

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, September 5, 1962.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. L. H. Densley) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.**CIVICS.**

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: On August 28 I directed a question to the Minister representing the Minister of Education regarding having placed in our school curricula the teaching of civics. On August 31 the following statement appeared in the *Advertiser*:

The Public Examinations Board already held examinations in civics, the Professor of Education at the University of Adelaide (Professor L. F. Neal) said yesterday. If State or independent schools asked the board for further examinations in civics the request would be considered in the same way as the board would consider any request to examine a subject taught in schools. Subjects to be taught in schools were decided by the Director of Education, his advisers and the heads of independent schools and their school councils, Professor Neal said.

It appears to me that there is some ambiguity about this subject being taught in our Governmental schools. Will the Attorney-General, representing the Minister of Education, take up this matter with the Director of Education for the purpose of having this important subject placed in our school curricula?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: With regard to the first part of the question, namely, putting this subject of civics in the curriculum, I referred the matter to my colleague the Minister of Education and I understand that a similar question was asked in another place and a reply given. In regard to the second part of the question, namely, whether the Director of Education should consider whether something more should be done in regard to the teaching of civics than is the case at present, I am happy to bring it under the notice of my colleague for reference to the Director.

BOOK SALESMEN.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I have received a letter from a constituent of mine with regard to the activities of people known as the Ruskin group, and with the permission of the Council I quote the following from it:

You may or may not be aware of these salesmen and the tactics they use, but I would like to give you a few facts on the methods used by one particular firm, namely the Ruskin group of Melbourne. The salesman of this firm who called at our home openly declares that he had the full approval of the Education Department, that he also had the approval of the teachers themselves as classrooms were overcrowded and there was a shortage of teachers. He also showed us an article in a journal, which he claimed was a teachers' journal, proving his point, and he also claimed that he himself was an ex-teacher and that he knew the position only too well.

These people have been using pressure tactics in country districts to force their sales. Does the Attorney-General intend to take any action against the firm because of the pressure tactics and the misrepresentations it has perpetrated?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: The activities of this particular firm and also certain other firms have been brought to my notice and particularly the fact that they do in some cases quite openly state and in other cases imply that they have the approval of the Minister of Education or the Education Department to sell their books. On that point I should like to say that it ought to be clear to most people now from statements made from time to time by my colleague, the Minister of Education, that no authority is given to any outside people to represent that they are selling books on behalf of the Education Department. Therefore, if anybody approaches people in the country or in the city and makes those representations the people must know that the representations are not well-founded and have no justification. People who are approached to buy books from a person on that representation should be very careful and, I should think, make doubly sure before they commit themselves in any way whatsoever.

With regard to this particular case, if the honourable member will let me have the correspondence he received I shall be quite happy to refer it to the proper authorities and have inquiries made. I may say that in other cases I have found that there have been improper practices in connection with the sale of books. Those cases have been referred to the police, who are making the necessary inquiries. I should be pleased to have that done in this case.

RAILWAY CROSSINGS.

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: There have been several accidents at railway crossings between Murray Bridge and Tailm Bend in recent times. I believe that five people have lost their lives there in the last 18 months. The Liberal and Country League branch at Murray Bridge has forwarded me a resolution which I shall read for the attention of the Minister of Railways. It is as follows:

That the Government give urgent attention to the need for more effective signs on approaches to railway crossings and on the side of railway carriages.

My question is in two parts, the first dealing with signs on the approaches to the crossings, and the second dealing with the suggestion that luminous paint should be used on the sides of railway carriages, stock vans and other rolling stock. The background of one of these accidents was that the surviving passengers in the car said, prior to the impact, "What are all these dark things along the side?" In fact, they were moving carriages of a fair height that looked pitch-black in the night. I trust that the Minister will treat my suggestion regarding the use of luminous paint seriously.

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: This suggestion of the use of luminous paint on the sides of these dark louver vans is not at all new and the Railways Commissioner has advised me that this question has been the subject of investigation not only by railway officers here but also on the other Australian railway systems. The use of Scotchlite tape and similar material was tried out on the Victorian Railways some years ago. It was found that the reflectorized material caused confusion and hazards to the shunting staff in the Victorian railway yards and the material was therefore removed from the rolling stock. More recently, the suggestion was discussed at a conference of Australian Railways Commissioners, and it was decided that the use of reflectorized material on goods trains was not desirable.

