

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, September 16, 1959.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### PRICE CONTROL.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY—Can the Chief Secretary supply a list of the items still under price control? If that list is too long to be supplied in answer to a question will he indicate where such a list can be examined?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I will refer the question to the Premier and endeavour to get the information for the honourable member, either to be given here or for him to peruse.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Will the Chief Secretary also obtain a report as to the increases in prices of raw materials that have taken place since price control has been effective in South Australia in contrast to the controlled prices effective on goods manufactured from those raw materials?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—If the information is available I will endeavour to obtain it for the honourable member.

The PRESIDENT—I would point out that it is the practice of this Council that if a question involves the preparation of a long or costly statement the proper thing is for members to move for a return, rather than to seek the information by way of question.

#### STATEMENTS BEFORE ASKING QUESTIONS.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Members are told that before they can ask a question involving a statement they must ask leave. I would like to know how many words there should be in a question before it is necessary to ask leave.

The PRESIDENT—When the Council has given permission for a member to make a statement any other member but the President can stop that statement at any time. The Council having given permission, the honourable member can continue only at the will of the Council. As to the exact length of the question, I will decide that from time to time as it occurs.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL—Arising out of Mr. Condon's question, sometimes members make a differentiation between a brief statement and a very brief statement. Have you the right, Sir, to determine what is brief or what is very brief, or the length of a statement?

The PRESIDENT—I thought I had made that clear. Once the Council has given permission for an honourable member to make a statement it is in the hands of the Council. In the first place the granting of leave must be unanimous, but any one member can stop the statement by calling out the word "question."

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not quite clear yet. On one occasion I commenced to ask a question containing 16 words and I was stopped. I want to know how far one can go, because it is very embarrassing to members if they are stopped in that way.

The PRESIDENT—I always put the motion in the form in which it is moved. If an honourable member asks leave "to make a statement" I put it that he have leave "to make a statement." If he asks leave to make "a short statement" I put it that he have leave to make "a short statement": I always put the wording that the honourable member himself has selected, and leave it to the Council to decide. I might add that Mr. Condon can often convey more in 16 words than some members in half a page.

### MENTAL HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

### LIMITATION OF ACTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

In Committee.

(Continued from September 15. Page 699.)

Clause 3—"Extension of certain periods of limitation"—which the Hon. F. J. Potter had moved to amend by adding the following words at the end of the new section 47 (2):—

Provided however that any defect or inaccuracy in the terms of such notice shall not invalidate the same if the court which hears the action is satisfied that the defendant has not been prejudiced by such defect or inaccuracy.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary)—I have a report from the Parliamentary Draftsman which, in effect, says that the amendment sought by the honourable Mr. Potter is in accordance with the spirit of the Bill, and therefore I accept it. When I was asked yesterday to report progress I think there was some misunderstanding as to whether there was another amendment which took priority over this one. However, I feel that there is no difficulty regarding it as the amendment of another honourable member,

which possibly should have been considered before this one, can be taken merely by reconsideration of the clause at the end of consideration of the Bill.

The PRESIDENT—By reconsideration at the end of the discussion on the Bill.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—What I am trying to say is that that may remove any misunderstanding within the House. I accept the amendment that has been moved.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 4 passed.

Clause 3—"Extension of certain periods of limitation"—reconsidered.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL—I move—

In paragraph (c) of new section 47 (1) to strike out "and" and insert "or."

I am afraid I may have misled the House in respect of this amendment by not putting it on the file, but it was so simple that I did not feel it was necessary to do so. Also, I did not know that the honourable Mr. Potter had an amendment on the same clause. I should like to make a very brief explanation on this matter, which I have already mentioned at length in the second reading debate. The position was that last time, as the Chief Secretary said when introducing the Bill, this clause stopped after the words "reasonable cause." The rest has been added—"and that the defendant has not been prejudiced by such failure." A legal colleague of mine has told me that he suggested that these words be added, but that they should be added as an alternative to the other reasons for failure to give notice, and not as qualifying the three reasons previously given.

The clause as previously drawn gave a plaintiff the right to bring his action after six months and before 12 months had expired, on the three grounds set forth in the clause. My colleague wanted a fourth ground added—that the defendant has not been prejudiced by the failure to give notice. Apparently, possibly through some misunderstanding, that became a matter that qualified the other three grounds rather than being an additional ground. As a former practising lawyer, I am very conscious of the way the onus of proof falls in courts of law. In my opinion, it would be very difficult in almost any case for the plaintiff to prove that the defendant had not been prejudiced by the failure. That is something within the defendant's knowledge, and not the plaintiff's, but the onus is on the plaintiff to prove the affirmative. I understand there

is no objection to this amendment. If the Chief Secretary would be good enough to make a brief comment on the matter, perhaps I could leave it at that.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—Yes. I have the report of the Parliamentary Draftsman, which I think sets out the position fairly concisely. It states:—

As the Bill now stands a plaintiff could bring his action within 12 months without previous notice if the court were satisfied of two things, namely, that failure to give the notice was due to reasonable cause and that the defendant had not been prejudiced. Sir Arthur Rymill's suggestion would make it possible for a plaintiff to bring his action without the necessary notice if the court were satisfied on either count. In other words, the plaintiff would have to show either that he had failed to give notice for reasonable cause or that the defendant had not been prejudiced in any event. The effect of Sir Arthur's suggestion would be to liberalize the conditions but, after all, the action has to be brought within 12 months in any event.

To a layman it would appear that it is left to the court to decide and it is in safe hands. The Parliamentary Draftsman raises no objection. In consequence of that report, I am taking the risk of accepting the amendment.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Title passed.

Bill reported with amendments and Committee's report adopted.

#### LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 688.)

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (Northern)—The Land Settlement Act, to which the amendments contained in this Bill apply, is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Lands, who presented the Bill and his amendments in another place. In doing so he contented himself with a very brief statement of just what the amendments strove to obtain and did not give much more information on the Bill except to refer briefly in each case to the particular amendments. The Chief Secretary when making his second reading speech in this House yesterday followed that same course. The result is that honourable members so far have been left more or less to form their own conclusion as to whether an extension of the period for the committee to operate is justified.

The *Hansard* report also reveals that the debate on the Bill in another place must have

been close to a record for brevity for, in addition to the Minister's short statement, only two other members spoke on the matter. One confined his contribution to the debate to exactly four words. I feel, in those circumstances, that somebody has the responsibility of informing members of this House of both the present and possible future activities of the committee because the amendment provides for the extension of the life of the committee and it also retains the very important compulsory acquisition of land clause. These are two matters on which I think members are and should be interested.

I admit that until recently I had grave doubts in my own mind as to whether an extension of the life of the committee could be justified, and I was doubtful for two main reasons. The first, as honourable members no doubt will recall, was that the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State—the soldier settlement agreement—was terminated by the Commonwealth as on June 30 last. That of itself did not mean, of course, that there was to be a cessation by the Commonwealth of its activity as far as projects in the course of development were concerned, but it meant that no further inquiries would be held into new projects submitted to the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth War Service Land Settlement Agreement. The second point that perturbed me was the fact that suitable land in suitable rainfall areas was becoming very scarce, and offers were in the main restricted to single unit properties which did not come within the provisions of the Land Settlement Act under which it is provided that land will only be referred to the committee for inquiry as to purchase, settlement and development where the purchase price involved exceeds £30,000. These two points did cause me to consider whether the committee should be appointed for a further term under the Act.

