

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Wednesday, April 6, 1960.

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

**QUESTIONS.****FAIRVIEW ESTATE ROADS.**

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES—I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES—I am aware that new roads to areas such as Fairview Estate are normally financed out of grants from the Federal Aid Rural Areas Grant. I appreciate that houses are not yet built on the blocks in this estate and that money from this Federal source will probably be available by the time the blocks are occupied. Nevertheless, the movement of superphosphate and livestock must occur before the coming winter. Does the Minister of Roads propose to allow any further moneys to the district council of Lucindale for this purpose? If not, will moneys to provide temporary road facilities, which will probably be necessary, have to come from grants already allocated to access roads for districts that have applied for many years for funds for this purpose?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The department has been fully aware of the need for access roads in these newly developed districts and has, at some considerable disadvantage to longer settled districts during the last five or six years or even more, devoted considerable sums from the Federal Aid Rural Areas Grant to make certain that access roads were provided wherever possible for soldier settlers. Due to the virtual cessation of the soldier settlement scheme in the South-East and the fact that the Commonwealth Government did not support the purchase of Fairview Estate for soldier settlement, it has been let on lease and the Lucindale Council has already approached me with regard to the allocation of funds for access roads. However, I have had to reply that we have already made a very fair allocation for access roads in that area from the Federal Aid Rural Areas Grant and that any future grants, particularly for newly leased lands which are virtually non-residential for the moment, will have to take reasonable priority with those who have been settled far longer in the country and still have no good access roads, particularly during the winter in very wet years.

**SLEEPER BERTH ACCOMMODATION ON SOUTH-EAST EXPRESS.**

The Hon. L. H. DENSLEY—In view of the report that only one sleeper coach will be available for the South-East train during Easter has the Minister of Railways any information he can give the Council?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—I was most concerned to hear that the usual allocation we have been able to have for the South-East train, namely, two sleepers, has been reduced to one on the occasion of the Easter weekend. The position is that all of the sleeping cars that work on both the South-East and the Melbourne lines are joint stock owned by the Victorian and South Australian Railways Departments. The Victorian Department has been prepared to make two cars available on a considerable number of occasions—in fact, almost regularly—but there are occasions such as Christmas time and Easter when the Victorian Railways Department is not prepared to forgo its rights to the use of these carriages on the Melbourne main line. We have 17 sleeper coaches, 12 of which are fully booked out *ex* Melbourne on Easter Thursday night and five fully booked *ex* Adelaide on the same night. Consequently, the Victorian Railways Department, despite our representations, is not prepared to incommode passengers who have already made bookings. Therefore, we are unable to obtain the use of an additional sleeping coach for the South-East.

**FUNDS FOR RENMARK IRRIGATION TRUST.**

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I ask leave to make a statement prior to asking a question.  
Leave granted.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN—I am in receipt of a letter from Renmark which is, in effect, a complaint relative to the Renmark Irrigation Trust Act of 1959 under which a sum of money was to be made available to the trust for the purpose of carrying out drainage works. I understand that following on the passage of the legislation the trust was informed that it could proceed with the work in the expectation of receiving a grant from the State Government. Accordingly, it has proceeded to carry out the work to the extent that its own funds permitted. I am informed that 34 men have been dismissed and that there is a likelihood of more being dismissed this week because, owing to the lack of funds, the work is coming to a standstill. I ask the Minister of Local Government—(1) how much money has been made available to the Renmark Irrigation Trust

under the 1959 Act; (2) will the Government make money available to the Renmark Irrigation Trust immediately to enable drainage work to proceed?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—As the question is somewhat involved I suggest that the honourable member place it on the Notice Paper.

#### EYRE PENINSULA HAULIERS.

The Hon. E. H. EDMONDS (on notice)—What are the terms of the licence granted by the Transport Control Board to Western Hauliers Ltd., for co-ordinated rail and road services to the western areas of Eyre Peninsula?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE—The Chairman, Transport Control Board, reports:—

Western Hauliers Limited has been granted a licence to March 31, 1963, for the carriage of goods and livestock between Port Pirie and those areas on Eyre Peninsula not previously served by Adelaide—Eyre Peninsula road and rail co-ordinated service. The licence fee is 5 per cent of the gross earnings. The company will use the railway between Adelaide and Port Pirie.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from April 5. Page 29.)

