

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Wednesday, July 22, 1959.

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

**QUESTIONS.****CEILING HEIGHTS.**

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—In view of high building costs there is a movement on foot in most States to have their Building Acts amended to permit of the reduction of the height of ceilings from 9ft. to 8ft. In an ordinary home this would result in a saving of about £90 to £100. Will the Government consider the advisability of amending our Act to provide for a minimum height of ceilings of 8ft. in lieu of the present 9ft.?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I shall have pleasure in placing the matter before the Treasurer.

**BUSH FIRE RELIEF SCHEME.**

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—Will the Minister of Railways further pursue the question I asked on June 11 regarding the stoppage of the cartage by road of hay for people who had suffered losses as a result of a fire in the South-East, as it is of considerable interest to the people there?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I certainly will.

**ADDRESS IN REPLY.**

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from July 21. Page 91.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—For some years it has been my privilege to follow the speeches of the mover and the seconder of the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. In doing so today I have no hesitation in saying in all sincerity that I was impressed with the speeches of both honourable members delivered yesterday. They were delivered excellently and with discretion. I look forward with confidence to the debating strength of both these honourable members. The fact that about 100 ladies attended the sitting yesterday was a tribute to the popularity of Mrs. Cooper, who is the first lady to have addressed the Legislative Council. I assume that they came to show their respect to the honourable

member, who is the first lady ever elected to this Chamber. I congratulate her and Mr. Hookings, and trust that they will remain members for many years to assist in the affairs of the State. I support what the honourable members said regarding His Excellency the Governor and Lady George, who have endeared themselves to the people of South Australia. I am sure that we shall all be sorry when the time arrives for their departure. I sincerely trust that the Hon. C. D. Rowe will soon be restored to normal health and be able to carry out his public duties.

The mover and the seconder of the motion made the same mistake as other honourable members have previously done in that they attributed the progress, prosperity and industrial development of South Australia, and all that goes with them, to the Playford Government. I was always under the impression that all legislation was passed by Parliament, the two Houses of which consist of 59 members. If the Premier and his Ministers are responsible for everything that is done, why not abolish this Council, and perhaps another place?

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—The Premier and his Government initiate the legislation. That cannot be denied.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The speech of the mover was directed more towards abolishing this Council than anything I have ever said here. At least, I have always given Parliament, and not a few individuals, credit for the legislation placed on our Statute Book. If the Government is responsible for everything, why not do away with Parliament and elect eight Ministers by a vote of the people? We would then see how long this Government would last.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—They are not here by majority opinion.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Supporters of the Government have nothing to boast about because the Government is elected on a minority vote. At the last election, for instance, in the aggregate the Labor Party received the highest number of votes, yet it is in opposition because of the undemocratic system that exists. I should not be happy to be here if elected on a minority basis. The Opposition in this Chamber does not appear to count for much, and its efforts do not receive very much consideration. This Council is nothing but a Party House at present, and the minority view rules.

I have always endeavoured to uphold the prestige of this Council and have continually defended it inside and outside, but I regret to say that my faith is becoming somewhat shaken. My objections are not to what is conveyed in His Excellency the Governor's Speech but as regards what is omitted. Reference was made in the Speech to the harmonious relations that continue to exist between the employer and the employee, and may those relations long continue. But what encouragement does the Government give to the members of industrial unions and the working class generally compared with what other States give by way of legislation? The Opposition has fought for improvements in the Workmen's Compensation Act, but with little success. As one who has been closely associated with the industrial movement for many years, I know of the many hardships that face a family when the bread winner meets with an accident or is laid aside by illness. The difficulties are, firstly, the lack of income, secondly, extra expenses, thirdly, debts and many other difficulties.

When a person is injured, why should he not, under the Workmen's Compensation Act, receive the award wage, a provision that operates in other States? We continue to hear about prosperity; we know about increased profits; therefore industry could stand up to meeting the increased payment. Take a firm that operates in several States: the workers in that firm in New South Wales receive better treatment under the Workmen's Compensation Act of that State than those in the same firm in South Australia. Can any honourable member say that the workers in other States are superior to the workers in South Australia? What encouragement does this Government and the Parliament give to those who have played such a wonderful part in pioneering and building up this State?