There are three or possibly four land settlement Acts which come within the ambit of land settlement in one way or another, and they are complementary to each other. First of all there is the overall Crown Lands Development Act and then there are the Land Settlement Act Amendment Act of 1948 (which is distinct from the 1944 Act under which this committee is constituted), the Irrigation Act, and the Commonwealth and State War Settlement Act which I have previously mentioned. They are all complementary to land settlement, and soldier settlement in particular, in one way or another. It is interesting to note, in this

connection, the scope and the duties of the Land Settlement Committee under the Land Settlement Act of 1944. Section 22 of that Act stipulates the duties and powers of the committee as follows:—

The duties of the committee shall be—  
(a) to inquire into and report to the Governor upon any project for land settlement or any question relating to the settlement, development or working of any land, which is referred to the committee by the Governor; (b) to make recommendations under section 25 of this Act in relation to the acquisition of land; and (c) any other duties which relate to the settlement, development or working of land and are conferred on the committee by the Governor.

From that honourable members will perceive at once that the committee has very wide terms of reference and they go beyond anything envisaged at the time the soldier settlement schemes were being conceived and put into operation.

As I said before, I did have some doubt as to whether the circumstances were such that an extension of the life of the committee was warranted, but since then there has been a reference made to the committee in a wider sphere. The committee has been asked to give consideration to a fairly extensive scheme for the irrigation area at Loxton. This is quite a big undertaking and it concerns about 6,500 acres of irrigable land and involves the expenditure of about £1,250,000. An interesting feature of the Loxton proposal is that the Commonwealth Government is finding all the capital expenditure required, and the Loxton irrigation scheme becomes virtually a Commonwealth undertaking. The State is required to provide administration and the necessary clerical work in connection with administration and things of that nature, but beyond that the financial commitments are not large. The committee has already commenced to make preliminary inquiries into that irrigation scheme, and for the enlightenment of members I add that there is a prospect that further references along those lines will be made to the Land Settlement Committee.

In the past such proposals and projects involving irrigation have been reported upon by the Public Works Committee and possibly, although this is mere surmise on my part, it is the accumulation of work already before that committee which has induced the powers that be to refer some of these proposals, which are after all intimately concerned with land settlement, to the Land Settlement Committee.

However, the committee is now giving consideration to the Loxton area and that, in itself, will take some time. If on top of that the committee is to get similar references of equal magnitude I believe its time will be fully occupied for the full period of the extra term provided for in this Bill. That term is different from past extensions of the life of this committee. Honourable members probably know or have been told that when the 1944 Act came into force it provided for a term of five years. Subsequently when the Act was amended that term was reduced to three years and thereafter the committee's term was extended from year to year until the end of the present year. This amendment provides that the committee shall continue for another two years, and I think that indicates that the Lands Department and the Minister of Lands have a pretty good idea that there is work available to keep the committee busy.

I understand that despite the termination of the Commonwealth-State Land Settlement Agreement the two authorities will go on until such time as the valuations are made in connection with the repatriated land. Honourable members will recall that originally it was proposed that the valuations would not be made until the land had been in occupation by the settlers concerned for 10 years. That period is about to expire and valuations are to be made and will continue to be made progressively as the settlers come within the ambit of that particular regulation.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Are valuations reviewed by your committee?

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS—We have not been called upon to go into the question of valuations as yet. As chairman of the committee, I express my appreciation of the work done by my fellow members. They have given very careful attention to the projects placed before them and I have no doubt I shall have the same loyal support in future. I support the second reading.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—I also support the second reading. The last time the Act was amended it provided for an extension of the committee's term for 12 months. I understand that this was the first occasion that the term was reduced from an extension of three years. The Bill now before us proposes to extend the period for another two years. This indicates that there must be sufficient work within the foreseeable future to warrant such an extension. Mr. Edmonds gave

a very concise outline of the committee's work since its inauguration. A number of inquiries have been held into land settlement projects and a vast drainage scheme in the South-East. I feel that the work of the committee warrants its continuation so that it can complete the work envisaged.

When the Commonwealth Government notified that it would no longer participate with the State in any new projects for soldier settlement, apparently the South Australian Government was not alone in being disappointed. There have been numerous applications for settlement by returned servicemen, many of which have not been satisfied. I understand that one reason stated by a Commonwealth authority for the non-settlement of some of the applicants was that the amount of money made available by the Commonwealth for soldier settlement had not been fully used by the State.

The Hon. R. R. Wilson—Who said that?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I understand it was stated by a Commonwealth official when a request was made to the Commonwealth for further funds to be made available for soldier settlement. It was then said that South Australia had not utilized fully the moneys available to it. On occasions the committee has recommended a certain proposal for land settlement, but for some unknown reason the committee's recommendation was rejected by the Commonwealth. If the committee's recommendations had been accepted, and funds made available, much land in the South-East could have been used for soldier settlement. It was not true that the State had not utilized the funds provided by the Commonwealth. If there is any fault, the fault lies with the Commonwealth for rejecting the recommendations made by the South Australian committee. Considerable areas could be utilized for soldier settlement, including single unit farms. There are returned soldiers who are anxious to go on the land and could be successful if more money were available for land settlement. For instance, there are large areas in the South-East which have never produced a thing, but could be brought into full production. There is still an enormous amount of work which the committee could do in helping to bring into production land that is now producing nothing. We shall have to bring more land into production not only to feed our own increasing population, but also to supply other countries.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL  
(No. 2).

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 694.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1)—In rising to support the Bill I readily appreciate the fact that there is little we can do with regard to the Estimates of Loan Expenditure except make a few comments and possibly suggest an amendment. However, it is my purpose to make one or two observations which I hope the Government will consider. These Estimates are arrived at by the respective heads of departments, and the money is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Australian Loan Council. I have on several other occasions referred to the Financial Agreement and how the Loan Council came into being, but we have reached the stage in our financial structure where we find that the Federal Government, with the advent of uniform taxation, lends money to the States out of the pool of taxation gathered from taxpayers throughout the Commonwealth, and charges interest upon it.

The Hon. C. R. Story—There is nothing new about that.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—It is new as regards Labor policy if it is not as regards Liberal and Country League policy. Labor carried on the war with a daily expenditure of £1,000,000 and not one penny was borrowed from overseas.

The Hon. C. R. Story—Your Government introduced the Snowy Mountains scheme which works on that system.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I will deal with every phase in due course. We spent £1,000,000 a day in prosecuting the war and not one penny of interest went overseas. I know very well that, as Mr. Story said, our Government did it, but I do not think anyone went insolvent because of it, and a lot became very rich.

The Hon. C. R. Story—They had good wool years.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—They would not have had good wool years but for the foresight of the Chifley Government and the reorganization of the agreement with Great Britain, which, in the early stages of the war, was buying our wool at a very low price. Through the foresight of the Labor Government the woolgrowers were able to repay their overdrafts and become very rich.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—I think the honourable member forgets just when the woolgrowers became prosperous.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am not suggesting that the Federal Labor Government should take all the kudos but I do suggest that it steered the wool barons' ship into a sea of affluence, and I do not think the honourable member would deny that.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—He sure would.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—In this State we have a very efficient Civil Service, and although we of the Opposition may disagree with some of the Government's proposals we appreciate that the heads of departments are merely responsible for carrying out Government policy. I said earlier that, from the pool of taxation, the Commonwealth Government is lending money to the States and charging interest on it. I have heard the Treasurer over the radio, and I have read his statements in the press, claiming that he has raised this question, but I never heard or read that he has levelled this charge against the Commonwealth in the appropriate place, namely at a Loan Council meeting. With the policy being pursued by the Menzies Government we are becoming tied to the chariot wheels of international finance. This reminds me of the occasion in 1931 when we were similarly tied, and every member knows what happened then. Today, through the Bretton Woods Agreement and the International Bank we are again tied as we were in 1931.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—In what respect?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—By virtue of the fact that in 1931, as the honourable member well knows, we were tied to the gold standard just as we are now under the International Banking Agreement.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—You mean through exchange?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Through exchange and export control. I do not want to weary members by enumerating all the provisions of the Bretton Woods Agreement, but some of the obligations under that agreement are—and this is published by the Treasurer of the U.S.A. at Washington—

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—How long ago?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—This is in operation now; it has not been altered. I know that honourable members may not want to hear what I am about to say—

The Hon. C. R. Story—You are battling well with a very weak case.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am not attempting to mislead the Council, but to place some facts before members. It is our responsibility to draw attention to these things, and it seems extraordinary to me that our Federal

members of Parliament have never drawn attention to the way in which Australia is becoming involved under the International Financial Agreement. Large amounts are being borrowed by the Federal Government from overseas that are never ratified by Parliament. They are submitted in a Budget speech or maybe submitted in Loan Bills, but it is the responsibility, not only of members of State Parliaments, but more particularly of members of our National Parliament, which has these borrowing powers, to raise the question.