The Hon. F. J. CONDON (Leader of the Opposition)—I endorse what has been said concerning the reply to the Speech of His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, and have previously addressed myself to paying respects to those mentioned in the Address. On a number of occasions during the past few years the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Mellis Napier, has opened sessions of Parliament with great dignity, and I believe it would be a great honour if the present Lieutenant-Governor were to be appointed the new Governor of South Australia.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph—Hear, hear!

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Federal Government has on two occasions appointed an Australian Governor-General in the persons of the late Sir Isaac Isaacs and Sir William McKell and the Western Australian Government appointed an Australian, Sir James Mitchell, as its Governor. Would any person suggest that our love and respect for the Mother Country has lessened because of those appointments? I say the answer is "no"; the ties between the Throne and South Australia are too strong to be broken and our loyalty to the Throne cannot be shaken. I earnestly ask the Government to consider this

matter. What a wonderful tribute it would be to the honourable gentleman who has done so much for South Australia.

I offer my congratulations to the mover of the Address in Reply, the Hon. Mr. Giles. His speech was well delivered and thoughtful. He placed forcibly before honourable members the case for the man on the land, and he asked for more favourable consideration for the landholder. I agree with a great deal of what the honourable member said, and I trust that his speech will prove fruitful. Courtesy demands that I also congratulate the seconder of the motion for his fearless and outspoken speech. I have no doubt that his speech represented the height of sincerity, and judged by the way it was received by the majority of honourable members it was well supported. However, it should not be expected that we on this side of the House would agree with what the honourable member said, and I am sure he would be disappointed if I did not offer some criticism. My first reaction was to ignore what he said, but on reflection, as I thought it was a first-class Commo speech and one that would be supported by some of his colleagues who no doubt wanted to lower the prestige of those he criticized, I think it needs some reply. I assure my honourable friend that I have no desire to be personal and I want him to accept what I say in the spirit in which it is offered. It does not matter what members of the Australian Labor Party say in defence because our Liberal colleagues would not be convinced.

My Labor colleagues on this side of the Council have acquired considerable knowledge and experience in both the State Industrial and Federal Arbitration Courts and they are well able to defend the persons who have been severely criticized by the honourable member. An attack has been made on our judiciary, on our conciliation commissioners, on union officials, and on union secretaries, and I repeat that the attack was most unwarranted and it was certainly something I have never before heard here during my term of office in Parliament and I hope I never hear it again. In defence of those who have been attacked I say that I have been associated with them for very many years and I pay a high tribute to those men for the very active part that they have taken towards furthering industrial peace in South Australia. There can be no doubt that industrial peace does exist in this State to a greater extent than in any other State of the Commonwealth. That has contributed to the good friendship and feeling that exists between employers and employees, and speeches of the

type we heard here yesterday can only disrupt the present happy relations that exist between both parties.

Let us examine what the honourable member said. I do not think he meant what he said, but he did make personal remarks about some members of the judiciary and those I have mentioned already. I ask members to pardon me for giving details of my association with the trade union movement and the principles for which that movement stands, but my first association with a judge of the Federal Arbitration Court was in 1907. He was the late Mr. Justice Higgins, and the Hon. Sir Frank Perry will remember him. Since that date I have been associated in Federal and State Courts with nearly every judge who has occupied the bench, and recently I had the honour again of appearing before a commissioner. During that period I have received several knock-backs, but I have never squealed because a case went against me. I have never complained because the court did not do what I thought it should do. I have had to take a few knock-backs in this place, and I can recall one in particular. Honourable members will remember the Premier's plan when the Conciliation and Arbitration Court reduced wages throughout Australia by 10 per cent. In 1932 the then Government introduced a Bill to reduce Ministers' salaries by 10 per cent. Then the Leader of the Liberal Party in this Chamber, the late Sir David Gordon, who became President of this Chamber, moved an amendment to reduce all members' salaries which I challenged, taking the stand that it was outside the scope of the Bill. Some members of the Liberal Party came to me and said, "I think you are right," and I replied, "I shall know tomorrow after you have had your caucus meeting." And what happened? The amendment was supported by you, Mr. President, and carried. There was a reduction. However, I did not squeal, not like the squealing we heard yesterday. I simply had to take it, because it was done constitutionally.