In South Australia the maximum amount payable on death is £2,600. In Queensland it is £2,500 plus £75 in respect of each dependent child. In Western Australia, a much smaller State than South Australia, the figure is £3,000 plus £80 for each dependent child. In New South Wales, it is £4,000 and £2 per week for each child under 16 years. The Opposition in South Australia has for many years been fighting for the coverage of the employee while travelling to and from work. The legislation in New South Wales now provides that the place of abode of a worker is considered to include the place where the worker has spent the night preceding his journey and the place

to which he is journeying with the intention of spending the following night. For those employed on night work and overtime, such night work and overtime has to be interpreted appropriately to the circumstances of the workers.

Surely workers in South Australia are just as worthy of consideration for the part they have played as those who happen to reside in a neighbouring State. No mention was made in His Excellency's speech of any proposed amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act, but I assure honourable members that they will have an opportunity to discuss this important measure later this session.

The Governor's speech referred to the fact that the administration of all labour legislation is to be undertaken by one department to be known as the Department of Labour and Industry. The present Department of Industry will be renamed the Public Service Commissioner's Department and will deal with matters concerning the administration of the Public Service Act and representation of the Government (as an employer) before industrial tribunals. That is nothing new, because for some years when the workers' organizations have endeavoured to improve the conditions and the standards of those they represent they have always been opposed by the Playford Government, which has sent one of its top rankers over to the Federal court to oppose any increase in the basic wage, the restoration of quarterly adjustments or an increase in margins.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Do not you think both sides should be heard?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly, but why go round saying you are the worker's friend when every time the worker endeavours to improve his position he has strong opposition?

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—The Government may turn out to be his best friend.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—And then in this House you do not do it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That is the point I make. Why not be honest about it and say, "Yes, that is our policy," and not try to mislead the people? There are several matters I desire to refer to. The first is the Harbors Board. Its total fund is over £14,000,000. In 1958 it earned over £2,000,000. The surplus was over £127,490. Very few departments can show a surplus at the end of the year. The Engineering and Water Supply Department, the Railways

Department and others give an indirect service to the community (I am not complaining about that), but the work of the Harbors Board has increased so much that I think a board of three commissioners insufficient.

There are several harbor trusts in Victoria—Melbourne, Geelong and other places. They have five commissioners, and the Deputy Chairman of the Harbors Trust in Melbourne happens to be the President of the Waterside Workers Federation. The fact that he is Deputy Chairman shows that he must be pulling his weight and doing a good job. Why not increase the number of commissioners in South Australia, which has only three? I understand that the Chairman is at present in South Australia, another member of the board, the General Manager, is overseas and the Chamber of Manufactures or commercial representative is, I believe, still overseas. This is too big a job to be carried on by one man. It may be that somebody has been appointed to act in the meantime, but I ask the Government to consider my suggestion.

We speak about prosperous times and know that somebody has to suffer. The Harbors Board is suffering in this respect to the extent that at the end of 1958 the tonnage handled in South Australia fell off by over 500,000 tons. Of the surplus that I referred to just now, Port Pirie returned £196,000 and Port Adelaide £111,000. Several losses were made, losses that occur year after year in several of our outports. The losses at Thevenard last year were £9,000, and it is intended to spend a fair amount of money at Thevenard—I am not by any means saying that it is not justified—on bulk handling and plaster works. Provisions have been made for Thevenard which will probably bring the loss much higher.

The loss at Port Lincoln was £6,000, at Wallaroo £2,000. That is where Parliament granted a charter to the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Company to ship bulk wheat. In spite of the money that has been spent, I am afraid that in this respect we are up for more losses. Of the few other revenue-producing ports, nine returned surpluses totalling £25,000, including Stenhouse Bay £6,000, Ardrossan £13,000 and Whyalla £5,000. The net cost of maintaining jetties, improvements and localities not engaged in shipping was £79,000. These losses are growing every year and close attention should be given to them.

