

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

Wednesday, April 20, 1960.

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

**QUESTIONS.****NEW UNIVERSITY.**

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH—In this morning's press appears a report of a reply given by the Premier to a question in another place with regard to the establishment of a second university. The Premier indicated that the subject had not been discussed by Cabinet; in other words, that the position was in a state of flux. When it does consider the question will the Government consider calling an architectural competition among the practising architects of South Australia in order that they may be able to compete and submit designs for any proposed new university?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN—I assure the honourable member that every aspect will be considered when such an important decision is being discussed.

**LAND SUBDIVISIONS.**

The Hon. F. J. POTTER—I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER—I refer to the report in this morning's paper of a statement by the Attorney-General, and various comments by other people, concerning the subdivision of land far out from the suburbs of the city. One gentleman was reported as commenting that the price of land has been too low for a long time. In the closer suburbs I think that is probably true, and with the pressure of an increasing population values perhaps should continue to rise there, but the other matter referred to by the Minister—the wide-spread subdivision for sale of good agricultural land far from the city—is, I consider, a very real and disturbing problem, and persons investing therein will have little or no chance of any quick capital profit. Allied to this question of subdivision is the other problem referred to in the statement—that of the roads already constructed which are likely to suffer rapid deterioration. Does the Government intend to take any action on these subdivisions or impose any additional controls other than those already exercised by the Town Planner?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE—In about August or September last year I made a statement expressing some concern about the large

amount of subdivisional activity going on. I pointed out then that the rate at which new building allotments were being created was faster than at any other time in the State's history. I thought at that time that we had probably reached the peak, but that was not so, and for the month of March this year the number of plans of subdivisions lodged in the Town Planner's office was an all-time record, and at the present rate at which we are receiving applications this year enough allotments will be created to meet the estimated requirements for at least the next five years. When these facts are considered in relation to other facts which I propose to mention I think it is obvious that we are heading for what may be some difficulties and problems in connection with this matter. Firstly, the density of population in Adelaide is only 5.7 persons an acre, which is the lowest for any city that I know of with a population of about half a million people.

Secondly, there are also in the built-up area of Adelaide over 14,000 vacant allotments which already have water and sewerage, light and power, and transport facilities available to them, and from a Government's point of view it is obviously much wiser that those should be built upon than that allotments in the far-outlying areas should be used. Further, in every city there is the process of reconstruction and replacement which takes place after buildings have served an economic and useful life; that is going on in the city of Adelaide and some of the suburbs. Moreover, we are finding that in many cases public utilities already provided are in excess of present demand; for instance, our transport utilities are not being used to their maximum capacity, and if the density of population were increased in existing areas and those facilities were used to their maximum capacity the cost to the community would be much less than if these facilities have to be provided over these new wide-spread areas.

Another factor is that only about 5 per cent of our population in the metropolitan area live in flats, whereas the percentage in Melbourne and Sydney is at least 10 per cent, and it does appear that we are gradually creeping up to the other cities in that regard, which means that more people will live within the prescribed areas. Therefore, it seems to me that when all these facts are taken into consideration it will be seen that the possibility of some of the scattered lands at present being subdivided being built upon and developed and provided with amenities and services which

people living in houses nowadays require—sewers, water, roads, transportation, schools and hospitals—must of necessity be some years ahead when it is considered in relation to the fact that the Government has not an unlimited supply of Loan money; and any allocation of Loan money must be such that it is spent where it will give the greatest return and provide the greatest degree of satisfaction to the majority of the population.

In reply, therefore, to the honourable member's question, I have to advise that all these matters will be considered by Cabinet in due course before it brings down an amendment to the Town Planning Act which was indicated in His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech would be done during the present session.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from April 19. Page 188.)

