

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, June 10, 1959.

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

QUESTIONS.**LINCOLN AND EYRE HIGHWAYS.**

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—I ask permission to make a brief statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—Yesterday I discussed briefly with the Minister of Roads the question of the construction of the highways on Eyre Peninsula. This is a very important matter and one in which much interest is displayed by the people of those areas, who, naturally, are anxious to know just what progress has been made. Can the Minister of Roads give any information concerning the progress of the work on the Lincoln Highway, and can he say when the plant now engaged on that project will be available for preliminary construction work on the Eyre Highway?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The honourable member informed me that he would like further and more detailed information than has been available for some time regarding this matter. The last section of the portion of the Lincoln Highway between Whyalla and Cowell is being sealed now, and will be completed soon. The section between Cowell and the Lady Kinnaird Tanks will be completed next financial year, when work can proceed on the Eyre Highway. Approximately £500,000 remains to be spent on the completion of the Lincoln Highway and the access roads to the towns along it. As these works near completion, work will be speeded up on the Eyre Highway, and it is anticipated that next financial year will see the expenditure of over £50,000 on the Eyre Highway and its associated townships, apart from considerable sums granted to the district councils concerned for maintenance. In other words, Sir, the policy of completing the Lincoln Highway and then transferring to the Eyre Highway as rapidly as possible will be continued.

NEW MERLOO GOLD MINES.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—In view of the report of Mr. R. J. Sowden, the Registrar of Companies, in relation to the conduct of

directors of New Merloo Gold Mines (No Liability) Ltd., is it the intention of the Crown Law Department to investigate this matter with a view to protecting the interests of the shareholders of that company?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—I think that a complete perusal of the report tabled in the House yesterday will indicate that it is not felt that it would be proper for the Crown Law Department to take further action.

MYPONGA RESERVOIR.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL—I ask leave to make a brief statement with a view to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL—Rumours are abroad in districts south of Adelaide to the effect that the new Myponga Reservoir is leaking through geological faults. Obviously there is no basis in fact for this rumour, as the building of the retaining wall has not yet started. I believe the rumour arises from certain difficulties encountered in the excavation for the foundations of that wall. With a view to clearing the matter up, can the Minister representing the Minister of Works say whether he has anything to report to the Council on this matter?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I, too, have heard these rumours, which certainly have no basis in fact. I will consult my colleague, the Minister of Works, and report to the honourable member as soon as possible.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION: PORT ROAD LIGHTS.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE (Minister of Roads)—Mr. President, I ask leave to make a personal explanation regarding an answer to a question put to me yesterday by Mr. Shard.

Leave granted.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—When Mr. Shard asked me a question yesterday concerning the intersection of John Street and the Port Road I was in error when I associated the matter with Woodville Council. It was, in fact, the Hindmarsh Council to which I should have referred. Since then I have checked the facts and now advise the honourable member that the Hindmarsh Council has recently approached my traffic engineer, who has agreed to prepare a design for traffic lights at the intersection. Certain road works and re-alignment would be involved and the Highways Department would probably be prepared to

finance these, while the council would be expected to finance and install the lights. I understand that any delay that has arisen is due to some doubt within the council itself as to whether it is prepared to support the project or not.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 1).

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

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide Supply to carry on the functions of State for about two months. This is more or less a formal Bill but, for the information of new members in the Council, I should make it clear that that is its purpose. This is customary. We have at least two Supply Bills before the first Appropriation Bill arising from the Budget is presented by the Treasurer in another place, usually in September.

The amount provided this year is £9,000,000, which is £2,000,000 in excess of last year's amount. The increase is due to delay in the payment of several commitments because the funds provided were not sufficient. This indicates, to some extent, the development of the State. I well remember that the first Supply Bill, presented in (I think it was) 1940, was for £1,000,000. Over the years the amount has increased to £2,000,000, £3,000,000 and so on until now it is £9,000,000, which could easily, after the happenings of the past week, be increased further next year. It is desirable that the State should at all times be able to meet its commitments. A further Supply Bill will, of course, follow in the usual way.

