anything further except to endorse what has been said about everyone having great confidence in the President and Deputy-President of the Industrial Court. We all agree with the proposals for an increase in their remuneration.

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

EXPLOSIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Ajourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1605.)

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE (Midland)—This is not a Bill calling for long and learned speeches, but is merely a piece of machinery to incorporate in the legislation power to deal with the mixing of certain substances. Whereas under the present Act the power of inspection and supervision of explosives is efficiently covered, we are now faced with the position where the mixing of individually harmless substances produces an explosive. As the powers of the present Act do not cover those things, the present Bill gives the inspectors power to supervise, if necessary, and to have the right of entry and inspection in the case of such substances mixed together. Exception cannot be taken to this legislation because recently we considered the control of firearms and what is normally called safe ammunition and it is more important to control these explosives, which are practically never safe. Even if two materials used are comparatively harmless, it is foreseeable that other substances when mixed with them in various combinations will produce explosives. Therefore I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

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

SAVINGS BANK OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1606.)

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL (Central No. 2)—I support this Bill, which deals with two matters. The first is the superannuation of officers of the Savings Bank, and I do not think it is for us, as a Parliamentary body, to go into the question of whether the superannuation is adequate or whether this is the right way of doing it. Rather that is a matter for the trustees, no doubt with representations from the officers concerned and with the advice of senior officers. In my view there is nothing unreasonable in the method of superannuation as submitted. I always support anything for the welfare of the individual that is within reason and is helpful, and I think that this is a proper matter to support, and therefore that aspect of the Bill has my commendation.

The rest of the Bill, although dealing with various details, really deals with only one principle. The Minister, in his second reading explanation, said, "The restrictions on the amount of deposits, etc., in this Savings Bank were first imposed in the early days of the Savings Bank," which is perfectly correct, and he continued, "probably for the purpose of restricting the growth of such banks." If one takes that literally I do not think that it was probably the real reason. I know that the word "growth" could be considered to include a number of things, but this appears to be some sort of hazard in the aftermath, without really pondering on why the restrictions were made in the first instance. I think it is important to some extent that we should understand why they were made, because we are now being asked to remove them. I would therefore like to give my views, as a person who has some connection with banking, as to why they were made.

A savings bank is a particular type of bank. There are many types of banks in the world although we only know certain sorts in this country. The Savings Bank is known as a bank in some respects, but in others it is hardly a bank as the term is often understood. It has this peculiarity: although it has funds deposited with it which are liable to recall by the depositors on comparatively short notice, by tradition, and indeed by the nature of its business, it invests those funds in long term securities. That is a very good thing and I commend it. It is very beneficial to our community life in general. The reason that Savings Banks are able to do that is because people banking with the Savings Bank—I put emphasis on the word "savings" in this regard—are not really banking as they bank with trading banks. They put the money into the trading bank in one day with the expectation,

possibly, of drawing some of it out at short notice, or the whole of it.

It is a savings bank, which means that the moneys deposited are at least intended to stay there for some considerable time, even though in practice some people may find that they have to draw it out rather more quickly than they expected. That is the nature of Savings Bank business. It is generally intended by the depositors that the money they deposit shall accumulate, and thus the Savings Bank authorities can regard those deposits in ordinary circumstances as being reasonably static; if there are movements they are likely to be within fairly narrow margins and consequently the money can be re-lent for long periods. That is the essence of Savings Bank business as I see it. Call it banking business, deposit business, or whatever you like, but that is the fundamental of it and that, I believe, was at the root of the reason for this limitation on the amount of deposits in the bank's younger and more formative years: to try to see that there was an even balance of funds; to have many depositors having an amount of comparatively low limitation and, with the bank's intention of lending out those moneys again on long term, to see that one person, or two or three, who had very high deposits could not, at whim, draw them out at short notice and thus leave the bank with nothing to cash in or to repay their deposits.

To put that in monetary parlance: if the bank had 500 depositors of £100 each, the total deposits would amount to £50,000. Probably very few of the depositors would want to withdraw their £100 at short notice, and thus the bank could expect to have most of that £50,000 from time to time, or at all times, for re-lending on long term. However, if the bank had those 500 depositors with a total of £50,000, and three other depositors of £50,000 each making a total of £200,000 it obviously could not lend out a large proportion of those moneys on long term because those three could each easily decide to withdraw their money at short notice, and thus the bank would have nothing with which to meet the withdrawal of deposits. That, I think, was the reason in the early days, when this bank was smaller, for the necessity of a maximum limit.