I think we must have some regard for that opinion of railway men, as such. I am quite sympathetic in this matter and do not regard the question as being at all hostile. I think we must examine the question to see whether

we can have lighter coloured vans. I realize that some accidents are probably due to the negligence of the drivers. On this particular occasion the flashing lights were operating and the bells were ringing, but the vehicle still ran into the train of black trucks. Therefore, the driver of the vehicle ignored the official warning signs already provided, through some negligence that will never be known to us, or it may have been through unforeseen circumstances.

With regard to the signs on the approaches to the railway crossings, I advise the honourable member that the signs generally conform to the Australian Road Traffic Code and are similar throughout all States, or almost similar. Those that are not similar are being brought up to the standards. Most of the pre-advance signs to railway crossings are of a phosphorescent type, particularly the red triangles, and they are extraordinarily effective, as the honourable member will know if he has ever seen them.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I am seeking a warning device at what is known as the 31 mile 40 chain railway crossing immediately north of Roseworthy on the Main North Road. I believe that on a previous occasion the Railways Commissioner stated that there was no hazard at this crossing. With respect, I disagree with him, because there is quite a dip from both north and south as one comes into the crossing, and as the railway line crosses the Main North Road at an oblique angle, it is possible to drive into the crossing from either north or south with the train being in a position more or less behind the vehicle. Also, there is a very high rate of traffic on that road. I believe that when the level crossing at the 26 mile on the north line, known as Whelan's crossing, is closed, which will be done when the new overway bridge is erected, the wig-wag warning device which has been there for some years will be removed. I ask the Minister if he would consider, when that signal is removed, placing it at the 31 mile crossing north of Roseworthy?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: I will take the matter up with the Railways Commissioner and let the honourable member have a report.

LOCOMOTIVES.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question.

Leave granted.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: All members are aware that there has recently been considerable controversy regarding the standardization of the railway line between Port Pirie and Peterborough. Conferences have been held between the Premier (Sir Thomas Playford) and the Prime Minister (Mr. Menzies) regarding the amount of assistance to be given on this matter. The Prime Minister agreed to make funds available to the State Government for the purpose of dieselizing the existing line. I understand that six new diesel-electric engines are to be provided to run from Port Pirie to Broken Hill for the carriage of ore, and that the cost of the engines will be about £336,000. Will the Minister of Railways say whether the six diesel-electric locomotives are to be manufactured in the railway workshops in South Australia or are they to be built elsewhere by tender, or is any portion of those engines being built in the Islington workshops?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: I think it is desirable to refer the honourable member to the reply recently given in another place by the Premier to an exactly similar question.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Can the Minister of Labour and Industry provide me with information regarding this State's portion of the unemployed force in Australia at present? Can he also say whether our figures have declined in recent months?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: I prepared a statement on this matter recently which I released to the press and the substance of it was as follows:

1. Persons registered for employment in South Australia represent 1.7 per cent of the total work force in this State. This is the lowest percentage of any of the Australian States and is well below the Australian average of 2.1 per cent.
2. Compared with the position at July last year, there are in South Australia now 600 more vacancies available with the Commonwealth Employment Service, while, on the other hand, there are 3,300 fewer persons registered for employment and 2,100 fewer persons receiving unemployment benefit.
3. The work force in South Australia is approximately 9 per cent of the Australian total. The number of persons receiving unemployment benefit is,

however, only 6 per cent of the Australian total and those registered for employment represent only 7 per cent.

4. Detailed information concerning the occupations of persons registered for employment and of vacancies registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service in South Australia shows that 122 skilled metal and electrical workers were registered for employment but there were 482 vacancies registered for these persons. In the skilled building and construction trades there were 150 persons registered but also 135 vacancies registered.

This bears out the statement which I made, that we at all times have had a better employment position than that in any other State of the Commonwealth, and as time goes on our position is improving much faster than that in any other State. I believe it will continue to do so.

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION: SPEED LIMIT.

Order of the Day No. 1: The Hon. C. R. STORY to move:

That Regulation No. 54E under the Road Traffic Act, 1934-1959, in respect of speed through Brown Hill Creek Public Pleasure Resort, made on April 11, 1962, and laid on the table of this Council on April 18, 1962, be disallowed.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland) moved: That this Order of the Day be discharged. Order of the Day discharged.