I remember that a few years ago all the coal that came into the chief seaport was handled at Port Adelaide. Then an agitation was started to erect coal gantries at Osborne and

we were told that we would have cheaper coal, costs would be down and everything in the garden would be lovely. What happened? On the coal handling plant in 1958 the loss was £31,000, equivalent to a loss of 8d. per ton on every ton of coal handled.

I will now speak about the bridge at Port Adelaide. On August 12, 1930, the Public Works Standing Committee arrived at the conclusion that it was not desirable at that time to construct the proposed Port Adelaide-Birkenhead bridge and it recommended that further consideration of the matter be postponed for three years. Five years later the matter was brought before the committee again and one recommendation it made in November, 1935, was that in connecting Birkenhead with Port Adelaide the bridge should be built in alignment with Commercial Road, Port Adelaide, on the south side and Elder Road, Birkenhead on the north side. Anyone knowing the location would admit that a mistake was made in erecting the Birkenhead bridge on its site because it would have been better to carry out the decision that would lead the Port Road straight across to Birkenhead thus avoiding Port Road traffic.

The committee recently had before it a suggestion that a bridge should be built away from the site of Jervis bridge. The Highways Department and the Harbors Board were both in favour of altering the site. The estimate given for a bridge on the present site was £595,000. A non-opening bridge known as Jervis bridge was estimated to cost £315,000, with approaches costing an additional £20,000. The committee recommended that a bridge, linking Hart Street with St. Vincent Street be built across the river.

In considering matters of this nature I believe that we have to take into account the economy of the State and the purpose for which the construction is required. The site was recommended but what happened? Another reference was sent to the Public Works Standing Committee and the matter was reconsidered by it. I am not expressing an opinion and I am not objecting to the matter being referred back because I realize it is my duty to look at these matters with an open mind. If the evidence produced warrants it one must consider that evidence.

The Hon. Mr. Hookings, in his very able speech referred to country sewerage. I listened to evidence on that matter last year, and even before then, but what has this Government done to carry out the recommendations of the Public Works Standing Committee made

years ago on this question? I refer to Mount Gambier which was spoken of yesterday. As far as I can ascertain the committee set up made only one recommendation and I understand that has been carried out, but as to other extensions to the country there has been talk and nothing else.

While I am dealing with this matter may I say that a mistake is made in the way this State has failed to control the money that has been allocated by Parliament when that money has not been spent in a specified period. I draw the attention of this Chamber to two cases only, although I could speak of many more. At the end of the last financial year one department had not spent £600,000 of the money allocated to it whilst another department had £200,000 not spent. No-one can deny that there is unemployment in this State. Why? Because the sub-contractors and contractors do not carry out their contracts and it is no use Parliament's voting money if it is not going to be spent. A closer watch should be kept by this Government to see that the money allocated is spent.

I speak now of another department of which I am very proud, namely, the Hospitals Department. Many years ago I took part in agitation for the building of a hospital in the Port Adelaide district. I think today we are all proud of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Woodville. That work was recommended by the Public Works Standing Committee on May 14, 1948, at an estimated cost of £1,369,636, but four times that amount has already been spent on that hospital. Why? Here we have a work passed and completed—there have probably been additions—which has already cost four times more than the original estimate. Sir Collier Cudmore advocated—and so did I—that a Public Accounts Committee be set up for just such cases as that. That committee's duties would be to check on estimates and costs as the work proceeded.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Isn't that the function of the Public Works Standing Committee?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—No. Once we have passed it that is the end of our job.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—But you do consider costs?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but the work may not start for three or four years after the Committee's recommendation and it has been my complaint all along that there should be much stricter control over finance. I am astounded and, although I neither condemn

nor criticize, I draw the attention of this Government to the fact that construction of the maternity building and the original nurses' home was supervised by the Architect-in-Chief's Department and therefore no fees were payable to private architects. That work has not yet been completed and final costs have not been ascertained. Therefore, I do not know what will be the final cost, but I am having a guess. Already, £210,984 has been paid to one interstate firm of architects.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—You remember the circumstances of our having to get these architects.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but was it necessary?