As at June 30, 1931—the commencement of the depression period—the public debt of the Commonwealth was, in round figures, £392,000,000, and the public debt of all the States was £763,000,000, making a total public indebtedness of £1,155,000,000. In 1959 the total debt of the Commonwealth was £1,649,000,000. It is true that we had a war in between and that some of the debt accumulated from the war period. The States' debt amounted to £2,391,000,000 and the total indebtedness was £4,040,000,000.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—So we have not got a Depression.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I am not suggesting that, but since 1949, with the advent of another Government in the Federal Parliament, a good deal of the indebtedness has been transferred overseas, whereas all the money spent during the years that we were prosecuting the war was borrowed from Australian citizens and remained in Australia. In 1931 the Commonwealth's debt per head of population was £60 2s. 5d. That of all the States was £117 4s. 9d. and the total indebtedness a head of population was £177 7s. 2d. In 1959 the respective figures were £163 19s. 1d., £239 6s. 8d. and £403 5s. 9d. Those figures are gleaned from the Commonwealth Budget of 1959-60. I am not arguing that we cannot have progress without spending money. I readily accede to that principle, but I am claiming that instead of using the whole of our own resources—that of the Commonwealth Bank, the private banks, lending institutions and the public generally—for the purpose of participating in the progress that has been made from 1931 to 1959, a portion of interest charges are being paid overseas and not to the people of this country.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—You are quite wrong. Can you quote figures for that?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I can substantiate my statement. I remember that a similar argument was adduced in 1931. I mention these things in passing because we are dealing with money matters and loan expendi-

ture. The major point I want to make is that we should borrow the money within the perimeter of Australia from the Australian people, and should not tie future generations of Australians to overseas finance. It may be said that Australia has departed from the International Agreement, and I am reminded that the Prime Minister of New Zealand, which had kept right out to the very last, said:—

By coming into it we could become part of a world-wide organization of finance and currency and trade control that could, I believe, strangle the economic progress of this land.

I have raised this matter realizing that it is the responsibility of our Federal members also to see that these things do not come about, thereby saddling future generations of Australians.

Another item in the schedule that I want to discuss is the Electricity Trust. I am not opposed to its activities. It was through the support of Labor that the Adelaide Electric Supply Company was taken over. I have vivid recollections of how, on the first occasion it was submitted, the Bill was lost by the casting vote of the President and how, in a special session, it was subsequently carried by one vote.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—You voted for the Government?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—We did. I may say that the arrangements that were made then by the Government for the shareholders of the old Adelaide Electric Supply Company were most favourable, because the shares were pegged at 1945 and for every share that a shareholder held at 1945 he got a bonus share, so he did very well out of it. The Labor Party can take some credit there. Labor is often charged with confiscation. Labor supported the Government in giving those people some reward for their thrift and energy.

As regards the Electricity Trust, the proposed Loan expenditure during the financial year 1959-1960 is £2,500,000. I am not objecting to that, but I do object to the fact that the Architect-in-Chief's Department and all the other spending departments covered by the Loan Estimates have to run the gamut of an investigation by the Public Works Standing Committee. On top of that, those departments have a responsible Minister who can be questioned in either House of Parliament on their activities. Here, we have a semi-Governmental instrumentality—for it is nothing more or less than that—that can spend or receive Loan moneys as proposed in the present Estimates,

but it does not have to suffer any investigation. It can be in effect a trial and error proposal, but for every other department a report must be made by the Public Works Standing Committee about the necessity or otherwise, or the wisdom, of the expenditure before the proposal can be ratified.

I return to the other departments. Over the years we have had plenty of reports from time to time where the Estimates of the department have not kept very closely to the proposed expenditure. Members of my Party in this House and in another place have always advocated that there should be a public accounts committee for the purpose of keeping a check on the expenditure from time to time, to see that it keeps within the bounds of the estimated amounts originally submitted. I am not mentioning this in a carping manner. I think it is the responsibility of every honourable member to express his thoughts on these things as they may occur to him. There should be a practical approach whereby some report or overall view could be taken.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—We do get a report.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—We get the Auditor-General's report and also a report of the various projects and the estimated cost and the amount by which the estimate is exceeded. The last one published was in about 1955. The answer to the problem is the establishment of a public accounts committee that can review the progress of expenditure. I was pleased to have the support of the honourable Mrs. Cooper and the honourable Sir Frank Perry for my advocacy and the advocacy of members of my Party with regard to some measure of financial support for independent schools. As Sir Frank Perry has mentioned, it is true that for years I have always advocated it, for the very obvious reason that we are supposed to live in a free democracy and if my conscience dictates that I should send my child to a certain school where he will receive religious instruction, then I have the right to do so. I do not deny the right to other people. That is why we have the establishment and the continuance of these independent schools which have played and continue to play a prominent part in our development, not only in this State but in the national sphere. These schools receive no reward or help from any Government department.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—And they save the State many thousands of pounds a year.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—Yes, and they have to meet the high cost of building,

maintenance and providing teaching staff; and the fees, even if they increased a hundredfold, would go nowhere near defraying the expenditure on maintenance of these schools, their equipment and teaching staff. Whilst Sir Frank Perry has advocated a committee of inquiry, I think the proposal could be more adequately met if all the responsible people conducting these independent schools—and the economic problems are there for them all to solve, for they are affecting every school—could meet and lay down some form of policy upon which they could all agree and which they could present to the Government, asking for the necessary financial assistance to continue to carry on their schools. I am opposed to the suggestion of an inquiry, because those who would probably be placed upon such a committee would not or could not become as conversant with the general atmosphere surrounding these colleges and schools as those who are running them now. The Government should call a conference of these people so that they can lay down some form of unanimous policy and the Government can review it and if necessary grant some financial aid at least for capital costs and equipment of the buildings to enable them to carry on as heretofore.

The honourable Mr. Robinson mentioned yesterday certain matters appertaining to the university. I am one of those people who believe in the maintenance of the institution of the university, but I also believe that the university's primary function is to give degrees, to maintain a standard of education so that those who enter the various faculties can go out into the world fully qualified to practise the faculties they have studied and chosen for a career. I have mentioned earlier on several occasions the gap when a child attends the university after leaving a college or a high school, for he finds himself as it were in a 40-acre paddock. These views I have expressed have been confirmed by the report of the Committee on Australian Universities (the Murray report) which, after dealing with the student leaving his college or school and entering the university, says at page 36:—

The gap between school and university: whatever the academic standard of Australian university entrants, there can be no question of the abruptness of the transition experienced on passing from school to university. From the school classroom, with its close supervision, its frequent tests and exercises, the school pupil too often finds himself in many cases an unrecognized member of a formless mass of students in which no one appears to him to know or care how or if he works.