LOCAL COURTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

METROPOLITAN DRAINAGE WORKS (INVESTIGATION) BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

MENTAL HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1).

Read a third time and passed.

ELECTRICITY (COUNTRY AREAS) SUBSIDY BILL.

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 828.)

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN (Central No. 1): I support this Bill, although there are one or two comments I desire to make. It has for its purpose the payment of subsidies to the Electricity Trust of an amount of £500,000, with a further £100,000 if required, to enable charges to country consumers to be reduced.

I am pleased that this legislation has been introduced by the Government, because this step has been advocated for a long time by the Opposition. As a matter of fact, the Opposition went further than this Bill does, because it advocated that the same charges for electricity should apply in both metropolitan and country areas. There is no necessity for any difference in these charges. The money made available as subsidies should not have come from the general revenue of the State, but from Loan moneys. Had this been done, moneys would have been available to the State for urgent and necessary works, which would have greatly assisted—particularly in 1960—in relieving the unemployment position in this State. Although this position is better in this State than in other Australian States, there is still a percentage of unemployed people, and that is not a healthy condition in the State's economy. Had the surplus revenue been used for urgent and immediate works at that time the State would be in a better position than it is in today.

In 1950 similar legislation was passed by Parliament with a limit of £1,000,000 for this purpose, whereas today the limit is £600,000. Although that legislation was passed in 1950, the £1,000,000 was not made available until 1960, when that sum was transferred to the trust for the construction of transmission lines. It came from general revenue and was used by the trust to supply electricity to South-Eastern districts. I wholeheartedly support the supply of electricity to this part of the State. The money was made available not to provide cheaper electricity for consumers generally in the South-East but to induce an overseas company to establish a paper pulp mill at Mount Gambier.

The Hon. W. W. Robinson: To bring employment to the State.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: The work was not given to a South Australian contractor, and the expenditure did not result in one more South Australian being given work, for the workmen came from another State.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: The contract was let by tender.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Yes, but that did not debar the Government from giving the work to a South Australian firm. Because it was a little cheaper to get the work done by an outside firm the Government did not have any feelings for unemployed South Australians. The expenditure of the money did not bring more work to South Australia.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Do you think the work should have been done by day labour?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: No. I have said that the Government should make electricity available to all country people.

The Hon. G. O'H. Giles: As quickly as possible?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Yes. All electricity undertakings should be run by the State. Those being helped by the State should be taken over by the trust. In some districts private undertakings supply the electricity needed, but they have profit primarily in mind and not the interests of the consumers. State undertakings are not run solely for profit. It is the responsibility of the State to supply an essential commodity like electricity. Water supplies and railways are provided by the State.

The Hon. G. O'H. Giles: Do you suggest that electricity supplies should be?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: The honourable member cannot put suggestions into my mouth. I will give my own suggestions and if he cannot understand what I am saying it is not my fault because I think I am making myself quite plain. I do not suggest that electricity supplies should be controlled by private undertakings. They should all be State undertakings. Some members advocate decentralization, but if we are to achieve it we must supply the services needed. It would be useless to establish an industry in a sparsely populated area if electricity were not available. We should not first establish the industry and then supply electricity and other essentials. They must be there first in order to induce the industry to go there. If industries are established people will go to the area to work in the industries, and then houses will be built for the workers, and this will stimulate business. It is in this way that further prosperity will come to the State. We cannot induce an industry to go to a country district unless essential services are there, so the Government should see they are there before expecting industries to be established.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: If they were not there, there would be no benefits under this Act.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Obviously. In some districts the Government has taken over electricity undertakings. For some years the trust has had a surplus amounting to about £400,000.

The Hon. C. R. Story: The fact that it makes a profit does not necessarily mean that it has a surplus of revenue.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: It is making a profit of about £400,000 each year.

The Hon. C. R. Story: If it re-employs that money in the business, isn't that a good thing?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Is it? I suggest that the trust is continually making a surplus. The honourable member says that that money is re-employed. Therefore, it must be re-employed over a certain period in the same way that surpluses are re-employed in any business. The honourable member knows that in his own business any profit he makes is re-employed in his business. Year after year the trust enjoys a surplus of about £400,000, and each year it makes a profit from its undertaking. Therefore, as that trend is continuing, some of that money should have been used to reduce country tariffs. The suggestion has been made that, over the years, country tariffs have been progressively reduced until we have reached the stage where this legislation will reduce those tariffs to within 10 per cent of the metropolitan tariffs. The Treasurer, in allocating the subsidies that will be made available under this legislation, must have some voice on the charges and conditions to operate in country areas to receive benefits. I would be surprised if those conditions were not enforced.