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Yes.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—That may be a matter of opinion. A South Australian firm of architects was paid £70,000, and therefore the architectural fees for the hospital amounted to £280,984. I am not criticizing the Government or the architects.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Everyone has to pay these fees. It was a very big and intricate job.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly, but it was a big sum to pay. The South Australian Housing Trust has done an excellent job under difficulties, but I think much more could be done. If we want our people to be contented and to take an interest in the country, give them homes to live in. I am sorry that the housing position today is still very bad. In allotting houses, preference should be given to those who have been endeavouring to secure a home for a long time—some for more than three years. It is intended to establish a new industry at Millicent. I have learned that already many homes have been completed there for prospective employees, but are not yet occupied. Why build homes and allow them to remain unoccupied when the industry will not be started for another two or three years.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—I think the first statement on the question was corrected.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but the statement was actually made. I admit that homes must be found for the prospective employees in the industry, but I consider that houses are needed more urgently elsewhere. I trust the Government will keep that in mind.

I was interested to hear Mrs. Cooper refer to education. I came to the conclusion that she is an authority on the subject and therefore one must take notice of her remarks. I consider that over the years our education

policy has been greatly improved. This is indicated by the fact that the department has set out to build about 40 new schools every year. This is something we should be pleased about. For the financial year ended June, 1958, almost £13,000,000 was spent on education. This represents £14 7s. 6d. a head of the population, an increase of £1 19s. 5d. on 1956-57, or a total increase of £2,000,000. In 1953-54 the aggregate expenditure was more than £7,000,000, or £9 a head. In 1957-58 an amount of £774,000 was provided for the Adelaide University, an increase of £133,000 compared with the previous year. I believe that even £1,000,000 will be provided by the Government this year.

Session after session the Opposition has asked for representation on the University Council, but the Government has simply refused to amend the Act. It wants to make this a Liberal Party House, and is not prepared to consider the request of a Party that plays just as important a part in the State's affairs and the affairs of this institution as the Liberal Party. I ask the Minister of Local Government to bring this matter under the notice of the Treasurer.

I should like to know what it would cost the Government if the many thousands of pupils now educated at private schools had to be educated in public schools. Government assistance should be given to these private schools in the provision of free books, as is done for those attending State schools, because the parents of these children have to pay similar taxation to that paid by the parents of children attending public schools. Many find it a great struggle to do so. Again South Australia is lagging behind the legislation of other States.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Where do they do that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—In New South Wales. It is about time the Government's policy of providing free books was extended to those attending private schools. When Australia is involved in war the question of what schools pupils attend does not come into it, but everyone stands shoulder to shoulder in the defence of the country. I hope the time will come when it will not be necessary for me to say anything further on this subject.

It is expected that the present financial year will result in a deficit of £1,250,000. The gross Loan expenditure will be about £27,400,000 and credits will amount to £3,250,000, making the actual figure

£24,150,000. I remember when there was considerable opposition to the idea of uniform taxation. I have said here previously that one year when the Playford Government was in power the surplus amounted to £1,270,000, but it never attempted to reduce taxation. Some years after the war the Treasurer complained about the existing taxation system every time he introduced the Budget. However, some years later when the Prime Minister threatened to give the States back their income taxing powers, Sir Thomas ran for cover and we have heard nothing about the disadvantages of uniform taxation from him since. The fact is that uniform taxation has been the means of promoting parallel and substantial development in every State during the post-war period. However, it has taken some people a long time to realize this. It is true that although uniform taxation has, unfortunately, not achieved all we had hoped, it has vindicated itself. Not one State Government is now anxious to regain its income-taxing powers. Some people, particularly my Liberal friends, maintain that any progress South Australia has made is due mainly to the Treasurer. The fact that the State receives taxation reimbursement grants from the Commonwealth is, of course, the result of the system of uniform taxation, which has largely governed the financial relationships between the States and the Commonwealth since 1942. A Federal Labor Government introduced the system during the second world war, not merely for war purposes, but for developmental purposes after the war. Following on the recent Premiers' Conference it will be interesting to see what will happen under the entirely new formula which has been arrived at but which no-one seems to know very much about. The new arrangement is to be operative for six years.