Whatever has been done during the basic wage and the margins cases has been done constitutionally. I am sure that my honourable friend opposite does not want it otherwise. I will take the opportunity to show why there should be a Federal Arbitration Court. Certain South Australians have been compelled to go to that court because they were denied a wages board. I know, because the association I have represented for many years was one of the parties concerned. We were compelled to

affiliate with certain unions in the other States so that we could approach the Arbitration Court to have our claim heard. We have the same thing today. We in the Labor Party have endeavoured to amend the Industrial Code, but have been refused because it is said there are not sufficient members in a particular industry to warrant the granting of a wages board. Therefore, unions are forced to go to the Federal Court. No matter what court one has to approach, I stand for conciliation and arbitration, have always stood for it, and hope I shall never depart from what I think is the best offering.

In the pre-war days, and during the first period of World War I, owing to a racket of employers, the cost of living in South Australia increased by 28 per cent and the Liberal Party appointed a Prices Regulations Commission. Although prices were increased by 28 per cent in the 12-month period, not one person by a court award, agreement or wages board determination, or any other method, had his wages increased, and we have been chasing that 28 per cent ever since. That is still the position today. If we want to compete in overseas markets, we want to be on an equal basis and we do not want one State to have an unfair advantage over another. We had that position in South Australia before. Many State unions approached the Federal Court, with the result that we now have one set of wages, with consequent fair and equal competition on overseas markets. I take it that my friend is objecting to awards of the court. Judging from his speech, he does not want to see wages increased.

The Hon. F. J. Potter—Do you really think I said that?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—However, the honourable member, during this session, will be opposing a continuation of the prices legislation. He does not want the worker to receive any improvement, and he does not care what charges are made for goods. During the current session we shall hear him further opposing the fixation of prices for another 12 months. I am not objecting to that. He has a right to his opinion, and I do not fall out with him because he expressed that opinion, but I want to put the point of view of the men he criticised. There is no feeling in the matter, because this is a place for every honourable member to express his opinion. We cannot all be of the one opinion, but at least we should respect the views of others.

Who was responsible for the present standard of living in Australia? I say that it was the trade union movement, because it initiated the

procedure. The unions went to the court set up for the purpose and stated their case, and in doing so spent time, money and energy in order to get what they thought was a reasonable and just wage. Their having achieved some improvement, who got the benefit of it? With very few exceptions, every person from the man who opened this Parliament down to the man on the basic wage. Do public servants, from those who recently received increases of up to £260 a year down to those on the lower ranges, recognize who was responsible for their receiving their present wages? I do not care what a man asks for if he asks for it constitutionally. I am, and have always been, opposed to strikes. I favour conciliation and arbitration, and more is done by conciliation than by arbitration. That is achieved not by one side but by the reasonableness of both sides.

I regret that honourable members applaud what my honourable friend said, because I think he has done an injustice to those who have had a long connection with the courts and have always endeavoured to be fair and reasonable and carry out the decisions of the courts. Let me deal with one statement he made about the Federal Arbitration Court being used only for private industry. If that came about there would be chaos in industry. If a firm had half its men under a Federal award and half not, it would cause dissatisfaction if one half got no increases while the other did, both working in the one industry. Therefore, if we are to have arbitration at all, let us have one set of conditions where one employer can be in a position to compete with another. As regards overseas markets, I remember other States granting subsidies to industries to the detriment of this State.

The Hon. C. R. Story—Which industries were they?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Flour milling. That is one of the reasons, together with what I have already stated, why we federated, so that each State's subsidy should be knocked out and each State should be put on one rate of wages so that the South Australian employer and manufacturer could compete on equal terms with employers and manufacturers in other States. Are there any more questions?

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—The Arbitration Court would not even say that.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Arbitration Court has not pleased my honourable friend and some others, but it is a judicial body.

The Hon. F. J. Potter—What do you say about it trespassing on the State?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—We say a lot about that. There is uniform taxation. This State is not worried about getting its taxation powers back. That applies to other things, too.

The Hon. A. J. Shard—It was anxious to have the same wage.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—For the Hon. Mr. Potter's information, the year before uniform taxation came into operation the surplus in South Australia was £1,250,000, but the South Australian Liberal Government did nothing about it. Why? Everybody was satisfied, but that does not alter the present position.

The Hon. F. J. Potter—That is my point. We can do what we like with our taxation, but we cannot do what we like with arbitration.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—As a matter of fact, you have done something about arbitration.

The PRESIDENT—Order!