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for the payment of any increases in salaries or wages which may be authorized by any court or other body empowered to fix or prescribe salaries or wages. I submit the Bill for the consideration and attention of the House.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—It is extraordinary that with three weeks of the financial year remaining we are asked to pass a Bill authorizing the expenditure of £9,000,000, when I remember that when I first entered this House the Estimates for the 12 months amounted to approximately what we are asked to authorize this afternoon. I have often heard this Council referred to as a "House of review," but do not let us continue to be hypocrites, for this Council is the biggest Party Council in Australia. Actions taken

during the past few years prove that. After the recent election, I do not think the Government has anything to boast about in occupying the Treasury benches today because for the third successive election, because of a system in respect of which, were I to describe it, I might be said to be out of order, it occupies office despite its minority of votes. Shortly after the last election some members of this House moved their places in this Chamber; they transferred their seats, with no consideration for anybody else, from one place to another. I want to know on whose authority that was done.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—The honourable member had better read the Standing Orders.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Was it on the authority of the officers of this Council or on your authority, Mr. President? To some people the part they play in Parliament is probably of little consequence. I expect that before long the Honourable Mrs. Jessie Cooper, whom I welcome to this House, will be sitting on my right as the Leader of the Liberal Party. We have two leaders in this House, but I recognize only one—the Honourable the Chief Secretary, Sir Lyell McEwin.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—Your leader!

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, if the honourable member pleases. I pay that respect to the Chief Secretary to which he is entitled, while the honourable member and his Party do not always pay it. No other Parliament in Australia today has two leaders. Today, I do not know of whom to ask a question. I do not know whether, when in this House, I should direct my questions to the Chief Secretary or to Sir Frank Perry. I submit that because I think that the Government is belittling this Council and, if it continues to proceed on the same lines, I think the more quickly this Council is abolished the better it will be for everyone. I say that after great consideration. One has to be careful as to what he says in this Council because, unfortunately, there is too much of the Liberal Party's policy being introduced here, whereas I have no reason to ask my supporters for any advice as to what I should do in this House.

I should like to refer to one or two matters during this debate. His Excellency the Governor's speech omitted to mention a few matters and I refer to one I raised in this House yesterday. It is, to me, a matter of more importance than most things. I refer to superannuation.

Less than 10 years ago the Government introduced the Parliamentary Superannuation Bill, which entitled members, on retiring after having served a certain number of years, to a pension of £75 a year. For that pension they had to pay certain contributions. Two years ago, with that fund having accumulated something like £80,000 in a period of less than 10 years, both the pensions and the contributions were increased.

Now, although we are told that the Parliament of South Australia stands supreme and that it stands out on its own, what do we find? We find that we receive the lowest pensions paid to Parliamentarians in any State.

Two sections of people enter this Parliament—the wealthy and the poor. Some come here to earn a livelihood and others come here for pin money, and I desire to say something on behalf of those people who have devoted their lives to Parliament. While on this subject, I wish to mention the case of two Ministers of the Crown who are living in retirement. Each was defeated when standing for re-election to Parliament. One secured a job as a lavatory attendant and the other had a job for which he was paid the basic wage. It is time that we as a Council realized that members are entitled to what they have paid for.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—There was no superannuation fund in those days.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No, but when a superannuation fund is started and accumulates a sum amounting to £80,000 to £90,000 after a period of only nine and a half years and honourable members have to pay contributions amounting to £102 a year to get a pension out of that fund, consideration should be given to those people who have sacrificed most of their lives representing the people of this State in Parliament.

I ask the Government to consider seriously, even if it means an increase in subscriptions, an increase in pension. I believe that a man who has served the majority of his life in this Parliament and who has paid £102 a year in contributions is entitled to more than a husband and wife would receive if they were age pensioners. Although I do not condone the meagreness of the old age pension, I point out that pensioners have contributed nothing directly towards their pension whereas Parliamentarians pay £2 a week to their fund. I hope that this Government and the Federal Government in their wisdom will increase