Things have utterly changed. In the Savings Bank of South Australia today we have a fine financial institution of which South Australians are proud. It is a very fine bank indeed. Those formative years are over and it is now a bank of large stature. Recently, quite irrespective of this Bill, I glanced through its balance-sheet, and a well presented document it was. I cannot say that I was surprised because I know what a fine bank it is, but I must say that, looking at the accounts for the first time for a few years (and rather more carefully than usual), I thought how excellently the bank must be conducted. It has great strength. Its deposits are, in effect, guaranteed by the Government and, of course, with its strength in these days it also has its own borrowing capacity should the need arise; no doubt it could borrow large sums itself from short-lending banks. Therefore, presenting my argument in that way, I see no reason why the maximum limit on deposits should not be removed altogether from a bank of this magnitude and resource.

There is a further safeguard because the Savings Bank Act will still provide that the trustees have power to fix the interest borrowing limit at any amount they deem appropriate from time to time. That is the complete answer, I feel, to any qualms anyone in this Chamber may have about removing the maximum limit. In effect, it is giving the trustees power to regulate their own business and to say, from time to time, according to the situation at any particular period, exactly how much they will take on deposit. People will not put funds into that bank for very long above the interest-bearing limit because, obviously, they could do better elsewhere. Therefore, I feel that this is a very proper clause. It gives the trustees further power to regulate the affairs of the bank, something which at the moment they do not have. It gives them greater trading latitude, which I feel should be encouraged. I am always a believer in competition as long as it is fair, and I see nothing in this Bill to suggest that there would be, or could be, any unfair competition.

I have said that the rest of the Bill was really based on the same principle, because clause 7 relates to Savings Bank deposit stock, and in turn permits the larger denominations of that to be withdrawn at much shorter notice. Instead of having varying periods of notice that have to be given for the withdrawal of deposit stock it is proposed to make a uniform period of one month, which seems to be a reasonable thing. I have no doubt that that period will be perfectly safe for the bank to encompass any withdrawal of any magnitude it may have.

There is one other matter I overlooked in my general survey of the Bill, and that is the withdrawal of deposits by beneficiaries of

deceased persons. The Minister explained that the maximum which could be paid out without probate or letters of administration was fixed in 1942 at £200. Clause 6 proposes to increase this amount to £600. The rough and ready rule of multiplying by three, to which I have referred before, is still probably as good as any, and that, in effect, brings together the present situation and the intention when this facility was first put into the Act. For the reasons I have given I support all the clauses of the Bill.

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

ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1606.)

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—I have much pleasure in supporting this small but most important Bill, which increases the amount the State Bank may advance for the building of houses on farms. This legislation has been of great benefit in the past to primary producers developing and clearing new land. The direct loss to the Government over the years has been considerable, but no-one can assess the indirect benefit from it. As we all know, the clearing of new land creates severe hardships. It is essential to get production under way in order to obtain revenue, and it is also essential, for the comfort and contentment of the settler, to build a home. Sons who have worked on the farm and wish to marry often have to move elsewhere because the father is not in a position to build, and the same may be said about share farmers and employees. Very often, the first question they ask is whether they will have a home in which to live; if they wish to marry and there are no homes for them, they are inclined to leave the industry. I think the increase from £1,750 to £3,500 will be a great benefit.

The State Bank has played a very important part in the development of this State. It has lent money, and in genuine cases where a man has proved he is worthy of a loan he usually has no trouble in obtaining it. I notice that the loan must not exceed 90 per cent of the value of the property, but I think it would be much better if it were 90 per cent of the price. However, there is very little more to be said on the Bill. I commend it, and I am sure it will be of great value in the future as it has been in the past.

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

INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1607.)

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—The Industries Development Act empowers the Treasurer, subject to a report and recommendation from the Industries Development Committee, to:—

(*a*) guarantee the repayment of loans made or to be made to any person engaged or about to engage in an industry for the purpose of enabling him to establish or carry on or extend such industry, and

(*b*) make a grant or loan out of the Country Secondary Industries Fund to any person for the purpose of enabling him to establish or carry on or extend any secondary industry outside the metropolitan area, or to conduct experiments, research and investigations relating to any such industry or the possibility of establishing any such industry.

This amendment provides for the further encouragement of industrial progress outside the metropolitan area. The Industries Development Act was first introduced in 1941 and was advantageous in providing for the greater output of building materials and other items in short supply during the war period. Many important industries have been assisted, such as Cellulose, the pyrites industry, and mining and cement industries, and they have been a very considerable advantage to South Australia.