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern)—In rising to support the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I should like to associate myself with the expressions of loyalty voiced in this Chamber to Her Majesty the Queen; also to congratulate her and Prince Philip upon the birth of Prince Andrew. This adds another interesting member to the Royal Family, which is all to the good. Although I know it is anticipating somewhat, I should like to offer to Her Majesty birthday greetings (for it is her birthday tomorrow) and best wishes for a long life and good health to reign over us for many years to come.

I should like also to express my appreciation to Sir Robert and Lady George for the great services they rendered to this State over the period of seven years during which they occupied the vice-regal position here. On behalf of the outback people, the station people, those in the far-flung parts of the State, I should like to thank Sir Robert and Lady George for the many visits they made to those parts of the State. I am sure those visits were appreciated by everyone, for they made them feel that they were not forgotten people.

Sir Mellis Napier, the Chief Justice, delivered the opening Speech in a dignified and forceful manner. We do appreciate the lustre that Sir Mellis has bestowed upon the judiciary in this State and the many services he has rendered in other capacities.

Mr. President, I should like to say how pleased we are to see you regaining your health and presiding over us in this Chamber.

Your rule has always been conducive to harmony. I will admit that sometimes you may quip a member for being slow in rising to move that the debate on the Address in Reply be adjourned, but we do appreciate the manner in which you control the Chamber. To the relatives of the late Mr. George Hambour I should like to express my deepest sympathy and to say that I believe that his early demise was caused partly by the services he rendered to the people of South Australia. We hope that our sympathy will help them in some measure to bear their sorrow at this time.

I should like also to congratulate the mover and seconder of the motion upon the high standard they set for this debate. As was said in the Lieutenant-Governor's Speech, the past year has been difficult and trying, particularly to primary producers. The Honourable Mrs. Cooper yesterday dealt with the advancement in agricultural science and the services conferred upon the agricultural community by officers of the C.S.I.R.O. and other departments. We owe a great debt to those officers, particularly those of the C.S.I.R.O., for what they have done not only for primary production but for other industries in the State.

The Honourable Mrs. Cooper compared the returns of 1914 with those of 1959. I suggest that several factors played some part in accounting for the difference between them. It is interesting to note the production for those years. In 1914 we had a production of 3,520,000 bushels for an average of only 1.41 bushels an acre, while this past year we had 11,700,000 bushels with a return of 7.7 bushels an acre. I believe that that was in great measure brought about by the incidence of the rainfall. In 1914 the year broke at the end of April or early May, and there was a period of little rain until October. Quite a lot of that year's rain—about 12 inches—fell in the latter part of the year, outside the growing period altogether. In addition, today we have better farming practices arising from mechanization, and the introduction of the tractor and the combine, which enable the producer to do the job more quickly and efficiently than he could with the old horse teams. They enable the grain to be sown properly: it is sown in one action. With the fast-moving implement, all the grain is placed on the seed bed, at the bottom, in the soil reservoir as it were, and it then germinates much more readily. Water is available to it and production is much greater than under the old method of the slow-moving implement from which the seed fell amongst the drier particles of soil and did not germinate so readily.

It is thought that, considering our lower production, we are going through this year very well indeed with the assistance of secondary industries. I should like to express my appreciation for the development that has taken place in South Australia and the Commonwealth in those industries. It gives us a much more balanced economy and an outlet for our primary products, which is very satisfactory. I would suggest that the bad effects of the last poor season have yet to be felt. I do not want to strike a pessimistic note, but we have to face the issue as we see it. I should say that we went through last year with a normal wool season. Most of the sheep were shorn from April until the spring, and we had a normal wool clip with a reasonable price. With our depleted flocks this year, I know of a case where a station property produced 251 bales of wool last year but has shorn only 38 bales this year. Another that had 130 bales last year is down to 16 this year. Our economy has also been greatly affected by deferred payments on wheat and barley. Because of the system of marketing adopted by the two boards concerned certain deferred payments are made from year to year according to the time when the full realization of the crop in a particular year has been completed. Those payments have, in a measure, helped to tide the State over the present difficult period. In addition to this, approximately £400,000,000 has been spent on hire-purchase and has been poured into the economy, thereby keeping the secondary industries buoyant. I think we, as a people, are spending at a greater rate than is justified by the present outlook. It has been estimated that Australia is spending about £200,000,000 a year more than the country is earning. In other words we are taking out of the pool about £200,000,000 more than we are putting into it.