pensions of all kinds and that all social service benefits will be increased by the next Federal Budget. I make that plea because, in proportion, more men have been wrecked in health in serving in Parliament than have any other section of the community.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Do you think it is the Government's responsibility to take the initiative in the matter mentioned?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The honourable member knows that neither I nor any other honourable member may introduce a Bill to amend the Parliamentary Superannuation Act, and therefore it is the Government's responsibility to do so. Yesterday the Chief Secretary said that the question of increased superannuation payments was a matter for the Public Actuary. Perhaps I had better not say what I have in mind other than to mention that if a fund can be built up to £90,000 in 9½ years, to which all members contribute, it necessarily is in a good position to meet increased superannuation payments. A member must serve 12 years before he can participate. Does that apply in any other State? After serving 18 years a member who retired would be entitled to the maximum. Even if he served double that time he would still be entitled to only the maximum, despite the fact that his annual contributions continue. That is entirely wrong. I hope that before the end of that 36-year period, if this Council has not already been abolished, members will be entitled to receive more than is provided for today.

I have been reading the "Playford Pictorial," which indicates that the Government has been cringing and crying because of the increase of 15s. a week in the basic wage. It seems a terrible thing that it should have been increased. This 15s. only makes up the lag in the cost of living during the past 12 months. To the new honourable members let me repeat what I have said before—after the end of World War I the cost of living increased by 28 per cent, but not even one person by an award, an agreement or for any other reason received a penny a week increase. The position is that since 1928 the dog has been chasing its tail. However, when the court increases the wages of some workers by 15s. a week there is a hue and cry by the press and employers. Yesterday His Excellency the Governor referred to the good relations existing between employer and employee in South Australia, and I hope that those relations will long continue. That would indicate that our workers are efficient and

doing their best. In spite of our efficiency, we have lost many markets because of the inactivity of the Commonwealth Government, supported by the State Governments including that of South Australia, in not protecting the interests of Australia.

If I did not refer to the flour-milling industry my esteemed friend, Sir Arthur Rymill, would think there was something wrong with me. In this trade alone exports have fallen since 1953 from 853,000 tons to 352,000 tons, but nobody worries and nobody cares. Other industries have fallen off, but not to the extent that the flour milling industry has done.

Who is worrying about it today? I sent a letter three weeks ago to the Minister for Primary Industry and made three requests. I have no personal interest in the milling industry, but I am interested in an industry that has been built up by private enterprise over a period of many years. That industry has gone from a three-shift industry to a one-shift industry today. I suggested to the Honourable Mr. Adermann, who succeeded the Honourable Mr. McMahon, that his Government should use its influence to protest and, if possible, prevent other countries such as France, Italy, and Germany subsidizing by as much as £4 a ton in order to enable their producers to compete in markets that have been held by Australia for many years.

I also asked in that letter whether, if the Government could not prevent those subsidies, it would grant an equal subsidy in order to retain the Australian markets. We know that other industries are subsidized. It is costing Australia £15,000,000 a year to subsidize the dairying industry, and I am not complaining about that because I think that subsidy is essential. It costs millions of pounds to subsidize other industries, and I am not complaining about that either because I realize that, if other countries win trade from Australia by what I consider unfair methods, Australia has to retaliate or else close industries down.

Thirdly, I asked the Federal Minister whether, if he could not agree with me in the other two questions put to him, he would make arrangements with the Australian Wheat Board to fix a price of wheat to millers at which we could compete with other countries. Is anything wrong with that? I know very well that the farming community and most representatives sitting in this Council will not agree to that, but something has to be done about it before very long. In Australia today

we guarantee a price of 14s. 8d. a bushel on wheat for local consumption. What are we receiving for it overseas? I am not even objecting to that. Mixed up with this matter is the question of price fixation. I have always held the view that price fixation is of little value unless it becomes a Federal concern. Price control does not exist in any other State but South Australia.