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I will tell the honourable member what the Federal Government has done to arbitration. The Federal Government amended the Arbitration Act. At one time one single Arbitration Judge had the right to grant long service leave, and long service leave was granted. Then the employers, through their action with the Federal Government, said, "We want an amendment of the Act," and the Act was amended so that no single judge had the right to give long service leave. Therefore, one has to go before the Full Commission now. In my opinion that action was weakening the Arbitration Act.

The Hon. G. O'H. Giles—Parliament discussed the position before the amendment was moved.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, and the Federal Parliament can discuss doing away with the Arbitration Court if it so desires. It tried once, but the Federal Government was defeated on that issue. Let my friend try to influence it in another attempt. The basic wage was increased during 1959. The Commission held that industry could carry on without any increased prices but what happened? Within a day or two, although the court in its judgment said that in its opinion it could carry on, it did not carry on without increasing prices. What did the court say, supported by followers of the Liberal Party? What does it say today?

The Hon. G. O'H. Giles—It said that primary production could handle it, but it cannot.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I will come to primary production soon and my honourable

friend may not like what I have to say. The Government says, "There is prosperity." The Premier and his supporters go out and say, "Oh, we are in a prosperous position in South Australia." Then why all this cry of, "We are not in a position to do it? Keep your wages down, but keep your prices up." If it is fair to fix wages then it is fair to fix prices.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan—Who tied the State basic wage to the Commonwealth?—this present State Government.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Well, what happened in the basic wage case? What happened in the margins case? This Government sent its top-rankers over to Melbourne to oppose the applications for basic wage and marginal increases. It had a perfect right to do it—I am not objecting to that—but let us tell the people concerned who was responsible for it. The Government goes out and says it is a friend of the workers. Why does it do these things? Why did it go to the Arbitration Court and ask for a reduction in the basic wage but at the same time try to bluff the people that it supported the workers? I do not blame the Government for presenting its case before the tribunal, but if it does so it should not pretend to be the friend of the workers. The Government has never missed an opportunity open to it to try to prevent the workers getting increases and therefore it is the Government's responsibility, which cannot be denied.

The Hon. F. J. Potter—If you do not think that I was right you had better read the top press in today's *News* before you go on.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I have not seen the press so I cannot comment on that. My honourable friend made his speech yesterday and I am making mine today. According to the honourable member the decisions of the commission were based on the alleged increase in the prosperity of Australia. He said, "That is quite clear from the judgment," but I suggest that the court distinctly said that Australia was in a position to pay increases and that the country was prosperous. The honourable member disputed that and criticized the court unfairly.

The Hon. F. J. Potter—I disputed the way in which the commission measured prosperity.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Exactly, but that does not alter the fact that the honourable member attacked the commission. He went further and had a shot at union secretaries—men who have done more to keep industrial peace in South Australia than any employer he

cares to mention, including my honourable friend on my right, Sir Frank Perry. Mr. Potter said that one of the main reasons is that union secretaries are subject to re-election every 12 months and run the risk of losing their job if they do not do something to benefit their workers. That was quite unfair. I say that union secretaries do great work in the interests of industrial peace. How often do they approach members when a dispute is pending, asking for their assistance to prevent the strike? I could mention dozens of cases, and I think it very unfair of the honourable member to attack them in such a way.

Another statement by the honourable member was that the average wage was £20 a week, and the basic wage was only £13 a week. He must have included people who are getting £4,000 a year or more, people who have had their margins increased by £260, and averaged them. How many men are receiving £20 a week?

The Hon. F. J. Potter—How many are on the basic wage today?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—There may be a few getting £20, but members of the profession to which my honourable friend belongs receive the benefit from marginal increases without having to go to the court. It is all very well for members to attack the basic wage, but what interest have they in it? Look around this Chamber. It is easy to smear those to whom we owe a lot, not only in South Australia but throughout Australia. The honourable member went on to say, "It is plain that the State Industrial Court does not agree but is forced by circumstances to follow the Commonwealth line."

The Hon. F. J. Potter—That is what they said.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—We accept that, but does the honourable member believe in two rates of wage?

The Hon. F. J. Potter—Even the court does not apparently.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Federal court has always maintained that if a union operates in two States it is entitled to approach the court. If a manufacturer has goods to sell does he not sell them in the best market offering? He will sell them to any country as long as he gets the best price. Has not the employee the same right to go to the court with a request for what he thinks is fair and reasonable?