I have advocated, and came under the fire of criticism in one or two instances, that the university should provide in every year of a student attending the university a complete report half-yearly of the application of the student, of his capabilities, and attendances at lectures, so that the parent or guardian or those who may be in control of a particular student will have some idea of his progress at the university. The only time that a failure or a success is denoted is at the end of the university year, when a student either comes out triumphantly with a pass or goes down dejectedly with a failure. If that were done, it would to some extent obviate the waste of time, energy and money referred to by the Murray Committee's report of failures of students at the university. The report also says, at page 121:—

The most disturbing aspect of university education in its actual working is the high failure rate. A survey of the records of students enrolled at six universities for the first time in 1951 showed that of every 100 students only 61 passed the first year examinations; only 35 graduated in the minimum period of time; and only 58 have graduated or are expected to graduate at all. Such a high failure rate is a national extravagance and can ill be afforded. Extensive consideration of the problem clearly indicates that there is no one cause and we have discussed various relevant factors such as the previous preparation of students, the gap between school and university, the pressure of curricula, teaching methods, inadequate staffing and the absence of student guidance.

I maintain it is the responsibility of the Commonwealth to provide this money. The Minister of Health can tell this House that every doctor, every pharmacist, every dentist and every nurse trained in South Australia is trained at the State's expense, either in a State hospital or in the State university. He or she is then co-opted or recruited into either the Commonwealth armed forces or the Commonwealth public services, which have not paid a penny piece towards their training. When I say "not paid a penny piece" I mean have not paid an adequate amount because they take no responsibility for providing the training schools or hospitals. Whatever sum the States get is a lump sum that is distributed over the various institutions. The Commonwealth makes no specific effort to train those people whom they take from the States after they have been trained by the States.

The Hon. F. J. Condon—They get them by paying higher salaries.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—I do not want to go into that now. I sum up my

remarks on the Estimates by reiterating that nothing can be done to alter the proposals other than to make one or two observations, and I hope that my observations have been of such a nature that they have expressed my views and those of my Party and that the Government may see some merit in them.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1)—I do not desire to unduly delay the House on this debate because I feel that most of the lines have been discussed by the various members who have participated in the debate. An amount of £26,000,000 has been made available through Loan funds for various purposes during the next 12 months under State administration. Some of the lines when examined prove interesting. In his second reading speech the Chief Secretary pointed out the various amounts which were to be made available to departments for carrying out their work. I wish to comment on housing. The State Bank will have made available to it, for the purpose of financing the purchase of homes, a record total of £4,700,000, £2,750,000 of which is to be provided from Loan moneys. The Housing Trust is to be allocated a sum of £600,000 from Loan moneys and there is provision for an amount of £5,000 under the heading of Temporary Homes. I assume that that amount will mainly be for maintenance and renovation of temporary homes and not for the building of further temporary homes. The policy which has been enunciated by the Housing Trust, as I understand it, and which is supported by the Government is that no further temporary homes shall be built but that the trust will concentrate all of its efforts in future on the building of permanent homes of brick or other materials.

It is interesting to note from the last report of the Housing Trust that since the activities of the trust were commenced in 1937 it has completed a total of 35,645 homes. That is an achievement for any State to be proud of, and all of those homes are completed and occupied. There are further homes in the course of construction which will be allocated to persons who have applied for them. It is worthy of note, too, that the report of the trust states that for the 12 months ended March 31, 1959, the amount collected in rents was £2,496,944. The amount collected by the trust in rents has risen to such a high figure that I think that, very shortly, it will no longer be necessary to make Loan moneys available to the Housing Trust for the purpose of continuing its building activities in this State. That position should apply even taking into account the fact that



out of rents received the trust must allocate a certain amount of money for maintenance on homes already erected. It has been mentioned in this debate that temporary homes have served their period of usefulness and that the tenants in them should have done something in the way of supplying themselves with their own permanent home. The honourable member who spoke in this vein said:—

In fact there is so much new building going on that it should not be necessary to have temporary homes except in cases of emergency.

Perhaps one could agree with that statement because temporary homes were built in the first place to cater for cases of emergency, but I suggest there are still cases of emergency today. If we analyse the reasons for the erection of these temporary homes in the first instance we find that they were built because of the long time required to build a permanent home, because of the great demand for homes and because of the necessity arising in urgent cases to help particular persons to obtain some sort of home. It was decided in these circumstances to build the temporary homes which could be put up in a very short time and made available to tenants. They were for the purpose of covering a transitional period and to give a person a home which he could call his own whilst waiting to be allocated a permanent home built by the Housing Trust. It was never the intention of the Housing Trust or of the Government that they should be permanent dwellings, but they have become permanent dwellings because we have not been able to catch up with the demand for houses in this State. The Housing Trust still has a large number of applicants on its books requiring homes, and as members of Parliament we are still approached by persons in necessitous circumstances. I, along with other members, have had applications or appeals from people to assist them to obtain a home of some description because of the conditions under which they have been forced to live. The trust cannot automatically supply them with a home and it cannot in many instances make available a temporary home because until the trust can remove a tenant from a temporary home into a permanent home it has no vacant temporary homes available. These people have to battle along as well as they can until the trust is in a position to help them. I think trust officers are very sympathetic in such cases. To suggest, as one member has, that the occupants of temporary homes should have been in a position to at least have paid a deposit on a

home, because of the period they have been in temporary homes, is not a fair statement because one must take fully into account the position of these people. It is easy for us to say:—

It is not in many cases a problem of finance or of poverty as the occupiers of many of these homes possess modern cars—even Jaguars I am told. They have fine furniture and all modern labour-saving devices and obviously could have paid a deposit on a home if they had so desired.

I think every person has the right to have decent furniture in his home. I feel, too, that our standard of living is such that a married woman is entitled to home aids, such as refrigerators, which we have come to look upon as everyday commodities. Let us examine how these things are obtained in many instances. One does not require £1,000 deposit to buy a suite of furniture. Under our present-day system a lot of these amenities are obtained by reason of our social standing through time payment or hire-purchase. I do not say that in a derogatory tone because in many cases the people who do use hire-purchase have to do so because of their financial position and it is the only way available to them to obtain these things, and motor cars too. If we were to busy ourselves in these areas we would not find too many new cars but we might find a lot of old model cars. Persons employed by General Motors-Holdens have available to them a scheme under which they can buy a Holden car, but they do not have to pay cash, for financial arrangements are made with that firm under which they can purchase a car if they require one.

When we come to the purchase of a home it is a different matter altogether. We know perfectly well that the State Bank at the present time, because of the policy which has been enunciated by the State Government, has been inundated with applications for finance for homes, and there is a considerable waiting list for loans and it will be some time before persons who have made application will be able to get the necessary financial assistance. The Housing Trust requires a certain amount of money as a deposit, and the amount required is not just one or two pounds but a considerable sum of money. The trust is sympathetic to persons who desire to purchase homes, and if the amount of money required for a deposit is not available it is possible to raise further finance by way of a second mortgage, but here again not everybody can afford to do that. The income of an applicant has to be considered and second mortgages

involve added interest rates. One has to think carefully before deciding whether one can afford that sort of thing and be in a position to repay every month or quarterly the amount of capital and interest required to make the place his own. The majority of those living in temporary homes are not there by choice but because of their circumstances, and would not remain if they could get other accommodation. They are not in a position to meet repayments to buy a home. Unless one has experienced these things one cannot appreciate the position. I have been through it myself. I do not own my own home now. I have never been in the position to go along to anyone and say, "Here is a sum. I want to buy a house"; and financially, I am much better off than those living in temporary homes. One can appreciate that people want to have decent household furniture and some amenities such as a washing machine, refrigerator and electric cleaner, but although one has those amenities, one may not be in a position to pay a deposit on a home or erect a home. It is not as easy as it appears on the surface. There are only a few lending institutions with much money available for home building. We have the Savings Bank, the Commonwealth Bank, the State Bank and a few building societies. With private banks, the amount available for home building is limited and if one goes to a financier to borrow, the interest repayments are so high that one cannot meet the commitments; or possibly in the future may lose the home because one cannot keep up the payments. In purchasing a home, it is preferable for the average person to deal with one of the institutions I mentioned. Generally, those living in temporary homes are not in highly paid positions, but are only ordinary working people, and are thankful for being able to live for the time being in a temporary home, hoping daily that they will be able to get a permanent rental home through the Housing Trust. With the money available to it under this Bill, the State Bank will be able to meet some of the demands made upon it for homes.