I now wish to give honourable members some information about the new works that have been reported upon by the Public Works Standing Committee since last year. The works include:—

	£
Royal Adelaide Hospital (Radiotherapy and women's hospital block additions) . . . . .	1,493,000
Main to link Barossa trunk main and Mannum-Adelaide pipeline . . . .	152,800
Nangwarry power station . . . . .	804,300
Millicent water supply . . . . .	281,000
Port Lincoln oil berth . . . . .	184,500
New water mains, Port Pirie . . . .	122,500
New Norwood high school . . . . .	148,000
Marion Road trunk water main . . .	136,400

These total £2,322,500. I do not want to put any individual on a pedestal, and I remind members that the passing of these works is due to Parliament and not individuals. What I might refer to as the "Godsends" are the Morgan-Whyalla pipeline, the Mount Bold reservoir, the South Para and Myponga reservoirs, and probably a hundred other different works that have been recommended by the Public Works Standing Committee. I do not know whether my honourable friends who have recently entered this Chamber know, but until two or three years ago the Government could not introduce any new work if the estimated cost exceeded £30,000. The Act was then amended and the amount increased to £100,000. No new work can be introduced into Parliament without its reference to the Public Works Standing Committee, which is a non-Party Committee consisting at present of three members of the Liberal Party, three from the Labor Party and one Independent. It is the desire of those members to do the best they can in the interests of the State. That is one reason why I am pointing out that this State is not run by one or two men. The credit cannot be taken by one or two individuals: it must be passed on to Parliament.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—You seem to be very anxious to get on the credit side.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I want the truth to be known. I am sick and tired of honourable members putting one or two individuals on a throne when all the legislation on the Statute Book is placed there by Parliament. It would be to my honourable friend's credit if he upheld the prestige and dignity of this place as I do.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—There must be an initiator in all this. Give the Government the credit.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am giving the Government credit, but I do not want it to take all the credit. I intend to give credit where it is due.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Don't you think the greatest credit goes to the initiator?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—It is the members of Parliament who go to the Government and ask for these things to be done, and very often these big works have been done on the initiative of a private member.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—Who talked about the Mannum-Adelaide pipeline first? Who initiated that one?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I could mention other projects equally as big. I say it is Parliament that must get the credit, and I want to put Parliament on the pedestal, not individuals. Even if the Labor Party were in power I should still say that Parliament should take the credit for what was done.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Parliament accepts the responsibility; there is no doubt about that.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly, and all the members should get some credit. Listening to the speeches yesterday and those that have frequently been made in the past one would imagine that the only man in the world is the Premier, and I think it is about time someone else had a bit of a go.

The new works about to be reported upon by the Public Works Standing Committee are as follows:—

	£
Taperoo high school . . . . .	138,700
Blackwood high school . . . . .	147,400
Plympton high school . . . . .	141,100
Willunga high school . . . . .	179,000
Penola high school . . . . .	232,000
Vermont girls' technical high school	240,350
Mitchell Park boys' technical high school . . . . .	227,600
Angle Park boys' technical high school . . . . .	161,400
Elizabeth girls' technical high school	114,950
Elizabeth boys' technical high school	305,600
Magill primary school . . . . .	115,600
Millicent primary school . . . . .	148,000
Elizabeth Vale primary school . . . .	147,600

The Government will have to give more encouragement to teachers and look after them better than it has done in the past. The amount of £815,000 is proposed to be spent on the Adelaide Teachers' College, and all that money will be well spent, although I doubt whether it will be spent during this financial year.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Did the Public Works Standing Committee inquire into the site of that building for the Teachers' College?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes. The report was laid on the table yesterday, and I draw honourable members' attention to it because it gives much valuable information. Some difficulty was encountered in obtaining land suitable for that project. I am sure that that building will provide a service that has been long overdue.