The question has arisen from time to time whether the Industries Development Committee should report to Parliament or to the Government, but as the committee was set up to report to the Treasurer I assume that it is correct for that course to be adopted. It can be readily envisaged that, when enquiring into some industries that need assistance, if certain things were made public they could cause an unfavourable reaction to that industry. During the 17 years this Act has been in force, bank guarantees, advances and grants have amounted to £3,237,000. The guarantees, advances and grants in force to June 30 amounted to £2,918,900.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Has only £300,000 been written off?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—No. Bank guarantees totalled £3,097,050, advances from the Loan Fund were £80,000, advances from

the Country Secondary Industries Fund £42,915, and grants from the Country Secondary Industries Fund £17,938. Over that period there has been a loss to the Government of £23,600, which amounts to ¾ per cent of the total loans and guarantees made. Whether the tremendous increase in industrial output and the increase in the provision of items that were in short supply in South Australia justifies that loss or not is a matter which Parliament and the public must assess for themselves.

This Act provides for the building of factories for letting or for sale outside the metropolitan area, so it will provide one more factor towards the encouragement of industries in country areas. A definite world trend exists today for Governments to build factories either for letting or for sale to encourage industrial output within their areas. Throughout Great Britain, Ireland, Pakistan, Canada, South America and many other places the trend is for Governments to build factories to encourage industries in certain areas. In the very great demand in South Australia for the setting up of industries in country areas, it is desirable to provide all the encouragement we can for the establishment of industries in those centres. It is most desirable that factories be set up at Elizabeth, in view of the many people there who otherwise would have to travel to employment in Adelaide. I envisage that the inquiry for factories will mostly concern the town of Elizabeth.

The Bill provides for industries to be established in any country district, but obviously there is a bigger demand at Elizabeth than elsewhere. The Trust has already provided factories at Elizabeth, and this amendment has been introduced really to legalize what has been done. The trust has made a careful inquiry into industries desiring to set up at Elizabeth; it has encouraged overseas factories to come to that town; and it has been able to make recommendations to the Industries Development Committee and give much valuable information on the standing and desirability of these new industries. I believe that, because the trust has undertaken the building of houses by contract, the same practice will be maintained regarding the building of factories. I think we all agree that it is not desirable that any State institution should take up the work that private enterprise has done up to the present, and I think the fact that it will call tenders for the building of these factories will ensure some satisfaction for those people who are prepared to do the actual building.

The trust is prepared to either lease the factory buildings or sell them on terms. Some overseas firms have been interested in setting up factories in South Australia and have been happy to go to Elizabeth because of the provision of factories there. I hope that policy will be satisfactory and that it will be greatly augmented in the future, because of the great expansion for which we are hoping in this State. I am pleased to support the measure, and I feel confident that it will benefit South Australia.

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

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 6. Page 1612.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—On December 8, 1954, a Workmen's Compensation Act Amendment Bill was introduced in this Chamber and I supported it with a certain reluctance because the rates provided did not compare favourably with those existing in other States. However, we are now getting a little nearer. I fail to see why employees in South Australia should be at a disadvantage compared with those in the remainder of the Commonwealth. Long before I entered Parliament, as a union secretary I was closely associated with this legislation. It is true that over a period of years the provisions have been improved but, in my opinion, certain anomalies still exist. A few years ago the Government set up a committee to make recommendations to Parliament regarding rates of compensation. The present rates were fixed four years ago, but since then the basic wage has increased by 25s. a week. In 1956 the Act was further amended and it dealt with dependants entitled to a pension, and partial incapacity was to be treated as a percentage of total incapacity. It also fixed compensation for injuries and industrial diseases.

For many years the Opposition has endeavoured to have included certain provisions in the Act to bring the law into conformity with that prevailing in other States. It has been successful in having some of these provisions included, but one that has not been accepted is worthy of favourable consideration. Over the years the trades union movement has endeavoured to have embodied in the Act a section providing for compensation to be paid to a man who is injured on his way to or from work, similar to the provision operating in

other States, but Parliament has not recognized this request. The provision applies in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, so why cannot it be introduced into South Australia? Surely South Australian workmen are just as important as those in other States? At times we hear about the great industrial peace in South Australia, the excellent work done by our workmen and our prosperity, so why should not this principle of payment of compensation to workers injured when travelling to or from work apply in this State?