The estimated gross loan payments for irrigation and drainage amount to £801,000, estimated repayments to £28,000, leaving £773,000 for expenditure on irrigation and drainage. I appreciate that this money will be made available from Loan funds. What I shall have to say does not apply to my own constituency, but to the Northern District. I do not want those honourable members representing that district to think that I am entering upon their domain, or to feel that I am levelling criticism against

them for inactivity in their own district, because I consider this district is adequately represented. I have in mind the big Murray flood of a few years ago, and its effect upon the Renmark irrigation area, which is controlled by the Renmark Irrigation Trust, and was established in the late nineteenth century. This area is more or less the home of our dried fruits, vine and citrus industries. Following the success of these industries in the early history of Renmark, similar prosperous industries were established elsewhere along the Murray. I am concerned with the problems today facing Renmark growers, whose position has been aggravated in recent years because of seepage. I was at Renmark last week and made an extensive examination of the area. I am no expert on irrigation, but since I have been a member of the Land Settlement Committee I have gained a certain amount of knowledge of the subject. One does not have to be an expert to appreciate the effect of what is happening. Renmark is one of the largest fruit-growing districts in the State. The 1958 report of the Dried Fruits Board indicates that 16,130 tons of vine fruits were produced in that year and the production of tree fruits amounted to 2,010 tons. The biggest proportion of the State's dried fruits comes from the Renmark district, where the irrigation projects are controlled by the growers themselves through the Renmark Irrigation Trust.

Parts of many of the blocks at Renmark are going out of production because of salt. Many trees and vines are already dead. When on my visit I had the opportunity to observe the vast difference between healthy blocks and those that were being affected by seepage. South Australia could not afford to allow the Renmark district to go out of production, and not one honourable member would stand idly by and see such a calamity happen. I understand that over the years the water table has risen considerably, and this position was aggravated by the big flood. In some places the water level has risen to within four feet of the surface, or even closer. Because of irrigation, the salt is being brought to the surface more rapidly than would normally be the case. Water cannot progress below the water table and has to remain until it can be drained elsewhere. Because of the operations of one blocker two miles away in irrigating his property, another blocker may find that his water table has risen considerably and he therefore is unable to irrigate until the water drains off his block.

The growers have been charged by the trust for irrigation water, for the building of channels and the building and maintenance of pumping stations, plus the limited amount of drainage that has been done by the trust. Now the trust finds that it cannot go further on its own resources. Its revenue will enable it to maintain existing works in proper order, but it has nothing left over for expansion, and the growers cannot be levied for any more at present. The position became so acute that representations were made to the Government for financial assistance. These negotiations have been going on for some time—this is not something new. From what I gather from talking to growers and the three bank managers in Renmark the Government has looked upon the Renmark irrigation project as a private enterprise undertaking and because of that has not been willing to give it financial assistance. However, it is remarkable that the Government for a number of years has been giving financial assistance to private enterprise in the metropolitan area and other places, both to enable new industries to become established or to permit existing industries to carry on. However, after protracted negotiations an offer of help has been made by the Government which, on the surface, appears to be a very good one, but on closer examination it seems to be a question of “take it or leave it.” With the indulgence of members I will quote the offer made to the trust on August 3, 1959, as follows:—

I desire to confirm my verbal offer made to the deputation which waited upon me at Parliament House last Thursday, July 30, 1959.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Are you speaking on behalf of the trust?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I am speaking on behalf of the growers of the Renmark area.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Who is that letter from?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—From the Premier to the secretary of the Renmark Irrigation Trust in answer to a deputation of the trust and the growers for financial assistance to help them with their drainage scheme and irrigation. The Government has finally made an offer in a take-it or leave-it manner. The letter continued:—

That, provided the Renmark Irrigation Trust agrees to withdraw from the exercise of local government powers and functions, the Government is prepared to assist the trust in the financing of its drainage scheme and its proposals for the rehabilitation of its irrigation system.

That is the first paragraph, and it is not easy to get over. The Minister of Local Government will have one or two headaches before this is over. I believe he has already made a statement to the effect that they should alter their local government authority to a municipality.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—That is quite incorrect. It is their own request that they remain a municipality.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I am simply repeating what I was told. In view of the set-up at Renmark, with two bodies functioning—the local government authority and the trust—it is not easy to get over the difficulty in a manner satisfactory to all parties, and that is why I said that the Minister will have many headaches.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—They are going to make the decision. I am not.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—As I see it it can be done in one of two ways. Either we put through a special Act in relation to Renmark only, which I think is impracticable, or there must be a considerable amendment of the Local Government Act to meet the situation. The second paragraph of the Premier’s letter reads:—

It is estimated that this work can be financed over a 10-year period, and the Government will be prepared to make an annual grant of £50,000 per annum for each of 10 years, and will make available a loan of £250,000 in 10 annual instalments each of £25,000. These instalments will be free of interest for the first 10 years, or if the work should be completed and financed in less than 10 years, until the full £250,000 is advanced when the full sum of £250,000 will be repayable by the trust in equal annual instalments with interest at 5 per cent over a period of 30 years.

The trust, for its part, must agree to provide from its own resources £25,000 per annum for 10 years. The trust will thus have available to it for the purposes mentioned an amount of £1,000,000 over the 10-year period.

At first glance that seems very good indeed; first, there is a grant of £500,000 from the State over 10 years, and in addition £250,000 as a loan, but the trust itself—in other words, the growers—has to find £250,000 in 10 years, and that is what is causing considerable concern throughout the district. Where is this £25,000 a year to come from? The growers are levied now practically to their capacity to pay, for water supplied, irrigation channels and so forth.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—And roads, which they won’t have in future?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—In addition they must be levied to find £250,000 over 10 years, or £25,000 a year, and they say they are not

in a position to do it. There is only one alternative; they will have to borrow £25,000 a year, and apparently the banks operating in Renmark appreciate this position because it was put to me by the bank managers that they could not see the area go out of production, so they had to do something about it.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin—With or without security?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—It will be with security without a doubt, but as I have stated, this offer was made on a take-it or leave-it basis. Because of the crying necessity for immediate drainage the growers have no alternative but to accept, but how they are going to get over their difficulties they do not know. I suggest that the banks will have adequate security for their loans, but the growers must face the position that they will be responsible for the borrowing of £25,000 a year plus interest and, after 10 years, for paying back to the State the loan of £250,000 plus 5 per cent interest.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—The Government is providing three to one.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—Not at all. It is providing 50 per cent.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Are you advocating that it should?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I am pointing out that the growers feel that they will not be able to meet their commitments. Some small assistance has been given to the trust in the past. In 1896 the Government loaned it £3,000, and in 1900 a further £16,000, and this was not repaid until 1931. It was only the principal that was repaid then because they were not in a financial position to pay the interest rates on the money borrowed, so apparently the Government, realizing the position, had to cut its losses. It accepted the principal repayment but got no interest on its money.