I do not believe that the present Bill goes as far as it should go. There should be no distinction between country and city electricity charges and I believe that instead of providing subsidies from the State's general revenue, that revenue could have been used in a better way. We have enjoyed surpluses, and a further £500,000 could have been used to subsidize further reductions in tariffs. Greater use could have been made of the State's revenue surplus by advancing the money for electricity subsidies out of Loan funds. It is the duty of this State to supply electricity to country areas on the same basis as in the metropolitan area. Although this Bill does not go that far, it goes a long way towards that end and I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. W. W. ROBINSON (Northern): This is a short Bill, but one that will bring much appreciation from people living in country districts. It provides for the appropriation of £500,000 out of the surplus of the last financial year, and for further amounts not exceeding £100,000 from the general revenue of this State.

The trust has, over the years, been progressively reducing tariffs and has had in mind a proposal to reduce the country tariffs over the next five years to bring them close to city tariffs. However, the Government has decided to give immediate relief under the Bill so that tariffs operating outside the trust's zone No. 1 (Adelaide area) will come to within about 10 per cent of the city rates.

I wish to reply, to some extent, to the statements of the previous speaker (Hon. Mr. Bevan) with regard to the expenditure of £1,000,000 on electricity extensions in the South-East. When I interjected that I thought that was done to find employment I had no thought about the few men employed on the contract. Although the work was let to a Victorian contractor, it was let by tender and, therefore, it would have been let at a reduced rate. I am sure that the contractor would follow the usual practice of employing as many local people as he could obtain so as to save transport costs and living away allowances for the men. The point I had in mind in saying that it would find employment referred to the great milling industries in the South-East that are employing many people and are reflected in the development of Mount Gambier, which has doubled its population in the last 10 years, and the development of Nangwarry, Mount Burr, and other centres. I am sure that this £1,000,000 will go a long way towards providing employment in the South-East. I am unable to say how many employees were brought from other States on this work, but I think it is reasonable to say that as many local people as possible would be employed.

This subsidy scheme will result in 45,000 consumers in country areas receiving immediate benefit from lower charges. In addition there are about 3,600 consumers who are supplied by other authorities. The names of these authorities are supplied in the Minister's second reading explanation. The Bill provides for payments to be made from revenue and for a contribution by the trust in the following year. In the first year the contribution from revenue, as a subsidy, is to be £100,000 and the trust is to provide £60,000. In successive years the amount of the subsidy is to be reduced by £20,000 and the trust's contribution increased by that amount. Therefore, after the sixth year the Government will not be contributing anything from revenue, but the trust will contribute the full amount of £160,000. That will represent about £300,000 in payments from revenue and about £600,000 from the trust. I pay a tribute to the Electricity Trust for

the way in which it has extended its lines to the remote parts of this State and provided services to a great percentage of country districts. Some areas still have not been so favoured, but progressively the trust is extending lines to country areas, and this has added to efficiency on farms.

Over the years tariffs have been progressively reduced. In January, 1961, rebates of £150,000 were made to country people, and later rebates to the extent of £30,000 were made. Only recently I learned of a contract entered into by several consumers in a country district for a surcharge to be paid over a period of 10 years. I know one man was to pay £18 a year for 10 years, but the trust after connecting the supply found that revenue was greater than expected and waived the surcharge in the first year.

People in country districts greatly appreciate the way in which the trust and the Government have extended powerlines. Recently, I attended a function at Orroroo when the Premier switched on the street lights. The Chairman of the District Council, in expressing appreciation of the district for electricity extensions, said that the town had electricity, water, a good hospital and a good school, and that it had just received, not from the Government but from private enterprise, a bulk-handling silo. He said that they were well served, and I think that is typical of country districts—that more and more amenities are being extended and country people can enjoy amenities similar to those that exist in the city. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): I support the second reading of this Bill. There is no doubt that this is the sort of legislation that one would expect all members of this Chamber representing country districts to welcome with a good deal of enthusiasm.