The Hon. C. D. Rowe—New South Wales has it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—New South Wales has the right to re-enact it if it finds it necessary, but it does not control the price. In New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and Queensland a person can charge any price he likes for flour, bread, bran, and pollard. We cannot do that here, and that means that the South Australian employer is tied down and cannot recoup any loss he may make on private trade with other countries, whereas the other four exporting States can make a cut on their private trade overseas and recoup it in a small way in the home consumption price. I am advocating not a price increase in flour or bread, but similar treatment to that which is given to other States.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—What about price control?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Price control is of little value unless it is on a Federal basis. I have always held that opinion. I have never stood behind a partition to see which way the votes go. Everyone knows the way I intend to vote, and I am not one of those who, tongue in cheek, stands back to see which way the votes are going before he casts his own. I have often seen that happen in this Council. Many honourable members advocate causes only because they know that the Labor Party is supporting them and that those causes will triumph, but if the Labor Party opposed them there would be a different tale to tell in this Council. Although I do not advocate it, would it matter if the price of bread was increased by a half-penny a loaf? It would probably mean only 3d. a week to the average person in this Chamber, although it would certainly make a difference to a larger family. However, the price of meat can be increased in one day by 1s. a pound and nothing is said about it, and the same thing applies to other articles.

If we are to protect an industry that means so much to the employment position and to the economy of the State, then probably we shall be forced to take action that we would not

under ordinary conditions. I know very well that my remarks may not be palatable to some people; particularly those who have not heard them before, but those people must recognize that this is a House where we can express our views, and anybody that does not express his view is not worthy of a seat in Parliament.

I have had 55 years' association with the flour milling industry all over Australia, during which time the industry has not lost even one minute through industrial trouble. I remember when Australia was the largest exporter of flour in the world. My friends in this House may think that I am harping on this matter too much, but I say that people who throughout their lives have done honest work, believed in arbitration, and played the game, are worthy of every consideration.

I wish to make one or two suggestions to the Government regarding the Public Works Standing Committee. I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Robinson on being appointed to that committee. He will be an acquisition and render good and valuable service. What I cannot understand is why the Government—I am speaking not to the Minister of Education, but at least to his representative—holds up so much work in connection with schools and expects it to be rushed through at the last moment. Last year 12 schools were recommended in one batch, and the education programme this year will be at least as great. If the department has planned for certain schools to be built, why not get on with the planning straight away? Why expect every thing to be done in a hurry? It makes for an impossible position. What I say about schools I say about other public works too. We cannot expect everything to be done in a hurry.

The staff of the Public Works Committee is one man, the secretary. When 10 or 12 reports have to be considered, how can any one man be expected to cope with that volume of work? He may have a system whereby he has a typewriter of his own, but I urge that, if the Government wants its work completed, it should refer it to the committee in time to allow sufficient consideration and not expect jobs often to be rushed through.

Another thing that the Government tends to do, because of some influence in certain directions, is to refer work back to the Public Works Committee. I asked a question yesterday—I felt quite all right but I was told I was out of order—about the Jervois Bridge.

The committee made a unanimous recommendation about that bridge. I think there is a little bit of underhanded work going on between departments and certain people.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—To whose department is the honourable member referring?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Does the honourable member represent the Highways Department?

The Hon. N. L. Jude—I asked which department the honourable member was referring to.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Does the honourable member represent the Highways Department?

The Hon. N. L. Jude—Yes.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Did it write to the Port Adelaide City Council about another site?

The Hon. N. L. Jude—I am informed it did not.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—And I am informed it did. Does the honourable Minister deny that an application has been made and influence used for another site?

The Hon. N. L. Jude—The Harbors Board is not under my control.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Does the honourable member deny it?

The Hon. N. L. Jude—I suggest the honourable member ask the question tomorrow.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I hope I get better answers than I have had previously. No committee is against any reference if it is considered wise. What happened to the bulk handling scheme at Wallaroo? What happened about the present congestion at Port Adelaide? There, the committee recommended the construction of a bridge from Commercial Road to Elder Road; the unanimous report of the committee was that that road should be constructed. What happened? The matter was referred back and the committee changed its opinion. Thank goodness I did not! I put in a dissenting report. Will anybody who knows the position today deny the mistake that was made there?