How can the growers pay back £250,000 over 10 years? With their dried fruits, their citrus fruit and their vine fruits—and the dried fruits are under the control of the board—they are in competition with Loxton, Berri and all the fruit-growing districts where drainage systems have already been put in by the Government and where the only responsibility of the grower is his own internal drains. He has a considerable advantage over all the others. I have been reliably informed by the people at Renmark that at least half the growers there are returned servicemen, who did not receive any assistance from either the State or Commonwealth Government to establish them on the

land, as happened in other cases of returned servicemen. They had to establish themselves. They used their deferred pay and any other capital they had to pay a deposit on the land and develop it to its present position. They have had a very hard battle over the whole period.

The present scheme has to be adequately drained, and quickly, to get any service at all. In the Renmark district, drainage and irrigation go hand in hand. A small amount of work has been carried out by the trust itself with external drains, and there is a natural evaporation basin. At present a fresh-water channel and a salt-water channel run parallel with one another—so much so that there is seepage of salt into the fresh-water channel.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin—That all happened before they came into the Northern district.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—The only way to rectify the position is by the laying of a pipeline from the river itself to the main pumping station, as any future extension of drainage up there into the evaporation basin itself would immediately cut out altogether the fresh water supplies because, if the fresh-water channel is made saline, it will be unusable altogether. Some properties have been feeding back salt water on to the land and not fresh water because the salt has got into the fresh water channel.

The Hon. E. H. Edmonds—Who has been responsible for that?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—The trust itself, which is the State. With continued irrigation and the other factors mentioned this afternoon the position is that Renmark has to be adequately drained now, not in 10 years' time. This area is too valuable to the State to neglect. As the honourable Mr. Edmonds himself said this afternoon, reference has been made to the Land Settlement Committee about the drainage of Loxton, the cost of which is estimated to be £200 an acre. There are a thousand or more acres to be drained in Renmark and, according to the Premier, it will cost £100 an acre. I do not know where the differential arises between Loxton and Renmark. Something will have to be done in Loxton quickly, but that will be done by the Commonwealth. The grower's responsibility will be to put in his internal and not his external drains. In Renmark the grower has to put in the whole lot. In Renmark the drainage goes with the irrigation, or the irrigation goes with the drainage. Unless drainage is carried out, the irrigation will aggravate the position further

because more salt will be brought to the surface. The water table will be raised because the salt water is not getting away. Considerable reorganization must take place in the Renmark district to enable irrigation by fresh water to continue. It has to be taken away from the evaporation basin and that can be done only by a pipeline to the main pumping station. That is the only cure.

The Treasurer himself should have said to these people: "We are prepared to make a loan or grant of £500,000 and we will do this conditionally upon your doing so-and-so" and allowed them to consider it and see if they could meet their commitments. If the growers do not meet the £2,500 pound for pound each year, they will not get the Government's money because it will not put its money up each year if it is not covered by the terms dictated by it. If this £2,500 is not forthcoming each year, they will get nothing from the Government: they will have to go outside and borrow it. It would have been a lot more gracious for the Government to say to these people, "This is what we are prepared to do but, if it is not acceptable to you, let us have your views." They should have been able to come back to the Treasurer and tell him the effect of the suggestions and finally perhaps an amicable agreement could have been reached between all parties. I hope that the Treasurer will reconsider his decision and that the door will still be open for further negotiation. I support the Bill.

The Hon. A. J. MELROSE (Midland)—I want to speak about fire control in the forest areas. I have read carefully the latest annual report of the Woods and Forests Department. Although it makes some sort of passing reference to fires, I feel the subject has not been treated sufficiently seriously. Amongst other things the report says:—

The incidence of serious fire damage at irregular intervals over many years has given the department much cause for concern.

It then refers to the fire that occurred last April when the lives of eight forest workers were lost. It goes on to say:—

In an effort to make any improvement possible, two important measures are now under consideration. The first is the appointment of a special officer to study the whole problem in relation to prevention, detection, and suppression. The second is the investigation of the possibilities of a complete coverage of all forest areas with the most modern radio transmission system that can be obtained.

That is all right as far as it goes, but I was disappointed the other day to read in the

press the statement by the Minister of Agriculture that aerial fire fighting was a hopeless proposition. From what I can ascertain, it is very far from being a hopeless proposition. In some of the forest areas in North America, including Canada, very effective use has been made of aeroplanes in fire fighting in forest areas, though they do not claim 100 per cent perfection. It is obviously still experimental, but the experiments are encouraging. The Government would be well advised to try it out here, to learn what it can about it. In the Loan Estimates a sum of £165,000 is provided for the maintenance of existing forests. That is a lot of money to spend on forests. A great deal of work has been done on 125,000 acres. We should not be averse to spending one or two hundred thousand pounds on investigating modern fire fighting methods.

I began fire fighting in the horse and buggy days when we carried a wet bag and worked like a slave. I know the conservative attitude that was adopted when fire fighting with water tanks and pumps on a motor vehicle was introduced, but it was soon proved to be a very effective method. It was almost a lady-like job compared with the long ride on horse back and the hard work that we had previously done. We have an illustration today of further progress in the forestry report. We have bigger trucks, more powerful pumps and that sort of thing and we should not baulk when we start to think of aerial fire fighting. These people do not claim to have the answer to everything, but they claim they can do some very valuable work in the dampening down or at least the controlling of forest fires. Under the heading of "Protection" the report refers to fire weather research, and that means weather forecasting. That does not prevent fires nor does it put them out once they have started because, in spite of the very best management and care, lightning will start a lot of fires. This report refers to the eight men who were killed and says the court of inquiry could not decide on the cause of the fire. It could have been lightning or anything else and nobody can take steps to prevent lightning from starting fires. The report goes on to say that 47 fires were reported within 10 miles of the forest reserves in the South-East between December, 1957, and February, 1958, which is within a period of three months. That figure represents a decrease of 32 on the number similarly reported in the previous year, so that in the previous year there were 80 fires within 10 miles of the forest areas. This is a matter worthy of very grave consideration.

I think I have said enough to indicate to the House and the Government what I am talking about and I hope they will not baulk as apparently the Minister of Agriculture baulked the other day when he said it was hopeless. Although it is in its infancy it is worthy of consideration. In America they use a chemical called calcium sodium borate, which is suspended in water. It is not dissolved but is a fine powder agitated in water to form a fine slurry and it is spread out in bands in front of the fire. The literature I have had does not claim it is the answer to the problem nor that it will completely erase fires out of control, but the fire fighters can operate some distance ahead of the fire and damp down the crown of the fire where it runs over the tops of the trees. The fire fighters can work only on the ground, but by putting this calcium sodium borate over the tops of the trees they are enabled to break down the crown of the fire which makes it generally more possible for the ground crews to put a fire out altogether. The types of plane used include helicopters, which are slow, as well as the ordinary type of planes used for crop spraying.

All these things are not going to be free because any experiment of this nature would presuppose the maintenance of special planes kept ready with trained crews to fly them, and a supply of the chemical too. The establishment of the whole thing would probably cost a considerable sum. However, 800 acres were burnt in the South-East fires and 150 acres were burnt at Wirrabara, and 1,000 acres of good forest is worth much money. If we spent a thousand or two to get protection against fires I think it would be money well spent. I do not suggest this expensive process would be applicable to grass fires unless it was applicable to fires like the Port Elliot fire of last year, but I am concerned with the terrific wastage caused by these forest fires. The people who interested me to speak on these things today have gone so far as to arrange for the importation into Adelaide of some of this calcium sodium borate, so private enterprise has done a certain amount of valuable spade work, and I hope the Government will give this matter very careful investigation. Although what I am talking about may not be the answer, it at least points to a solution of fire problems in valuable forest areas. I support the Bill.