The Hon. F. J. Potter—Well, one of the courts must be wrong.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not think the honourable member was very right in his speech yesterday because he picked out certain portions of the judgment. I have it before me and I could pick out a lot of things in reply to my friend, but time does not permit. He suggested that the day was not far distant when all State Governments would demand that the Conciliation and Arbitration Act be amended so as to apply only to persons engaged in private enterprise. Surely that would only create chaos because there would be different rates of wages—one fixed by the State Court and one by the Federal Court, and we know that rates fixed by the State Court always lag behind the Federal rates. It would simply cause discontent amongst a body of employees when they should be all working in harmony. Again, he said, “The Commonwealth Arbitration tribunals affect State concerns.” Does he not believe in them? We do, and we think that this system is the best way to maintain harmony in industry. The commission’s judgment of November 27, 1959, in the metal trades case increased the rate for tradesmen-fitters by 21s. a week, representing 28 per cent increase in the margin. The action of the trade union movement comprising the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Trades and Labor Council, and other organizations was responsible for this award which has been the means of improving the position of everybody else—except members of Parliament, for I have not heard of any increase in our salaries. Nearly everybody else is receiving or will receive increases in margins by virtue of the decision of the court.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—It does not follow that it will help them more than momentarily.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I agree that it does not help them when wages are increased if the increase is taken away next day. We are still chasing that 28 per cent and we are below the standard we had in 1953, but what unions are most concerned about is the restoration of quarterly adjustments. Since they were taken away by the court the standard of living has fallen considerably. I suggest—

- (1) That the function of the commission is to fix a basic wage which is just and reasonable, and to fulfil adequately this function the commission must have regard to changes in the real value of the wage.
- (2) The basic wage fixed by the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration in September, 1953, was

within the capacity of the economy to sustain and this capacity has not diminished since September, 1953, but on the contrary has increased. Therefore the real value of the basic wage should be higher than the basic wage fixed on that date.

- (3) Having fixed a wage assumed to be just and reasonable at the time of fixation the commission should take steps to ensure that the real value of such wage is maintained.
- (4) The commission should therefore adopt and apply principles which will ensure that such wage does not cease to be just and reasonable by reason of increased prices.

If the commission does not apply such principles a decision made after long hearings can quickly be rendered meaningless by subsequent price variations.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Who made those statements?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—They were the reasons put before the commission.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—By whom?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—By the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

The Hon. Sir Frank Perry—Now we have it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Mr. Potter said yesterday that the court had no right to make these decisions and I am pointing out reasons that we submitted in support of what we considered to be reasonable.

The Hon. L. H. Densley—Now you are telling the court what to do.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I am not.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—Our national income is lower too.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I heard the honourable member talk about the prosperity of South Australia. When Australia is prosperous should not the workers be entitled to some share of the prosperity? They do not say, “We are going to take our share,” but submit their case to the properly constituted tribunal and it is for the tribunal to say whether their case is reasonable or not. The basic wages prescribed under these awards are the result of past price increases above the standard of wages determined by the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration and also the Commission’s assessment of the capacity of the economy to stand wage increases. Because of increased prices and the suspension of quarterly adjustments, many wage earners are now compelled to subsist

on a lower standard of living than that which applied in 1933, and this, despite the fact that the prosperity of the community has not diminished since that time. On the contrary, it has increased.

The price increases which have occurred since the fixation of the basic wages in the awards of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration since September, 1953, show that there is a capacity to pay increased money wages. The adjustments of wages in accordance with movements in prices is desirable on the ground of justice and fairness and on economic grounds. The effect of the suspension of quarterly adjustments has been to prevent the wages of many workers employed under awards from rising with the changes in price levels, whereas prices charged by employers have been free to rise. Despite any increase in the basic wage, many awards remain below the wage which would have been prescribed had a system of quarterly adjustments continued to operate. The argument of the trade union movement is that the quarterly adjustments should not have been discontinued, but the court adopted other methods, and it has been left open to us, the same as it has been left open to the employer organizations, to approach the court. That is in accord with our policy. We approach the court, and after presenting our case we say it is up to the court to make the decision, and whatever the decision we abide by it.

The Hon. C. R. Story—That is what our friend was complaining about.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not understand his attitude. I return now to the speech of the Hon. Mr. Giles. He said that we have just experienced the worst drought since 1914, and I'm afraid that things do not look too promising for 1960.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—Do not get too gloomy.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I have taken that point because I have heard a few others crying here in spite of all the talk of prosperity. The crop return was estimated at 5,000,000 bushels, but the State harvested 9,000,000 bushels, and that, together with the carry-over of 5,000,000 bushels, meant that South Australia had 14,000,000 bushels of wheat, which quantity was sufficient to obviate the necessity of this State importing wheat from a sister State.