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—The honourable member is making some fairly serious allegations.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I make the statement that the committee recommended the construction of a bridge from Commercial Road to Elder Road. The report was signed unanimously by the committee. The matter was referred back.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—What were the terms of the second reference?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Another site, because of certain reasons. The Honourable Mr. Richards and I were the two members who made a dissenting report on that. Honourable members will read what we had to say about it. Will anybody deny that a big mistake was made? What is happening today? We are taking all the traffic through St. Vincent Street, down Elder Road and over Birkenhead Bridge. It is the biggest and most tragic mistake ever made by Parliament. Had that not been done, there would not be the congestion there is today. I emphasize that these matters must be amply considered. I hope I always bring a judicial mind to bear on such things. For instance, there are two or three things in my own district that are needed but, in my opinion, the evidence does not warrant them.

I refer now to the honourable the Minister, who generally dodges the question though that does not get him anywhere. He does not deny that certain influences are being brought to bear today. They may be justified. That the committee will decide.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—The honourable member has no confidence in his local corporation.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I have more confidence in the local corporation than I have in the Minister. I have reason to have every confidence in the Port Adelaide Corporation (I was a member for 10 years), but I have no reason to have confidence in the honourable the Minister. I do not say that personally, but I think he dodges the question too often when he should be game enough to come out into the open.

The Hon. A. J. Melrose—The honourable member is on both sides of the fence all the time, trying to be perfectly impartial.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—As far as politics are concerned, I am not on the honourable member's side. I think that the number of members on the Harbors Board should be increased. Today it has three members. Mr. Crawford is the chairman; Mr. Verco, who was recently appointed a member of the Chamber of Manufactures, is a member, and the third member is Carl Meyer, the General Manager. Mr. Verco is overseas—he has gone away. I think that tomorrow Mr. Meyer goes. Parliament should consider the fact that the work of the Harbors Board has increased considerably during the past 10 years. Therefore, there should be on the Board men with greater knowledge and wider experience, although I am not in any way detracting from those who officiate today.

What is the set-up in Melbourne? There the Government appoints a chairman of the Harbor Trust. The shipping companies appoint their representative, the farmers appoint their representative, the Chamber of Commerce appoints its representative, and the fifth member is President of the Waterside Workers Federation. The Melbourne Harbor Trust controls only the Port of Melbourne whereas the South Australian Harbors Board controls ports throughout the State. It would be in the interests of the Government if other interested parties had an opportunity of a seat on the board. I understand that they are not all fully paid men in Melbourne but they receive certain fees for their attendance. Such a move would make for greater stability.

I was amazed some three weeks ago, while looking at the Melbourne wharves, to note the great and wonderful improvements that have been made over many years. Although I have no liking for the shipping industry, it has the right, as it is wrapped up with commerce, to have a seat on the Harbors Board. I trust that the Government will consider this suggestion.

The Governor's Speech refers also to women having the right to sit in Parliament. No doubt they have such a right, because that has been proved. Why does the Government want to alter the Constitution in order to cover up something it thinks is wrong? I trust the Government will not endeavour in any way to alter the Constitution and that it will always recognize the right of women to sit in Parliament, with equal rights with men.

Another matter I wish to discuss is the Workmen's Compensation Act. My Party has advocated certain reforms. Why should not the workers of South Australia, who were praised by His Excellency the Governor in his speech and built up to the sky as being equal to or better than any other workmen in Australia, have the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by other workers. If we give them credit for doing good work, let us give them credit not only by word of mouth, but also by Act of Parliament. I hope that this Government will consider further amendments to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

I note that the Government intends to increase the allowance for free books to certain school children. I have always said that equal treatment should be meted out to every child irrespective of the school he attends. We are all supposed to be equal. We all have to pay our income tax according to our earnings.

I have never been able to understand why the Government should single out a particular denominational school and I hope that in future the Government will treat everybody equally.

I have spoken for longer than I intended to and I thank honourable members for being patient with me, but I sincerely believe what I have advocated and I trust that my remarks have not fallen on deaf ears, but that the Government will consider what I have said.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—Mr. President, I am pleased to support the Bill. I regret the absence, through sickness, of our Chairman, Sir Frank Perry, and I hope that he will soon be able to resume his place in this House. I further take this opportunity to welcome the four new members of the Council. I think that this is the largest increase in this Council over very many years; I cannot remember when four new members came into this Council in one year. It has certainly not happened in the last 15 years. I hope that they will have a happy time here and that their association with the Council will prove to be of value to South Australia.