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

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 698.)

The Hon. R. R. WILSON (Northern)—Every year we have before us the Bush Fires Act, the Road Traffic Act and the Local Government Act, which shows that these matters are important, otherwise they would not be before Parliament so often. There are 908 sections in the Local Government Act. Corporations and councils in South Australia number 143. I obtained these figures from the Year Book, which further indicates that spending by local government totals £8,500,000. The value of ratable property has reached the staggering figure of £530,000,000 which further illustrates the responsibilities attaching to corporations and district councils. The book recently issued to every honourable member which is entitled "South Australia—Historical Data" gives a lot of valuable information, and I pay a compliment to the Premier for making this information available to members of Parliament because it brings the records of the State up to date. I notice there are 56,000 miles of surveyed roads in South Australia. This is a very long distance and the responsibility for them falls on the Highways Department and local government.

The value of the honorary work which is carried out in local government cannot be assessed by anyone. I hope it will always be honorary because I claim where honorary work is performed it is given more freely and in a better spirit than when people are compelled to do work. Expenses are generally paid to members of corporations and district councils, but they give their valuable time without fee. People who take on this work are always very busy, and therefore councillors are not easy to obtain. This responsibility I think is one of the reasons why careful consideration is given by so many before they accept the duties. They must have a knowledge of local affairs and it is recognized that the nearer we are to the seat of the government, whatever it is, the better the results we obtain. The local government conferences which are held in the various parts of the State are also of great value, and that is where most of the matters of interest originate. It is good to see so many young men willing to give their time to this work. They realize this work is essential to the progress of the State.

The Bill contains some clauses which are practically the same as those contained in the

Bill introduced last session. I desire to refer first to clause 3. It has been asked why so much time is wasted on this particular matter. However, it is important, for the Bill was thrown out last year because of this clause, and no-one wants to see this Bill thrown out because it is so badly needed by corporations and district councils. I was one who voted against the provision for the appointment of deputy mayors last session and I want to speak on it on this occasion because I did not speak last year. Following our decision to vote against the provision my colleague and I were threatened that we would lose our seats at the elections because the amendment was introduced by the member for Stuart in another place. We were not, however, bluffed by that, although we were threatened with the axe and we thought the best way to meet the position was to go to the town itself. We went to Port Augusta and found that the person who was mainly concerned was the acting mayor who was also the chairman of the Liberal Party there. That was another thing which was held against us. We were told that we would have to go up to Yelkes Crossing—quite a number of miles north of Port Augusta—because of the influence wielded in that town by the mayor of Port Augusta. However, when we interviewed the deputy mayor we received a very cordial welcome and he could not have cared less about the result of our voting against the clause.

I noticed on reading *Hansard* of last session that speeches were made mainly by the members for Stuart and Stirling. Both are mayors of their respective towns of Port Augusta and Victor Harbour, and therefore they must have a definite reason for desiring a deputy. It seems to me that they both desire to hold down two jobs and give satisfaction in both. If one starts the job of mayor of a town and is subsequently elected to Parliament it is only reasonable that he should see the term out, but if he tries to do justice to both offices I think it is up to him to carry out those duties without asking for legislation for something to suit his own convenience so that he can spare the time away from his own town. I think that is constructive criticism, and I hope no offence is taken at it. An attempt was also made to have the matter discussed at the local conference held at Whyalla during the elections, but it was rejected. I think local government is political enough without attempts being made for such a matter to be discussed at a conference of that type.

When a person accepts a prominent position in public life he surely goes into it with his

eyes open. I see no reason at all why a deputy mayor is needed. It has been the custom at Port Augusta to have a deputy mayor since 1932. They have carried on satisfactorily in that manner, and I fail to see why Parliament should be asked to pass legislation for it. I know of no other corporation asking for this amendment. During the Show Week I met a number of people from my district and not one favoured this amendment. I consider it originated from people who want the legislation to suit their own convenience. The ballot box at Port Augusta did not support the threats made to us.

The Act provides that an acting chairman of a district council may be appointed, and this practice has proved satisfactory. If a person acts as No. 2 to the mayor or to the chairman of a council, it is not always to the best advantage. I know of big organizations that will not entertain the appointment of a permanent deputy president or deputy chairman, who is always elected from those present. In a council, such a practice gives other councillors an opportunity to carry out the duties of the chairman, but if a councillor were appointed permanently to that position the same opportunity would not be available to others. Under the Act the spending allowance of a mayor cannot be made available to his deputy unless the mayor dies or goes away for a considerable time. Otherwise, the prestige of the office would be lowered considerably. The mayor is looked upon by rate-payers as an individual responsible to them in corporation matters. He must be a person of high standing, and to have a deputy mayor would not add to his prestige. An argument was also put forward regarding the holding of naturalization ceremonies. The Act provides that the clerk of a council may carry out this duty. There is no argument why a deputy should be provided and therefore I intend to oppose the clause. If the law provided for the appointment of a deputy mayor or a deputy chairman, there would not be the same harmony or the same results as in the past.

The Hon. C. R. Story—Do you think that those councils which appoint one now are any worse off than those who do not?

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—I do not know. The present polling hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and I consider that this arrangement is suitable. The Bill suggests an alteration to 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The first week in July is generally the busiest month for cereal growers in late districts, and therefore it is an advantage if they can vote after they knock off work. This

also applies to dairymen, whose work would have to be completed much earlier than is usual to enable them to get to the polling booth by 5 o'clock. I do not believe that the request for an alteration came from ratepayers, but more likely it came from returning officers. I think that if the hours were altered as proposed, the position would be much worse. Therefore, I intend to oppose the clause. Postal voting will be of great benefit. It seems ridiculous that a person living outside the State may have his voting paper witnessed by an authorized person living in the district, whereas a person in South Australia could not have his voting paper witnessed unless it was by a ratepayer in the same district. The proposed alteration will be an advantage.

I subscribe to the views already expressed by honourable members regarding the destruction of council property and that any person interfering with such property should be prosecuted. However, the penalty proposed is not nearly sufficient to meet the position. Many years ago I lived at Ardrossan and found that signs were often interfered with. One sign was erected at Virginia by the Shell Company to the effect "Shell—Go slow." Someone altered it to read "Hell—Go fast." Such pranks result in the public being misled. Road signs are a great target for young people who want to try their hand at shooting. They deserve severe punishment. I have great objection to unsightly vehicles being allowed to remain on premises. At Nailsworth where I live there are unsightly vehicles parked on the corner of Harvey Street and the Main North Road which seriously affects the value of surrounding properties. I understand that at present a person who knows the law can get away with that, provided a vehicle is mobile. I should think that most of the unsightly vehicles in South Australia are accommodated at this corner. I hope that the Act will be amended so that people who deliberately set out to offend in this manner will have to remove their business. I doubt whether one could see a more untidy corner than the one to which I have referred.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—The council already has power to correct that position.