The Hon. Mr. Giles represents the man on the land, and I have always supported legislation to assist the man on the land because I believe he is entitled to every consideration.

We have legislation that makes the home market pay for losses on the export market. If you want to buy a bushel of wheat today to have it milled for home consumption you pay 15s. 3d. The point I am making is that we are, as far as possible, trying to assist the farmer. It is our duty to do that, and we have to realize that Australia owes a lot to primary production, but, on the other hand, we have to remember that secondary industry has taken a very important place in Australian markets and in our economy. We are very often apt to overlook that fact, and are not at all times ready to extend similar consideration to some sections of secondary industry as is extended to primary producers. I ask honourable members, and particularly those associated with the wheat industry, what are we receiving from the overseas markets? What are we receiving as against the home price of 15s. 3d.? The answer is 2s. 3d. a bushel less than we have to pay in South Australia. South Australia has to pay 3d. more for wheat for home consumption, or for export purposes, than any other State in Australia.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson—For many years it was the other way about.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but two wrongs do not make a right. I do not object to paying 15s. 3d. a bushel to help the farmer, but I point out that when honourable members say we are doing nothing, that is wrong, because we are at least doing something. The same comments apply to butter. Two years ago a subsidy of £15,000,000 was paid by the Australian people to the dairying industry, and I supported that because it was necessary. Butter cost 4s. 6d. a pound in South Australia, and the price in England at the same time was 1s. 6d. We paid high prices for butter because it was necessary to consider the men on the land, and I am prepared to continue my support for the primary producer.

The Hon. G. O'H. Giles—Do you still think we are doing enough?

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—The Commonwealth Minister for Primary Production said in Hobart recently (about the Australian farm and export income):—

Bearing in mind the difficulty at this stage of the season in forecasting the year's result, it seems from the available evidence that the net farm income will be about £460,000,000, or 8 per cent above last year's level. The improved position is largely due to increased export returns. The value of exports of rural origin in 1959-60 is estimated to be about £760,000,000, an increase of £130,000,000, as compared with the export income in 1958-59.

That is not my statement, but it is a statement of a Federal Minister, made when he was addressing a conference of the Australian Agricultural Council. I believe that South Australia was represented at that council by the Minister of Agriculture. That is our reply to some of the remarks made by honourable members here.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—That statement came before the fall in the price of wool.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—Yes, but the Federal Minister was talking about everything. I am trying to place on record what he said. When it comes to electoral time we hear about nothing but prosperity, but when it comes to the question of the workers getting anything, everything is bad. If marginal increases cannot be granted in the present time of prosperity it is difficult to imagine when they can be granted.

I have one or two other matters to speak upon that I think may interest honourable members more than the points I have already raised. I have taken the opportunity of replying on behalf of those I represent here, and have said what I believe to be correct. Just over six months ago the Treasurer estimated that the deficit for this financial year would be £791,000. That estimate has now been increased to £2,000,000, and it appears that there may be a further increase before June 30. The gross loan expenditure recently agreed to by Parliament was £29,000,000, and the revised figure will be of the order of £27,000,000. Credits approximating £3,500,000 will bring the net loan expenditure to a little over £23,500,000. Things are not looking too bright in that direction, and I hope that they will improve before long. I do not intend to refer to the milling industry because there will be an opportunity later for me to do that.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill—That to me is disappointing.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not think that anything I said would satisfy my honourable friend. I now turn to the problem of water supplies. Much expenditure has been incurred in pumping water from the River Murray, but I think we have much to be thankful for because water restrictions have not been imposed. I do not know whether that happy position will continue until the end of June. It is well for us to examine our financial position. We have spent much money over a few years on water schemes, and we shall have to spend more. Despite what has been spent, and what has been done, we find that in

many districts there is and will continue to be a shortage of water. It is proposed to duplicate the Morgan-Whyalla main and this will cost a huge amount of money. It will not be a full extension, but whatever the cost, it will be money well spent. Owing to the growth of population and the increased demand for water it will be necessary for the Engineering and Water Supply Department to find additional sites for reservoirs in the Adelaide hills. In referring to returns from our water schemes, I am not in any way critical, because I realize it is necessary, in order to develop the State, to spend colossal sums, with little or no hope of good returns. The funds employed in our water undertakings up to last year amounted to £54,000,000, an increase of £5,000,000 compared with the previous year. There was an overall loss on our water works for the year ended June, 1959, of more than £1,500,000 made up as follows:—Country schemes, £1,227,000; metropolitan area, £369,000.