The Hon. C. R. Story: It is important for the city, too.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I agree. I was about to say that from the point of view of the metropolitan area the Bill can perhaps be welcomed, but with a certain reservation. I think two points in the Minister's second reading speech deserve the attention of members. The first point is that reducing country tariffs is something upon which the trust has committed itself. It has been its policy over the last few years to reduce and equate as nearly as possible country tariffs to those operating in the metropolitan area. This Bill enables

some sort of crash programme—if I may describe it in that way—to be embarked upon, because, as the Minister said, the Government examined the proposal and found that it was desirable to give country consumers immediate relief. The Minister said:

The Government is satisfied that the trust should not be required to do this immediately from its own resources. In fact, the trust has fairly heavy commitments, principally in the salary increases it has to meet this year.

I want to make it perfectly clear at the outset that I favour the principle of equating, or nearly equating, country electricity tariffs to those applying in the metropolitan area. I think, however, that it should primarily be something that the trust itself should undertake. It is, in fact, something that the trust has indicated that it is in the process of undertaking, and that, given sufficient time (probably six years), it will be able to do so from its own resources. Why, then, has it become necessary for the Government to step in at this time and provide this crash programme?

It must not be forgotten that this is the second occasion on which the Government has, shall I say, dipped into a surplus arising from general revenue to do something to assist the Electricity Trust. It was also mentioned in this debate that from the revenue surplus for the last financial year £1,000,000 was advanced to the trust to enable it to construct a powerline to the South-East. I do not think there can be the slightest criticism of that move; after all, it was an appropriate time for the work to be done. The State Government has, I suppose, been set a precedent, if one wishes to describe it in that way, in the expenditure of revenue moneys on capital works. This is done on a grand scale by the Commonwealth Government and, of course, last year this State's grant of £1,000,000 was made at a time when there was a great need to stimulate employment in this State. There is no question that as an immediate move, despite the comments made by the Hon. Mr. Bevan, it must have had an immediate effect of stimulating employment in that year. However, these things are purely relative, and I suppose it could be argued that the construction of a Festival Hall might in the long run, given sufficient time, have just as good an effect on the economy of the State as that powerline. These things cannot be worked out in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, but I think everyone approved (I certainly did) of the Government's making that advance at that time.

In this financial year we are to take money from a surplus of general revenue which normally would not be expended in this way. I want to make it clear that I do not regard the surplus as a normal surplus. As the Premier mentioned in another place, it was because a good deal of Commonwealth money had been injected into the revenue of this State during the last financial year that this large surplus of £500,000 was available to be used for this purpose. We can regard this as not a normal expenditure because it is not likely to recur. It involves a considerable material cash benefit to country people and is, in its way, a kind of sectional legislation.

One of the important points is that if it had not been for one fact, and one referred to in the Minister's speech, I doubt whether this Bill would have been necessary. I refer to the fact that the trust had to meet salary increases out of its immediate resources. From February 27 this year the trust increased by one-third its marginal payments to all its weekly-paid employees, and I suggest that to equate the position with the remainder of its employees it has also increased in the same proportion the professional and clerical salaries.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: That was done by a contract.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: It was done by an industrial agreement made between the trust and its employees.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: That is right; between the trust and the respective organizations.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Yes. The tradesman's base rate under the Metal Trades Award is £18 9s. a week, which includes a margin of £4 16s. over the living wage. To increase this margin by one-third meant that the trust was granting to such a tradesman £1 12s. a week extra. If that increase is related to the tradesman's total wage, it increases the total wages of the employee by one-twelfth. The trust's report shows a total wage bill for the year 1960-61 of £4,151,000. In February of this year the trust, of its own motion, and without, as far as I can see, any pressure being brought to bear on it, increased the total wages of its employees by one-twelfth: that is, it added £498,000—nearly the amount required by this Bill—to its wage bill.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: That was because of a conference with the union representatives. Instead of going to the Arbitration Court they had a conciliation conference.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: It was negotiated between the trust's board and the representatives of the various organizations or unions.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: It was most commendable on the part of the unions that they agreed to those increases.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I can assure the honourable member that I have never advocated a low wage policy. That is the most miserable sort of policy to follow. However, I can see little justification for these salary increases because if they were related to the particular economic climate of this year, and what is more cogent, if they were related to other negotiations that were going on in other spheres, then it certainly appeared to be a generous increase.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: There was no generosity on the part of the trust. It was an agreement that would either have had to go through the trust or to the Arbitration Court.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: All right. It went through the trust and did not go anywhere near the Arbitration Court.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: They may have got more through the court.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Let us compare this with the situation that existed at the same time with railway employees. The Railways Commissioner offered to tradesmen only an increase of 15s. a week. The trust gave to all of its employees a one-third increase in margins. When the Railways Commissioner offered 15s a week increase to tradesmen he refused an industry allowance. As a result a dispute occurred, and the 15s. was not accepted by the railway employees and the matter went to arbitration. As I read the judgment of Mr. Senior Commissioner Taylor, there was some support for the union views that perhaps the railways employees should have had an industry allowance. However, that is beside the point, because the arbitration was not determined and the parties are still conferring on the matter. The South Australian Government pays its tradesmen award rates. I am not complaining about that, but the Government employs many people who are on a weekly-paid basis.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: It is the biggest employer in the State.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Many of the employees are tradesmen and they are receiving the fixed Arbitration Court award rate. In those circumstances, I pose the question why then has the trust been so outstandingly generous this year, and why has it done this? It seems to me that it received absolutely nothing from its employees in return.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: That is unfair.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: It received nothing under the terms of the agreement.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: Don't you think the employees have helped to build the trust to the position which it enjoys today?