For many years I have had dealings with insurance companies and in the main I have no complaint about their treatment. Even those people representing the employers have some doubt as to the meaning of the Act. Earlier this session I inquired from the Minister of Industry regarding certain provisions of the Act and he replied that a Bill would be introduced. I was given to understand that the position would be cleared up, but there is no attempt to do so in this Bill. I support the second reading and ask honourable members to consider the points I have raised. The schedule to the Act names certain injuries for which compensation may be paid, but a man may suffer an injury that is not covered in the schedule. He may be injured internally and his doctor may send him to a specialist for treatment. The insurance company is not satisfied and asks that the injured man should consult its doctor, who in turn sends a report to the company. In one such case it was agreed that the deficiency of the workman was 40 per cent and the company paid 40 per cent of the amount of £2,600 to which he was entitled, but first it deducted the total of weekly payments already paid, amounting to £317.

That is where I came in. I said that that could not be done because Parliament in 1956 amended the Act to provide that weekly payments were not to be deducted. The company took the matter up and got the advice of a Queen's Counsel, who advised that the employee was not entitled to the weekly payments as well as to the total compensation. This firm would not take the injured man back because it had no light job for him and my endeavours in this direction through the insurance company were unsuccessful. That was the treatment meted out to a man who had given 22 years' service.

Another case concerned a man who was injured in an accident and on compensation for a considerable time. When he returned to work he was not quite fit and he suffered a recurrence of the effects of the injury. He consulted his doctor, who sent him to a specialist. The insurance company was not satisfied and considered that the man was able to go back to work and ordered him to consult the company's doctor. This doctor said that there was nothing wrong with him and that he could take a light job, but there are no light jobs to get as the firms do not provide such jobs. This man, who had served the company for 32 years, said that he could not accept the job offered as he was not fit to do it. However, the insurance company's doctor considered that he was fit, and his weekly payments were stopped. I took up his case with the company, which would have nothing to do with it. Finally, I suggested that a third doctor be consulted and that a panel of doctors examine the case. The third doctor certified a certain percentage of deficiency. Why should a man, because his injury is not covered in the schedule, be put to this trouble and expense in an endeavour to have the position righted? It is because of certain loopholes in the Act.

At Port Adelaide and Outer Harbour firms are engaged in exporting certain goods. Their employees may live eight or 10 miles from the port, and the men may have to be at the wharf by 8 a.m. The employee must leave his home at 7.30 in order to get to work at 8 o'clock, his ordinary starting time. Why should he not be covered for Workmen's Compensation from the time he leaves home until he reaches work? This principle applies in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, therefore it should also apply to South Australian employees.

The Bill increases the maximum weekly payment for married workmen from £12 16s. to £13 10s., and for single workmen from £8 15s. to £9 5s. When a workman is killed and leaves a dependant the compensation is to be increased by £150 to a maximum of £2,750. Funeral allowances are to be increased from £60 to £70. This applies to a person with no dependants. During the last few years people have arrived from overseas, many with no dependants, and occasionally they have met their death at work. All that the insurance company has to pay in the way of funeral expenses is £60. This is now to be increased by £10. The maximum payment for specific injuries, at present £2,600, is to be raised to £2,750, which is insufficient. Admittedly, these amounts are an improvement on what has obtained for many years but since early in this year the Act in New South Wales has been improved. We are far behind the other States in our rates. If it can be done in other States, why not here? After all, the

same insurance companies operate in other States as in South Australia. Why can they not pay here what they pay there?

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—They were not the same Parliaments.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No, but the insurance companies are the same. I have often heard honourable members refer to the industrial stability of South Australia. If they make those statements and believe in them, why not consider those entitled to consideration? Clause 6 deals with medical, hospital, nursing and ambulance expenses. The amount over a period of years has reached £150. Very often, there is an injustice here again.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Did you say "very often"?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I say that very often, unfortunately, an injustice is done. The amount is now £150. Anyone may appeal to the stipendiary magistrates.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—How far do you get when you do that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly. The man is put to the expense of doing that.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—That has been tried.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Quite.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—You only get justice.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—You do not get costs, but the magistrate has the power to increase the amount to over £150. What would happen? Many people are not covered by trades organizations, and they are the people who need this legislation. Hundreds of thousands of men do not come under the provisions of this Act. Some men have met with an accident and have not claimed because they have not known the position, or perhaps they have claimed when it was too late. It is all very well for us to say, "Yes, you should know all that," but many people are not covered by trades organizations and get no redress, because they do not know. These expenses are important.