I do not intend to enumerate details of the expansion that has taken place in our secondary industries—the proposed steelworks at Whyalla, the new oil refinery, and many other industries—but I especially mention the proposed expansion of industry in Port Pirie, not because that town is in my district but because grave concern was expressed about the prospects of Port Pirie and the effect that the development of Cockle Creek near Newcastle would have on that town. When in New South Wales the Public Works Committee made it its business to visit Cockle Creek and inspect the industry there because it is a sister industry to that in Port Pirie. The committee's intention was to find out what the prospects of development

were at Cockle Creek and what effect that development would have on Port Pirie. Certain expansion has been planned for Port Pirie and the improvements to the wharves and the deepening of the harbour will affect the position. It was considered necessary to find out whether Port Pirie would suffer at the hands of the competitor at Cockle Creek. The committee believes from the information it gained that it is reasonable to suppose that Port Pirie has a good future before it.

It is pleasing to note that the Broken Hill Associated Smelters proposes to treat the slag dump at the back of the Port Pirie works. I can remember that slag dump being built up for practically the whole of my lifetime and there must be millions of tons there. It is considered by some authorities to be the richest zinc mine in the world. The Broken Hill Associated Smelters proposes to treat that and it also proposes to install a charcoal producing plant. I suggest that while these alterations are taking place and while the wharves are being improved, a special effort should be made to complete the standardization of the railway gauge from Broken Hill to Port Pirie and from Port Pirie to Adelaide so that the whole of that work may be carried out in conjunction with the wharf improvement programme and the probable installation of bulk-handling facilities in that town. If that is done it is possible that the railway lines could be taken out of Ellen Street, Port Pirie. That railway running through the centre of the town has been a nightmare and an eyesore to the people there. The removal of the rails would cost too much if undertaken as a single project, but the expense could probably be met if the work were carried out in conjunction with other improvements.

Honourable members will be pleased to hear that the Co-operative Bulk-handling Company will put forward evidence in favour of the installation of bulk-handling facilities in Port Pirie, and I understand it proposes to do that soon. Because of the lack of bulk-handling facilities the whole of the north is at present handicapped and a number of farmers have to rail their produce to Wallaroo. It is estimated that the cost of that differential is something like £76,000 a year. I believe it is desirable that the work at Port Pirie should be put in hand as soon as possible.

In the course of this debate the Hon. Mr. Condon, who is absent on account of illness, had some criticism to make about the price being charged for wheat for home consumption

compared with the export price. The honourable member said that the home consumption price was about 14s. 10d. a bushel and the export price was considerably lower. Although I did not hear exactly what he said I believe he said that the export price of wheat was 13s. 3d. or 13s. 4d. a bushel. I have ascertained that the price is 13s. 4d. a bushel today compared with our home consumption price of 14s. 10d. That has not always been the position. In 1949 I asked a question of the Minister in this Chamber representing the Minister of Agriculture for information with regard to the export price of wheat in pools numbered 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11. I also asked for the price paid to the growers. I refresh honourable members' memories by saying that the information I was given was that wheat was selling at a higher price on the home consumption market than on the overseas market. I shall prove that the present position has not always existed by quoting certain figures. For No. 7 pool the export price was 6s. 5d. a bushel, and payment was made to the growers at 5s. 6½d. a bushel. For later pools the figures were:—