Another work to be reported upon is the South-Western Districts Floodwaters Drainage Scheme, the first stage of which is to cost £2,158,600. The second stage will cost over £3,500,000. It will probably be difficult to

obtain agreement of councils in this matter. The councils concerned were promised, before any recommendation was made, that they would have the opportunity of further discussing the matter. That was stated to them and made public, for what reason I do not know. Whether the proposal will be acceptable to the councils concerned remains to be seen, but I think in their judgment they will recognize that what has been proposed is most equitable and in the interests of all concerned.

Many matters were contained in His Excellency's Speech that one will have the opportunity of referring to later on. We had the honour yesterday of extending a welcome to the Hon. Mrs. Cooper, who moved the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I do not think there is any doubt that women members will be just as capable as men when it comes to serving the State in Parliament. I cannot see any reason why the Government should alter the Constitution to remove any doubt on whether a woman should sit in Parliament, because I think it is clear that women have the same rights as men. I trust that the Government will not weaken its position by proceeding with a Bill when it is already an established fact that women have the right to sit in Parliament. I hope the Government will at least consider the suggestions that I have made. I support the motion.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2)—Mr. President, I rise to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply to the speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor, and in doing so I support the Hon. Mrs. Cooper in paying my own personal tribute to the work of His Excellency in this State. I also pay a special tribute to Lady George for the way in which she has supported so many of the social welfare organizations in this State. I can speak from personal knowledge of at least two of them, namely, the Kindergarten Union and the Marriage Guidance Council. Lady George has rendered sterling service to both those organizations, as well as many others.

It is, of course, a great honour to be speaking here for the first time. One cannot help but look down the corridor of past years and think of the names of many eminent South Australians who have stood and spoken in this Chamber, and my own satisfaction at having this opportunity today is necessarily mixed with much humility. I congratulate the Hon.

Mrs. Cooper on the speech she delivered yesterday, and also the Hon. Mr. Hookings on the very able way he supported her. It is no easy task to stand up here for the first time. I have the feeling that it is a little like Daniel going into the lion's den. The lions are silent now but I can see my friends in the Labor Party are ready to rend us later.

Turning to the speech delivered by His Excellency, I think first of all the Government is to be heartily congratulated on the plans revealed in the speech for the development of agricultural research and the opening up of new lands for production. It may be thought that it is a little presumptuous of me, representing a metropolitan electorate, to get up and say something on this particular aspect of the Governor's speech, but I was prompted to do so because of the closing remarks yesterday by the Hon. Mrs. Cooper when she referred to one of the great challenges of the future—that of supplying food for the ever-increasing population of the world, and in particular our near neighbours in South-East Asia.

It seems to me that this is not only a social but an important economic problem, particularly from Australia's point of view. It is imperative for this country to re-examine its traditional patterns of trade and endeavour to shift towards greater trade with Asia. Great attention in this regard must be given to increasing our exports of primary products. That may seem rather a peculiar thing to say in view of the highly competitive markets existing overseas today for primary products and the comparatively low prices being received for those products.

After all, we are not, like the United States of America, economically self-sufficient. Overseas trade is of vital importance to us. The balance of payments problem in our economy can never be ignored. One-fifth of our national income depends directly on the volume of our exports and the prices we receive for them. Looking at the position indirectly, as much as 40 per cent of our national income is highly sensitive to changes in demand overseas.

This is neither the time nor the place to deliver a lecture on the problem of our overseas balance of payments, but we all know very well that, over the last few years, we have used three methods in an endeavour to find a solution to this problem. The first was, of course, the simple one of drawing on our overseas reserves. The second was borrowing from abroad, and the third—a method

with which we are only too familiar—was the imposition of import restrictions. As for that last method, that seems to me to be not really a solution at all. It only prevents the overseas deficit from being higher than it might otherwise be.

It was reported as late as today's *Advertiser* that there is now some possibility of a slight easing of import restrictions. Personally, I am rather sceptical about the extent to which that will be possible or the likely duration of such easing. In the long run—I come back to the point I was making in the first place—it seems to me that the future success of this country, and indeed of this State, will depend on an increasing export of primary products.