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: There would be many employees of the trust on a margin of £6 a week who received £2 a week extra. Under the industrial agreement the employees promised that, in return for this increase in margins, before they went on strike they would confer. That is the only *quid pro quo* that the trust in the agreement got from the employees' organizations.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: Don't you believe in peace in industry?

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I scratched my head to find out why it was done, and I can only think that perhaps it was done to keep tradesmen working for the trust and to prevent them from straying to private industry. This policy of giving such increases to everybody is not justified. I have a great admiration for the way in which the trust's affairs are conducted. Its operations have resulted in tremendous benefits to South Australians. By and large it is one of the most efficient electricity undertakings in Australia. We do not have to emphasize that because we already know it. Our electricity tariffs have been kept to low figures.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: Why criticize the trust about the way it is running its business?

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I am not criticizing it. The Minister said that if it had not been for fairly heavy commitments by the trust, principally for increases in salaries and wages, the trust would, from its own resources, have been able to embark on this programme. In other words, the trust has had to come to the Government, and I applaud the Government for the action taken. However, if the trust had not given these marginal increases, the generosity of which seems unjustified on the face of it, there would be the possibility that we would not have this Bill.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: Do you oppose the Bill?

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: No. I am pointing out that if it were not for the expenditure of the money in giving the marginal increases the trust would not have had to come to the Government, but would have

been able to use its own funds. At times the trust seems to have a dual personality. When it wants to raise money from the public, and it needs such money and what it does is proper, it does all it can to identify itself with the Government. That is perfectly justified and I do not criticize the trust for doing it. When it wants additional money for a particular work it becomes almost, as it were, a Government department, but when it spends the money it becomes thoroughly and completely independent. The Government might properly say, in reply to the point I have raised about the increased margins, that the matter had nothing to do with the Government because the trust is independent and can do what it likes. It can do what it likes, and it does so.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: We hope it will remain so.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Yes, but as Parliamentarians we have the responsibility of saying that if the trust adopts an independent line, as it does at times, it ought not to come to the Government regularly for additional money. It is tantamount to the trust saying that it will be generous to its employees, but will leave it to the Government to be generous to its customers. That puts the position in a nutshell, and in this case the country consumers are concerned. It is a principle that I think is not right. I hope that in future we shall not have to provide money to plug a gap, as it were, arising from an independent action.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: The Government might have gone to the trust and asked it to do the work.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I have said that it is trust policy.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: You are blaming the trust for coming to the Government.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I suggest that there was a common meeting ground somewhere.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: For a political advantage it is expedient for the Government to do what it is doing.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I suggest that this was something initiated as much by the trust as by the Government, but I do not know whether that is so.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: I should like to be as sure of winning Tattersall as I am sure about what I said.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: The honourable member was not here when I made my earlier remarks. If the trust wants this type of assistance in the future it should not by independent or arbitrary action embarrass the Government in other spheres. As an independent observer, I think its action in this case must embarrass the Government in other spheres of activity. It embarrasses the trust itself, because it has to come to the Government for money for the proposal.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: The honourable member is objecting to country people enjoying a lower rate.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I am not! Had the honourable member been listening when I started my speech he would have heard me say that I wholeheartedly approve of the principle that there should be a near equation of city and country rates, because it is obvious to me and every other member that this would prove a big advantage for the State, possibly assisting decentralization of industry from which we would all benefit.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: It must have that result.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Yes, but I am making a cogent point about the trust's costs, and I believe that if members read between the lines of the Minister's second reading explanation this is a point he may have wished to make himself. I wholeheartedly support this Bill believing it is a good thing from the State's point of view that this should be done, but I hope that this is the one and only time that members of this Parliament are asked to appropriate moneys to the trust in this manner. I think, and this is envisaged by the Bill and by the Minister, that this will be the only time. In six years the trust will have caught up with the situation and will have digested the margins it has so generously handed out to its employees. It will then be able to cover the extra cost from its own resources.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: What about the hand-out it gave shareholders when the trust took over?