The Hon. R. R. WILSON—Not if a vehicle is mobile. There is an important clause in the Bill relating to vehicles that are left unattended on streets and roads. An amendment as proposed is long overdue. I know of people who deliberately allow vehicles to remain on a street or road. It is proposed that a council shall have power to dispose of

such vehicle and, if the return is not sufficient to recover the cost of removal, a claim can be made against the person who left it there. This will be of great benefit to councils. I am glad that the Minister has taken a firm stand regarding the establishment of smaller council areas. A request had been made for a smaller council area on part of Eyre Peninsula, and the council concerned has now seen fit not to attempt to alter the position. A deputation waited upon the Minister this week, and I compliment him on the manner in which he received it and the way in which he handled the problem. The people concerned are quite satisfied. Closer settlement is taking place in part of the district, but another part of the district has no chance of improving its production and therefore perhaps the people concerned had some claim on their approach to the Minister. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, but will oppose clause 3, as I did a similar clause last session.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 695.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—When speaking on the Address in Reply I said that I hoped the Government would not weaken by introducing this legislation and consequently I cannot say now that I am happy about this Bill. I do not want to be one who says that Mrs. Cooper has no right to be here as this Bill implies. I say that she or any other woman who is elected has a right to be here—not a privilege, but a right, and I am supported in my view by the fact that this Bill is retrospective. When the Opposition introduces an amendment that has a retrospective aspect in any Bill it is always fought by members opposite, but here is an occasion when the Government is giving away its rights by saying "You have no right to be here, but we will make it all right for you." Parliament has the responsibility of saying whether women should be eligible to sit in Parliament and I say that it has already said that. The ladies elected at the last election were first chosen by plebiscites of their own Party, and the people at the elections endorsed that selection.

I would like to refer to one or two other matters that are missing from this Bill, but which I have mentioned on several occasions.



It would have been a credit to the Government had it deleted the 30 years of age stipulation. It reminds me that on one occasion when I was selected to stand for a seat in the Legislative Council it was found on inquiry that because I had not reached the age of 30 I had to stand down. Compulsory voting and compulsory enrolment are other things that could have been dealt with.

The PRESIDENT—I am afraid the honourable member is getting out of order. This is a Constitution Bill dealing with one subject and I must keep the honourable member somewhere near that.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I was trying to impress on members how this Bill could be improved.

The PRESIDENT—I am afraid the honourable member cannot improve it except on the subject to which it refers.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—May I move for an instruction to the Committee to allow me to introduce amendments?

The PRESIDENT—I do not think I could allow it even under an instruction because it has nothing to do with the subject matter of the Bill.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Then it is not much use my being here. I do not think there is any necessity for this legislation as Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Steele have every right to sit in Parliament without it.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY (Southern)—I am pleased that the opportunity has been given to enable this matter to be cleared up. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I feel that while there was a doubt about the legality of the position it was the duty of the Government to take action to clear it up. I point out that the Chief Secretary said when introducing the Bill:—

As honourable members are aware, some doubts were expressed during the recent election period as to the eligibility of women to sit as members of either House and, in fact, the question was raised as a matter of law following the nomination of women candidates.

He added that "the legal proceedings were indecisive." Those facts made it obligatory upon the Government to introduce the Bill. He added:—

I said this Bill was rather interesting because we pride ourselves on being the first State in the Commonwealth to give women the suffrage. It is interesting to note that the right of women to a seat in this Parliament should be challenged. This Bill will leave no doubt on the matter; it will write it into the Statute so that there will be no further doubt in future.

Undoubtedly the Constitution Act leaves the matter fairly wide open. Section 12 says:—

No person shall be capable of being elected a member of the Legislative Council unless—

- (a) he is at least 30 years of age; and
- (b) he is a British subject or legally made a denizen of the State; and
- (c) he has resided in the State for at least three years.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—On a point of order. Is the honourable member in order in referring to the 30 years provision as I did?

The PRESIDENT—He is in exactly the same position as the honourable member.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Then stop him.

The PRESIDENT—He has not started yet.

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—Looking at this matter from an historical point of view, it is difficult to trace any decision whereby the vote was actually given to women. I think it was largely accepted by some people and very much questioned by others. I do not know how far I can go back in history without hurting the Leader of the Opposition or being out of order, but the right of women to sit in the Legislative Council or the House of Assembly was dealt with as far back as 1894. It came under an Act of a different title than the Constitution Act, but nevertheless it was discussed and was part of a Bill. I was particularly interested on reading the *Hansard* reports of that measure to find a statement by Sir J. Lancelot Stirling which I thought was very much in line with my own thoughts and attitude with regard to women sitting in Parliament. It brought home to me how old-fashioned I must be because 65 years is a long time, and my views are similar today. I should like to read what he says about it:—

The maintenance of satisfactory family relations was the true principle on which its prosperity depended, and the history of the past showed that the failure of this parental duty was to a large extent contributable to the downfall of the States in which it occurred. The proper parental duty was the establishment and maintenance of home legislation, home ties, home management and home prosperity, and raising up children that they may do honour to themselves, their homes and their country. Was not that a duty noble enough for woman, which if fulfilled to the uttermost would demand the full exercise of all her better powers and gentler instincts?

That is an attitude of mind from which we have departed greatly today. The electors of South Australia have shown in no uncertain manner that they desire women members in both houses of Parliament. Consequently, I think it is time we did something about it and put the position beyond doubt. That it was

a matter of great doubt was evident from those debates. I do not know whether I can mention this Bill, but it included references to the sitting of members in the Legislative Council. It was the Adult Suffrage Bill, 1894, which introduced the right for women to vote for both Houses of Parliament. Clause 4 said:—

Until otherwise provided by Act no woman shall be capable of being elected to Parliament as a member of either House thereof.

That Bill created some controversy in the House. Some honourable members said that, if women were given the power to vote, they would want the right to sit in the House. Other honourable members debated it from the point of view that they would have the right to sit in the House anyway. The result was that this particular clause was struck out of the Bill by a majority of 17 to four, which left the position at that stage in still greater uncertainty.

The matter arose again in 1896, this time in the form of a Bill for an Act to amend and codify the electoral laws. Clause 9 said:—

All British subjects of the age of 30 years who have resided in South Australia for three years are eligible for election as members of the Council.

Clause 10 laid down five years' residence for all but natural born British subjects and said that no public contractor was eligible. The President of the Council at that stage ruled that that Bill could not be proceeded with, and those two clauses were struck out. A fortnight later the same Bill with the deletion of the clauses regarding eligibility of persons for election to Parliament was brought down to the House and discussed. Once again an attempt to clarify the position of the eligibility of women to sit in the Houses of Parliament was criticized, and the position was still left in great doubt.

I feel it is quite time we did something about clarifying the position once and for all. Most people in South Australia are happy that women have been elected to the Houses of Parliament. I have stated my own personal views over a long period, but women now play a part in all spheres of life. In those days, 65 years ago, there was no thought of women going into the army or doing the many things they do today. As Sir Lancelot Stirling said, their functions were almost entirely in the house. In view of the great advance in women's rights and the work that women have done, it is only right that we should meet the desire of the public in this matter and place this legislation on the Statute Book. If we do not do it now the matter will crop up

again shortly. Women having once gained entry into Parliament, if we do not act now we shall have a repetition of the position from time to time. Therefore, I support the Bill.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 698.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—The Bill amends section 73 of the Electoral Act, which entitles certain specified electors to apply for postal vote certificates and postal ballot papers. The amendment is justified and praiseworthy. Citizens who devote their life to certain religious beliefs and make sacrifices are worthy of consideration, and the present Act may conflict with their duties. It is not their intention to avoid their obligations to the State. I commend the Government for introducing legislation to meet the wishes of those concerned and support the second reading.

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 15. Page 699.)

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—(Central No. 1)—I support the second reading of this Bill, which is really a piece of machinery legislation. As the result of a recent reclassification of many officers by the Public Service Board, it is now proposed that senior public servants are to receive increases in salaries. They include the Agent-General, the Auditor-General, the Commissioner of Police, the President and Deputy President of the State Industrial Court, the Commissioner of Railways, and the Commissioner of Highways. The Labor Party has always supported proposed increases in salaries and wages. The officers to receive increases cannot apply through the Industrial Court because their salaries are fixed by Statute. We appreciate their work and their integrity displayed in carrying out their duties.

The Hon. Sir FRANK PERRY secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 5.14 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, September 17, at 2.15 p.m.