Many people say, "Oh, this is all a lot of nonsense! What we should do is concentrate on secondary industries so that they can export more and thus increase our overseas earnings." I feel that this will never happen to any great extent in this country, even though the proportion of the occupied labour force engaged in secondary manufacture will continue to rise. Thirty per cent of the labour force of this country is now engaged in secondary industry. It was 25 per cent before the war.

On the other hand, rural employment absorbs only 13.5 per cent of the total labour force in Australia. No country in the world has a smaller proportion of people engaged in agriculture than Australia, with the exception of Britain, Belgium and the United States of America. All those countries are substantial net importers of agricultural products. That is even true of the United States of America.

It might be thought in the circumstances that, with only that small percentage engaged, the Australian farmer is doing remarkably well to produce an exportable surplus at all, but of course today with the application of modern scientific methods it is possible to be a substantial agricultural exporting country with a comparatively small percentage of the total labour force engaged in primary production. However, it is my personal opinion that this figure of 13.5 per cent is far too low, and the Government should give all possible encouragement towards the opening up of new areas for production. Something like 20 per cent of the total work force is the more appropriate figure that should be engaged in this work.

The Government is alive to this problem, as is revealed in His Excellency's Speech. There are other matters not referred to but which were mentioned in the election campaign, all tending in this direction. I refer only in

passing to the proposed opening up of the new irrigation settlement using water from the Menindee storages. This is a step in the right direction.

But, of course, it is not just a matter of developing either our agricultural industry or our secondary industry: it is not an alternative. The Government has realized this fact and is to be congratulated on the rapid industrial development in this State. But industrial development, after all, is of more importance to the internal economy of the country at present and it is necessary that both sides of the economy, both the primary production and the secondary production, be developed so that the maximum possible benefits can accrue to the nation. But the issues in this development on both sides are complex and not always, I humbly submit, well thought out.

Let us for a moment look at the facts. Agriculture still provides 75 per cent of our exports, with the low percentage of the work force that I have mentioned engaged. Industry, on the other hand, with a high absorption of migrant labour is still selling almost exclusively on the home market and is doing this behind the protective walls of tariffs and import restrictions. Indeed, many new industries come here in the first place because of the difficulties involved in import restrictions. With the recent increase in the basic wage of 15s. a week, this could result in the competitive position of industry in this country on world markets being further weakened. I think the general position will have to be carefully watched in the future.

Summing up the whole matter, the problem is that, while industry is responsible for a large and ever-increasing part of the total employment, it requires a high level of imports (particularly machinery and some raw materials; and, of course, as we all know, a great importation of oil and oil products) to sustain its expansion. Our ability to pay for these imports depends on our volume of agricultural production and the world prices that are received for those products. That is the problem in a nutshell. That is why in this country we have so often seemed to be poised, as it were, on a knife-edge. I am not one of those people, to whom the Hon. Mr. Shard referred the other day, who like to get up and write this country down, as he put it, but at the same time I think everybody would agree that it is beyond any question of doubt that a price and wage spiral at this time would be disastrous to our economy.



I do not think this will occur at the moment but I cannot agree that a retention of price control, which was one of the matters also referred to in His Excellency's Speech, is at all likely to prevent such a spiral should it once start. I was rather disappointed to see from His Excellency's Speech that it was intended again to extend price control for a further 12 months. I do not think price control can be justified at all, and I cannot for the life of me see any force or logic in the views expressed yesterday in another place for its continuance on economic grounds.

I find myself in fact agreeing with the Hon. Mr. Condon when he said earlier in this session that he considered price control was of little value. I recall from my University days that philosophers in the Middle Ages made out a case for price control based on costs of production. They talked of a concept of a just price. I could follow the argument down through the years but by the 16th century it had come to be agreed that the only just price was one that was freely negotiated between a willing buyer and seller, subject only to these conditions: that neither party should take advantage of weakness or ignorance of the other.