Pool No.	Export Price per bushel.		Price Paid to Producer per bushel.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.
8 . . . .	8	6	5	10
9 . . . .	10	0	7	8
10 . . . .	16	0	9	6
11 . . . .	17	9	13	2½
Year				
1950-51 . . . .	18	8	11	11
1951-52 . . . .	21	2	14	1½
1952-53 . . . .	21	0	12	1

It is estimated that since the pool system has been operating, the growers have contributed to the consumers of this country approximately £200,000,000. During this period a stabilization fund was built up to £20,000,000 to take care of the position when the home consumption price exceeded the export price. That fund has now been reduced to £9,000,000 and it will be drawn upon to some extent this year because the overseas price of wheat is 13s. 4d. a bushel while the cost of production in this State is 14s. 10d. a bushel.

Had the Hon. Mr. Condon been present today, he would probably have asked me a question about the flour position. I took out figures on flour, but as the honourable member is not present I shall reserve comment on that item until later. The State has just passed through a season of very low rainfall, but, with the exception of a short period in the northern country districts, no restrictions have been imposed on the use of water. I think that is something of which the Government

can be proud, and we owe a great deal to the engineers and others responsible for quickly installing booster pumps to keep the flow up to requirements. An extra trunk main was extended from the Mannum-Adelaide service to the Barossa reservoir, which serves the lower end of the peninsula, and this has reduced the load on the Morgan-Whyalla main and enabled a supply to be available to country districts which otherwise would have been in short supply.

It is now proposed to duplicate portion of the Morgan-Whyalla main to provide sufficient water for the development of Whyalla and Iron Knob and to supply Woomera and all the intervening country. I am pleased to notice that generally the water will be taken through country not now served. The main will supply Burra, Hallett and country north-east of Jamestown through Caltowie to Appila and also Booleroo Centre, provided that some other service is not given to that town in the interim. There is a suggestion that a service may be extended there to tide it over the very dry conditions under which the people are labouring. It is only fair that I should give the true position regarding Booleroo Centre. Much money has been spent to provide that town with a service. First, a 500,000 gallon tank was built and water reticulated to it, but owing to the very dry summer it was found that the tank could not meet requirements, and the Government, anticipating the time when a service would be provided from the duplicated Morgan-Whyalla main through that area, built a 1,000,000 gallon tank. The present season has been an exceptionally dry one and the supply of water to that town from a bore has been greatly reduced, consequently creating much inconvenience. I do not consider that the criticism levelled against the members for the district and the Government was justified. When I read one letter in the press, the thought came to me that a person who would write such a letter would probably make very little provision for his own supplies, and I have been told since that that is so.

The proposed establishment of sewage treatment works at Bolivar to service not only Salisbury, Gawler and other nearby districts will remove the eyesore and place of nuisance-value, namely, the present area at Dry Creek, which will then be available for industrial development. I believe that the sale of this land will bring considerable monetary return to off-set the cost of the establishment of the new treatment plant, which will be about £12,000,000.

When these works are completed I should like to see provision made for the effluent to be used for irrigation. It has been suggested that it should be diverted to the St. Kilda estuary. It is debatable whether there may be some disability to Imperial Chemical Industries in the production of salt. With the construction of a cement tunnel  $6\frac{1}{2}$  miles long this effluent could be used for irrigation. Generally, such a project is fraught with the difficulty of disposing of the water in the winter months. Through this pipe would pass the winter storm-waters, which would accelerate the flow considerably, because during that period the water is not so much required for irrigation. The land in question has a very light rainfall, and if the area to be irrigated could be extended it could possibly absorb the water, even in winter. I agree with the Hon. Mr. Densley who suggested that the disposal of drainage water in the South-East into the sea should be carefully considered to ascertain whether some use could be made of it. In a country like South Australia, which is extremely short of water in many districts, the spending of so much money to drain water into the sea seems to be a step in the wrong direction. The opinion has been held that if more use could be made of water in the western districts of Victoria, there would be a reduced flow to South Australia and our problem could then be more easily dealt with.