I am not going to criticize the Bill strongly, but things are left out that should be included. The amounts are not high enough compared with those operating in other States. The insurance companies are reasonable people to deal with but they have to operate in accordance with the provisions of the Act in this State. They say, "This is not clear" and "That is not clear." Parliament should make the position clear so that there can be no legal argument as to what a man is justly entitled to. In the schedule extra provision should be made to cover that. It is easy for a man to fall off a scaffold or to be injured internally. In one case there may be no bones broken; in other cases the amount increases to £2,600 for the loss of a leg, but many things are not covered. That is where the trouble lies. The amount of £2,750 is not sufficient for a person who loses his life. It is not adequate compensation, although it is certainly better than we have had. Whilst we have not accomplished all we wanted to, we will fight in the future as in the past to get this Act brought into line with the Acts in other States. There is nothing unreasonable in asking for that. I hope the Act will come into operation as soon as possible because, as framed, it will apply only to accidents that occur after the passing of the Act. I will suggest amendments in Committee to meet the types of cases I have mentioned because they are reasonable and should receive full sympathy. I support the second reading.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY (Central No. 2)—This Bill is similar to those that have come up every year for the last three or four years. Clause 6 is perhaps the most drastic amendment. The Workmen's Compensation Act was devised not to compensate a workman fully, but to assist him. When a man is injured in an accident outside of industry, he has to run the risk of whether he is to blame or not and has to make out a case. However, with workmen's compensation, if a man is injured no matter whose fault it is the employer has to pay. That may be quite all right but does not fully cover the community for accidents. We have an Unemployment Relief Act and various forms of relief for loss of work and time, and at some time or other all these provisions should be amalgamated for the relief of those unfortunate people who suffer accidents. Employers, as a whole, do not complain much about the Workmen's Compensation Act. It involves a tax of 2½ per cent on wages in certain industries. The insurance premium necessary to cover a workman against accidents amounts to about 7s. 6d. a week. It is, of course, a tax on industry that industry has to pay.

In the main, this Bill increases certain compensation benefits and brings them up-to-date with the rising cost of living. I have no comment to make on that. While we operate under this Act, we have to keep in step with such increases. Clause 6, however, proposes a difference. It seeks to state more clearly what Mr. Condon said was not clear to the average workman and union secretary, although it has always been reasonably clear to the insurance

companies. Another point is that subclause (4) of clause 6 stipulates no maximum amount recoverable. In the 1944 Act, £25 was specified as the amount for medical expenses. Subsequently, it was increased to £150. It could go even further than that but it would be necessary to bring the matter before a magistrate to have it increased.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—You are not objecting to it going further?

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—I am not saying it has never been more than £150, but the insurance companies must safeguard the general position. That is why some control of the amount of expense must be covered by this Bill. There has been a jump in 15 years from £25 to £150 for medical expenses. Now the figure is unlimited. Subclause (4) envisages regulations prescribing the maximum amounts that may be charged for medical, hospital, nursing or ambulance services. It is very difficult, and perhaps unwise, to give an open cheque to anyone, whether he be a doctor or anyone else, and if we are to make the amount an unlimited sum over £150 some measure of control is warranted. If the regulations prescribing these maximum charges could be brought down perhaps that danger of over-charging might be avoided. I point out that medical expenses are not a benefit to the injured person; the benefit goes to someone else, and I think that if we are to be liberal we should be liberal to the injured man and not over-generous to those who might —I do not say will—take advantage of an unlimited claim.

Generally speaking, I am not opposing the Bill. I think members can accept it as a step forward, making the Act a little easier to understand, at the same time satisfying the worker by bringing the rates up-to-date. Mr. Condon mentioned several special cases. Of course, there are hundreds of cases covered by the Act, some of them difficult; cases occur where the cause of the accident is not always known and cannot be proved, and the insurance companies and those implementing the Act have to be safeguarded. In the cases cited by the honourable member the precautions taken were necessary to see that no one was defrauded and certainly not with the idea of extracting from the injured person something to which he was entitled, because eventually the claims were paid and it was simply a case of producing the necessary proof.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Threatened action makes the insurance companies toe the line.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—That may be so, but workmen's compensation business has not been too advantageous to insurance companies. In most cases, as I see it, the companies are liberal in their interpretation of the Act. I support the Bill as it stands but hope that the regulations referred to in clause 6 (4) will be brought down at an early date.

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

ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT.

The House of Assembly intimated that it had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment without amendment.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION FUND BILL.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.07 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, November 12, at 2.15 p.m.