It is only a few years ago that the metropolitan water district showed a profit of more than 11 per cent. In all the undertakings, except in the Adelaide and Barossa districts, and the Morgan-Whyalla scheme, earnings failed to meet working expenses. The Adelaide water district returned 2.4 per cent on the mean funds employed, Barossa 1.8 per cent, and the Morgan-Whyalla main less than 1 per cent. For the Tod River district total expenses amounted to more than four times the earnings, and for Beetaloo the total expenses were nearly two and a half times the earnings. During the year total expenses increased by three per cent and working expenses were down six per cent, but interest charges increased by 11 per cent. The quantity of water pumped by the department through the Adelaide-Mannum main during 1958-59 amounted to 5,000,000,000 gallons compared with 14,000,000,000 gallons during the previous year. Bad as things may appear financially, they will be worse at the end of this financial year. Water is the cheapest commodity we have, but I am not advocating any increase in prices. There will be a new waterworks assessment this year, particularly in country areas, and according to press reports there will be an increase in land taxes. I have taken the following from the *Pirie Recorder* of March 28:—

Country charges to rise this year—Water charges, council rates and land tax in country districts are expected to rise late this year after the gazettal of a new land tax, because of the rise in land values, which have increased more over the past five years than in any previous five years.

It will be for the councils concerned to decide whether they increase council rates or not, but I should not think any increase will take place until 1962. Mr. Giles in his speech referred to the operations of the Electricity Trust, which I consider has done a wonderful job in serving portions of the State that were previously severely handicapped. This amenity has been of great assistance to country dwellers. The first time that the Electricity Trust Bill was before this Chamber it was defeated on your casting vote, Mr. President, but three months later there was a special session of Parliament and this legislation was carried by one vote. It would not have been on the Statute Book today but for Labor members of the Legislative Council, and surely they are entitled to some credit.

The Hon. C. R. Story—It would not have been there if the Government had not initiated it.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—I do not think the time is far distant when this place will be a thing of the past and the State will be run by the Ministry. If the Ministry is doing such a wonderful job, why have any Parliament at all? The Public Works Standing Committee recommended on July 25, 1956, that a closed bridge be constructed at Port Adelaide at a cost of £315,000 to replace the existing Jervois Bridge. This proposal did not suit some people. As a member of the committee, I will not pass any judgment, because with other members of the committee I am guided by the evidence submitted. If there are altered circumstances, the committee must consider them. This matter was referred back to the committee in February, 1958, under the following reference:—

The construction of a bridge across the Port River to replace the existing Jervois Bridge and in particular whether an opening type bridge should be constructed in preference to a fixed type bridge as heretofore recommended by the said committee.

According to the authorities, the present Jervois Bridge is in a bad state of repair. I cannot understand why the committee's recommendation of 1956 was not given effect to.

If it had been, probably we should not be faced with our present difficulties. I issue a warning. Prior to the present Birkenhead Bridge being built a recommendation was made that a bridge should be constructed from Commercial Road to Elder Road. However, the matter was referred back to the committee. I do not want to say any more on why the committee altered its decision. I did not change my vote. What a mistake has been made is realized now, because the bridge was constructed in the wrong place. Had it been constructed on the site first recommended, there would not be the congestion at present existing in Port Adelaide streets. As a member of the committee, one has to sit in judgment and cannot make any comment why a decision should be altered unless the evidence justifies such alteration.

I assure the Government that the Opposition will assist in the passing of any reasonable legislation brought before the House. I am very disappointed that in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech no reference is made to the introduction of any industrial legislation. For instance, there is not one line referring to the Workmen's Compensation Act.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—I thought that everything was going smoothly.

The Hon. F. J. CONDON—For a considerable time the Opposition has been asking the Premier and other Ministers to submit legislation in the interests of those we represent. I refer particularly to the scaffolding legislation, the Industrial Code, the Workmen's Compensation Act and an amendment relating to the State Arbitration Court. I ask the Government to consider what I have mentioned in reference to industrial matters and introduce legislation that will be of some benefit to the people whom the Labor Party represents.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.39 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, April 7, at 2.15 p.m.