I was interested to read in this morning's *Advertiser* that officers of the Mines Department had conducted a hydrological survey of the Beetaloo Valley area and that it disclosed the possibility of sufficient underground water being available for irrigation purposes. This would be very welcome in that area. Beetaloo Valley is 6 miles north of my home town of Crystal Brook and extends northwards to the Beetaloo reservoir. That reservoir was built many years ago and it has practically prevented the natural flow of water through the Crystal Brook Creek. The valley is very fertile and decades ago stone fruits were grown. Now it is a citrus growing area where some of the finest quality citrus in the State is grown. However, the recent increase in water rates put irrigation out of the question and the citrus orchards are suffering. Consequently it was very pleasing to me, and I am sure to those in the district, that the department made the services of its officers available and that they have discovered the possibility of a very large volume of underground water for irrigation.

I was disappointed when we were considering the drainage scheme for the south-western

suburbs that some greater use was not proposed to be made of the water that flows through the Sturt River. It is provided now that a catchment dam should take off the surplus flood waters and that after the peak of the flood has gone this water be passed through to the sea. An earlier proposal was a reservoir to impound some 2,500,000,000 gallons of water. I am not suggesting that the Sturt River would provide the same volume of water as the Onkaparinga River, but that proposed reservoir would have impounded about half as much as Mount Bold. Unfortunately, the experts said that the water would be polluted and would not be suitable for general use, so for the time being it will be simply dissipated into the sea after the flush of the storm waters has passed. I believe, however, that at some later date industries may be set up in that area and that some use will be made of this water because, in a country with a low rainfall like ours, we cannot afford to allow water of any kind to run to waste.

I would also like to stress the importance of developing the Lincoln Basin on Eyre Peninsula. This is situated some three miles west of Port Lincoln and the basin covers an area of some eight miles by three miles. The water in it is regarded as being equal in quality to that in the Uley-Wanila basin which, as members know, has proved such a boon to Eyre Peninsula. There is also the Poldas basin in the north-western part of Eyre Peninsula which gives much promise, and all of these sources of water should be utilized to the utmost.

Something has been said in this debate about converting salt water into fresh, and I noticed within the last few days that in Texas a plant has been installed to provide 1,000,000 gallons a day at a cost of 9s. a thousand gallons. That is not a very great volume, nor is it at a price at which it could be readily used for irrigation. It is said, however, that if a larger plant were installed—and that is within the bounds of possibility—a very much greater volume could be produced at a cost of 3s. a thousand gallons. Again, that is not an economic proposition for irrigation, but it is a step in the right direction and shows that before long, when cheaper power is evolved, we will be de-salting water and using it for irrigation. Imagine what that would mean to this State! In this connection it should be realized that very much of the arid areas of Australia are at or below sea level so that with cheaper power the pumping costs would not be prohibitive.

A proposal is under consideration to increase the capacity of Mount Bold reservoir by 5,000,000,000 gallons at a cost of £440,000, and this seems to be a sound proposition. It has been a disappointment to many that the original plan for Mount Bold, which provided for the impounding of 11,400,000,000 gallons, was not carried out. However, it was thought by those in authority at that time that a reservoir of 5,400,000,000 capacity would meet the requirements of Adelaide for a very long time. How that has been disproved in a comparatively few years! As the cost of raising the dam by some 21ft. is estimated at only £440,000 it is a very good proposition indeed.