Does this definition of a just price need to be further refined here in the 20th century? Price control is in essence no more than a "cost plus" system. At least, it seems to me that is how it works in practice and in its administration. This system can bedevil the whole economy and can, if persisted in, reduce our whole way of life to a point of stagnation. What is more, I think that it has been productive, in this State, of market dealings and practices in some commodities which might fairly be described as rackets. Mention was made in another place yesterday of rising meat prices and we are all aware of what has occurred.

The CHAIRMAN—Order! The honourable member cannot refer to another place.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER—I read in the press this morning that meat prices have been increased. We are all aware of that, but I suggest that retail prices for meat in this State would not be as high as they are today if we had dropped price control on that item a long time ago.

Increases in economic efficiency and the reductions in real cost, in my submission, have been the real factors that have brought our western civilization to its present high standard. If we had endured 100 years of price

control we would never have attained our present position.

A great many undesirable tendencies that have developed such as price-fixing association between manufacturers and processors, have been promoted by price-fixing regulations and, indeed, during the war we had the ludicrous position that these regulations were even used to prevent price reductions. What sort of price control is it that picks out for fixation some specific items and leaves a vast field untouched?

I was disappointed that there was no reference in the speech of His Excellency the Governor to the Landlord and Tenant (Control of Rents) Act. We were not told whether it was to be continued or not. No doubt we will hear about this later but here is another wartime Act that is still with us. True—it has been continuously amended over the years and its impact softened, but the time has come when it should be totally abolished or very drastically modified.

It is useless to say that this Act has not worked an injustice on a large section of the community and every increase in the basic wage or the cost of living has added to the burden. Of course, the Labor Party pictures a typical landlord as a type of grasping Shylock who wants to take his money at the price of human happiness. Of course, like Shylock, you do not really find these people in real life. At least I have never found one who could be said to represent his class. Property owners in my experience—and I have had a good deal of experience of them in the courts and in my profession—are not as difficult as some smart disgruntled tenants who are ready to put over a "swifty" on some fair-minded old lady who has bargained fairly with them in the first place.

Too often have I seen officers of the Housing Trust used as adversaries against the landlord after a long period has elapsed since an original renting was made.

Too often the Housing Trust's fixation of a rental has been unrealistic, in my opinion, in all the circumstances in the case. Today I think that one of the primary factors that should be considered by the Housing Trust in fixing rent is what the tenant has offered to pay in the first place. There is little reason why one person should be protected because he has an agreement in writing while another person, through sheer ignorance, has neglected to take this precaution.

The whole Act is now completely unrealistic. This Government has a fine record in housing

development and more houses are now being built privately with the increased finance made available by Parliament, while the erection of flats, I am given to understand, is at a record level. I think, therefore, that the time has come when we might take the bull by the horns and repeal this legislation and the bull might turn out to be only a docile cow after all.

I commend the reference made in the speech of His Excellency the Governor to the proposed Bill on hire-purchase legislation. We do not know, of course, at this stage, what is in the Bill but I commend it freely as a valuable example of unifying law reform. Much useful work can be done between the States in this matter of reforming the law and codifying it. We have recently heard that something is to be done to codify and make uniform throughout Australia the laws relating to the incorporation of companies. I think, too, that another field that could be usefully looked at is the law relating to bills of sale. One of the greatest difficulties experienced in this kind of law reform seems to me to be not the measure of agreement but the actual placing of the Acts on the Statute Book. When the various representatives of the States, and perhaps also the Law Societies in the various States, come together it will be found

that there will be a surprising degree of agreement on what the law should be. This can be achieved very rapidly and it is then up to the individual State Governments to take the necessary action to get the unifying law onto their respective Statute Books.

Finally, I wish to say how honoured I am to have been elected as a member of this Chamber. I am one of four new members who have all come in for the first time this session. We are all comparatively youthful and inexperienced and I hope that we will not be considered too brash or ignorant, that the fresh breeze that blows through this Chamber will not be too strong, and that over the years we may derive wisdom and guidance from the elder members who have been in this Chamber for some years and who have contributed such a great deal to the fine administration, and development of the laws of this State. I have very much pleasure and honour in supporting the motion.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.52 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, July 23, at 2.15 p.m.