We are making history in that we have a lady member associated with this Chamber for the first time and I hope that her electors' ambitions will be realized and that she may be of great value in the deliberations of this Chamber.

The Bill now before us is for the supply of a sum amounting to £9,000,000 which, as the Minister said, is about £2,000,000 more than has been required by similar bills over the last few years. We can understand that, with the very much greater service that we have and with the increases in costs that are occurring, it is natural for the amount required under the Bill to be greater.

I pay a tribute to our Public Service. I think we are fortunate in South Australia in having such a fine Public Service. I do not think that any laudatory remarks one can make would be too good for the general run of our Public Service. Our Public Service officers are always prepared to help us in our Parliamentary duties and to give us useful information. They have their work to do in all avenues associated with the Government and I am sure we are glad to make the money available to pay them.

Reference has been made to the increase in the basic wage. I congratulate the Government on accepting the position so readily and

making the necessary arrangements to ensure that the rise in the basic wage will be quickly paid to the Public Service. There is no need for carping criticism about the feelings of the Government and employers on the rise or doubts on whether they will pay it.

If we are going to compete with overseas countries in the export market—and we realize that we have to compete with our exportable surpluses—we have to produce in competition with other countries. It is, therefore, only natural that we look with some apprehension upon the increases in salaries and wages throughout this country. If we do not give quality we will not get sales. Not only have the manufacturers an obligation, but the working people in all sections of the community have obligations regarding this country's prosperity.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—The Governor said they were equal to any in the world.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I believe they are equal to workers anywhere in the world.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—Why hit them to leg then?

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—I have not hit them to leg. I think if the honourable member will hear me out he will not be dissatisfied with what I have to say. If Australia is going to repeat the progress and expansion that it has made in recent years we must provide export goods of a quality that can compete with the quality of goods produced in other parts of the world and at a price that can compete with that charged by other countries. If we cannot do that, we will not progress as we have done in the past.

That is all I wish to say and it is not a criticism of our working people. I will leave that to the honourable members who are so loud in their remarks. Our present living conditions in South Australia have been unexcelled at any period in this State's history and those conditions are due to the present industrial expansion and to the good industrial relations that exist. I hope that that position continues for a long time. I hope that the prophecy on the price of wool made by the learned judge when increasing the basic wage may become an established fact, although I think it is dangerous to prophesy what the price of wool may be or to base a living wage on it.

The action of the Government in meeting this position so readily is to be admired. I am sure we are all glad that the Government

appreciates the position and has acted accordingly. We have had a long period of good seasons, but today we are faced with the possibility of a dry season this year, and all these things must have an effect on our standard of living; but we are not going to be pessimistic. This Government realizes its obligations and it is up to everyone to put his best leg forward and give of his best production and best service so that we can meet the commitments with which Australia is faced.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—I did not intend to speak on this measure, but one or two remarks by the previous speaker prompted me to put him on the right track regarding the economy of the State.

I desire to compliment Mrs. Cooper on her election to this Chamber. I am always charged with bringing politics into my discussions so, therefore, I may be pardoned if I state that it was the Australian Labor Party that had the first lady elected to Parliament in the person of Senator Dorothy Tangney. That indicates that the Party I represent always leads and that other Parties follow. Nevertheless, I want to be courteous about the matter and indicate on behalf of the Australian Labor Party our welcome to Mrs. Cooper in this Chamber.

I wish to say in discussing this Bill, which is a Supply Bill for £9,000,000 to the end of August, that this is a practice which has grown up with Governments over a period of years. I remember a Government in another State which had the whole of its Estimates passed piecemeal from time to time and in this way were able to baulk discussion on the total Estimates by submitting Supply Bills every three months to meet current expenditure. I have heard that this is a non-Party House and that it is a House of Review, and we are charged, as members of Parliament, with the responsibility of passing the Estimates. I do not desire to unfairly criticize Government officials but there should be a correct assessment made from time to time that would make it unnecessary for us to pass these urgent Supply Bills immediately after the opening of Parliament.

The Hon. C. R. Story—A court determination in the meantime makes it difficult.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—No. We have passed legislation permitting the Governor in Executive Council to defray certain expenses and I think the honourable member was a member of this House when that measure was passed.