I was very pleased to hear the answer given to the Hon. Mr. Edmonds recently with regard to transport from Eyre Peninsula and the conditions laid down. It was suggested that carriers would be free to carry stock to Port Pirie subject to a charge of 5 per cent by the Government, and I think that is a step in the right direction. I have felt for many years that some arrangement should have been entered into with regard to road transport. The Transport Control Board has been prohibiting road transport to and from such places as Port Augusta and beyond, and as a consequence private owners have purchased trucks and put them on the road so that the Government is losing what revenue it might have had by granting a licence to a carrier who could be charged, say, 5 per cent or 10 per cent of his earnings to pay for the roads. However, no such provision was made and all the hotels and country storekeepers run their own trucks to and from Adelaide, whereas this work could have been done by carriers with less use of the roads and some revenue to the Government. In this connection we have in the north-east, another problem in regard to a bus service from Broken Hill to Adelaide. The Pioneer Company runs this service daily, but the people living in the towns through which it passes are not allowed to use the bus and have to use the trains, which run only three days a week. They pass through the various towns at all times of the night and, generally, the service is very poor.

To afford some comparison I took out figures showing the services provided for Port Adelaide, for which there are 55 trains a day each way; and including trains running to and from the Grange 87 trains pass through Woodville each way daily. In addition, during peak hours, the people have a bus service running every four minutes. I suggest that neither of

them pays, but that is the service given to people in the metropolitan area. I believe that some arrangement could be made with Pioneer Tourist Coaches Pty. Ltd. to enable passengers to be carried from places *en route*, the company contributing, say, 5 per cent or 10 per cent of the takings to the Government. I readily admit it would mean a reduction of train services, as probably at least one train would have to be cut out, but I feel sure that the people would have a much better service, and I think the Government would be recompensed for any loss to the railways. A train leaves Adelaide on Thursday evening and anyone going to Yunta, Mannahill, or the uranium fields has to leave Adelaide at that time. Shearers on their way to stations arrive at the towns *en route* during the night and no mail goes out to the sheep stations until Saturday morning. By that time some of them at least have less inclination to go out, and others are picked up by other station owners and do not reach the destination for which they started. I would recommend that the Minister of Roads confer with the transport company to see whether some arrangement cannot be made to bring this about.

The Hon. N. L. Jude—We cannot make a charge on interstate vehicles.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON—I was very pleased to hear the Hon. Mrs. Cooper's eulogy of the Children's Welfare and Public Relief Department and the very good job it is doing with regard to delinquent and under-privileged children. As a member of the Public Works Committee it has been my privilege to visit some of the homes where delinquent children are accommodated. We have not yet visited Seaforth, but Lochiel Park for backward children is a very fine institution on 50 acres of land in the Payneham district. The man and his wife who are in charge—Mr. and Mrs. Cocks—are doing an excellent job. Glandore Industrial School also is doing fine work. Unfortunately we have only a limited number at those places and they could accommodate quite a number more. The same thing applies at Struan in the South-East. This is a semi-reformatory for the better type of delinquent who desires to go on the land. There are some 24 boys on the 12,000 acres there, which could accommodate a much greater number. Of course, we in this State know comparatively little about delinquency. We have not the numbers to send there, but at least that area is capable of accommodating a greater number than is there now.

We also visited Yatala Labour Prison and were delighted to see what the management was doing for the prisoners, who are producing about 18,000 bricks a day and doing most of the laundering for other Government institutions. It was pleasing to see what was taking place at the prison. I should like to make particular mention of Block C, an innovation that has been in operation for 18 months. That provides for 60 of the prisoners whose term of imprisonment has practically expired. They are placed in that block and have their own system of management. They have their own committees and run their own sports clubs and games, which in some measure helps to fit them for re-entering the social life of the State. The environment there is good; the place is well-kept. It is not fenced in at all. The windows are not barred and there is only one warder in charge at night. This is developing in the prisoners some capacity to go out into ordinary life again. In passing,

I should like to pay a tribute to the sheriff, Mr. Allen, for the way in which he manages that department. He is a man of vision, kindly by nature, yet firm in administration.

Before concluding, I should like to pay a tribute to the Government for the way it has managed the affairs of the State over the past year. I feel sure we can place every confidence in it. I should also like to extend that tribute to the many departmental officers in all departments of the State for the way they are planning the progress and development of this State. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.13 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, April 21, at 2.15 p.m.