I now come to the question of leadership in this Chamber. We have a somewhat Gilbertian atmosphere here that is not in strict conformity with the usual practice of democracy that applies in the British House of Commons and House of Lords. As Mr. Condon has said, we have a Liberal and Country Party Government whose leader in this Chamber is the Chief Secretary. There is also the chairman of the Liberal and Country Party who assumes the title of Leader of the L.C.L. and of the Opposition combined. About the seventeenth century even the august House of Lords, whose Standing Orders and practices we follow, recognized a Leader of the Opposition in that Chamber. This indicates that democracy cannot work where Parliament is comprised of only one political complexion without a recognized Opposition. Therefore, I submit, with great deference to your ruling some few years ago, Mr. President, that we have a Gilbert and Sullivan position in this place. When it suits them, honourable members opposite say that this is a non-Party House, but if any measure comes forward that may conflict with certain interests the position is different. I believe that the Government should go on its bended knees and thank the Labor Opposition for agreeing to legislation from time to time that has been rejected by members of its own Party.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—That is the opposite to what you have been arguing.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It is not. It indicates clearly that members of the Opposition are determined to support legislation that has for its object the welfare of the State. Ever since I have been in this Chamber during the last 18 years I have always heard the cry that, when wages are increased, our economy will sink to its bottom level and that all kinds of dire things will happen to business in this State, industries will close and shops will go bankrupt. Mr. Densley mentioned this afternoon that with the increase in the basic wage things will not be as bright financially as before.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—I did not.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Well, you implied that.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—I did not.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—If the honourable member did not, I took that to be the meaning. Mr. Densley will agree with me that we have a certain large processing industry in South Australia and several of a similar nature in the other States which are

in a very unsound financial position due to the laxity not of employees, but of the management as regards the quality of their goods. Therefore, they cannot compete with similar goods from overseas. It has always been my practice not to mention any particular firms or persons in this House because they would not have the opportunity to defend themselves, but everyone knows the particular industry I have in mind.

As to our internal economy, we do not want to revert to the position ruling in 1931 when we were tied to the chariot wheels of international finance and economy and the depression descended upon Australia, but rather to remember conditions during World War II when we carried on our economy on money borrowed within the nation. We established and maintained our own economy. I do not believe that any member of our armed forces went without his pay or that any manufacturer did not become prosperous in the post-war years, which indicates that we could determine our own economy instead of being so dependent upon overseas finance. Our major exports are primary products.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—At the moment.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—And that was so in 1931, but then we were tied to the international economy and therefore Australia became much poorer and the depression descended upon us. Many were out of work and we had to meet our full interest rates on the money borrowed from overseas during the years preceding 1931. I am not one who says that interest rates should not have been paid, but Parliament has a responsibility to see that there shall be no recurrence of the conditions of that period. The Federal Labor Government in 1941 and in the post-war years made provision whereby the internal economy of this nation was stabilized to such an extent that we enjoyed the fruits of that far-sighted policy. I shall have an opportunity on other measures to expand on this subject. I support the Bill.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Central No. 1)—I did not intend to speak on the measure, but in view of one or two comments I felt it incumbent upon me to reply. I wish to congratulate Mrs. Cooper upon being elected to this Chamber. The Labor Party has no objection to women being elected to Parliament, but rather welcomes it. I felt that I had to reply to one or two points mentioned by Mr. Densley concerning the basic wage. I was surprised to hear some members of my own Party say, when I was speaking to them on the matter,

that no benefit would result from the basic wage increase because of the increase in prices. I believe everyone receives some benefit from such an increase. I reminded these people that my wife and I raised our family, when the wage in the industry in which I was interested was £3 16s. a week. Since then there have been numerous basic wage increases. Will one honourable member say that the standard of living today is not better than it was ever before? It riles me to hear and to read in the press that no matter what the basic wage increase is, it will result in a calamity, and to hear people who should know better writing down our country at every opportunity. They refer to the effect it will have on industry and on overseas trade. As honourable members know, I am not one to throw bouquets at Arbitration Court judges. Following upon their recent inquiry they agreed that our economy could stand an increase of 15s. a week in the basic wage. In fact one said it should have been £1. What is the use of people on the other side of the fence continually telling us that it cannot be done and that it will ruin us?

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—Do you think it will have an effect on prices?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—A little, but the economy of South Australia and of Australia will become sounder as a result of the increased basic wage. This has been proved previously. If that were not so, why is it that we are now in a better position than in 1930 when the basic wage was about £3 3s. a week? Who will deny that we are not at least 300 per cent better off than in those days? If anyone wants to argue that point I shall be pleased to do so because I can give facts and figures from my own experience showing that the people in my industry are enjoying a far higher standard of living today than I enjoyed when I worked in it.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—What was the price of a loaf of bread in those days?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD—I am not concerned about that. No-one knows better than the honourable member that the standard of living of workers today is considerably higher than it was in the 1930's, and that applies to most people in the State. Why are we continually writing ourselves down? Why don't we say that we welcome the increased basic wage, because we know that it will result in improving the standard of living? Why be critical all the time? The increase of 15s. a week has been criticized this afternoon and

there has been criticism in the press. It gets under my skin to hear prominent people writing the country down instead of up.

I wish to refer to the good relations existing between employer and employee in this State, and I may be pardoned for saying that over the last decade or so I have played some small part in this. I believe that during the war and since that time the relationships between employer and employee in this State have been as good as they could possibly be, and I should like to see that state of affairs continue.

However, I was shocked this week at the dispute between the Electricity Trust and the employees at the electricity powerhouse at Port Augusta. I have not all the details, but I know that the dispute exists over the transport of workers. Negotiations have taken place and, according to the press and what I have been told, they have broken down. It is nothing new in industrial disputes that after counter offers have been made the negotiations break down because the parties cannot reach agreement. I am not conversant with the actual offers made, but I am concerned that the Electricity Trust, in effect, has said, "Negotiations have finished, the door is barred, we will go our own way." If the press report is correct, that is a bad thing, not only for the Electricity Trust, but for the State, and a bad example of employer-employee relations.

I appeal to the Minister of Industry to see that the trust alters its views and continues some form of negotiation to try and reach a settlement that will be satisfactory to both parties. If some highbrow private industry had been involved I could have understood the attitude that has been adopted, but it is a section of the community that is semi-Government and it behoves that industry and all sections of Government-controlled industry to at least endeavour to reach a peaceful settlement by any means rather than to close the door and say, "That is it." If the men are just as determined as the trust and say, "You have closed the door to us, we will walk out and you can get your electricity the best way you can", what is the logical conclusion? I was associated with a dispute at Osborne which lasted for 13 weeks; the whole State was affected by that dispute, and we do not want a repetition of that sort of thing. We can imagine the men's reactions. If they have the door closed in their faces and they take the other stand, where shall we be?

I remember when the Right Honourable Harold Holt called a conference at the time of the big waterside workers' strike. The waterside workers and the Australian Council of Trades Unions executives were present at that conference. Mr. Holt explained that the employers had the right to do certain things and that the employees had the right to negotiate right up to the end, and to arbitrate. There was a pause in the conversation and I said, "Yes, Mr. Minister, we can agree with you up to there; both sides having done that, where do we go from there?" The Minister had no answer to that question. That is the very position the Electricity Trust is forcing upon us. They have closed the door; we cannot meet around the table and discuss and negotiate on a dispute, so where do we go from there? To me the answer is obvious; I do not want to say what it is, but I think we must see what the result will be. I want to see a continuance of the goodwill that has existed between employer and employee in this State over the last 10 or 15 years, and I think it is bad taste and bad policy for a semi-Government instrumentality to take the action it has.

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

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES.

The House of Assembly notified its appointment of Sessional Committees.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The House of Assembly intimated its appointment of four members to the Joint House Committee.

The President and the Hons. Sir Arthur Rymill, K. E. J. Bardolph, and C. R. Story were appointed to represent the Legislative Council on the Committee.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION.

A message was received from the House of Assembly requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

The Hons. A. J. Shard, C. R. Story, and R. R. Wilson were appointed to represent the Legislative Council on the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.12 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, June 11, at 2.15 p.m.