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: That is ancient history. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I support the second reading of the Bill and emphasize that the Government's purpose is to get this Bill through today so that country people may receive some benefit. What I have to say will be perfectly to the point and I

shall not delay the Council many minutes. My object in rising is to voice my opinion on this matter. Firstly, I compliment the Government on its action in bringing this Bill forward because this is a realistic approach to the problem. The Labor Party has used this question—probably next to the subject of Liberal Senators that was debated yesterday—as a political football more than any other subject that I know of. The Labor Party has gone out and, through its egg-boiler, the *Herald*, has cast insidious matter over every front fence before the people of South Australia.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: And it has produced good results.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The honourable member has made a pertinent point. His Party hoodwinked many country people into believing that the Labor policy could be implemented. However, this is the realistic approach to the subject, because the State can afford £500,000 for the reduction of electricity charges. My object is to see that every country citizen receives a supply of electricity. If we adopted the Labor policy every resident would not receive electricity for some time, because since the single wire earth return service has been adopted in country areas a much heavier demand has been made on the trust to supply more consumers in existing supply areas. Previously a large centre would be given a supply of electricity because it could raise the standing charges and offer an economic proposition from the trust's point of view. Now, by grouping a certain number of people together an economic possibility is presented and the more people who become interested the greater is the demand on the financial resources of the trust to connect those areas. In the Murray Mallee, the Lochiel-Snowtown area, the Northern Legislative Council District represented by the Chief Secretary and his colleagues, and in the South-East, I know of many people who desire electricity and the only way they can get it is by the trust ploughing back its profits and resources into these schemes.

The Labor Party in its true socialistic fashion maintains that if the trust has made a profit it must be given away. My object is to see that everyone in country districts is connected with electricity, and the way to do that is to plough back profits made by the trust so that the trust can proceed with country extensions. The subsidy is provided out of last year's Budget surplus, so the

money is there. We are not producing the money out of the air.

If we adopted the Labor Party's method and equalized city and country rates we would have two ways of doing it. We either do it at the expense of the schools, hospitals and other public utilities and services by pruning the funds available to them to give the trust enough money to equalize city and country tariffs or we increase metropolitan tariffs so that the country areas may have power at the same rate. We hear much from members opposite about unemployment. This State is unfortunately placed geographically in relation to the main population of Australia, and it is essential that we keep our freight and power costs in industry as low as possible. Our industrial work force is largely in the city and metropolitan area and if we equalize the rates by raising the metropolitan tariffs how can we compete with Victoria and New South Wales, whose power tariffs are continually being reduced? We have enjoyed the privilege of having the second cheapest power rates in the Commonwealth, being next to the hydro-electric scheme of Tasmania. However, with the grid system being introduced in the Snowy Mountains and new black coal stations being extended, New South Wales will obtain a distinct advantage, and if we dissipate our present advantage by raising the cost of freights and services we will price our manufacturers out of the field. If we price them out of the field we shall create more and more unemployment. In the matter of decentralization it is claimed that the country areas cannot have industry because electricity tariffs are higher than the rates charged in city areas. I have not heard of greater eye-wash.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: Who says that?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The Labor Party! It is fed out through the *Herald* in banner headlines, particularly at election time.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: No.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The Leader once used those exact words. Does he consider that country areas are being deprived of industry because the cost of electricity is higher in the country than in the city?

The Hon. A. J. Shard: I never said that.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I am talking about "the" Leader. The point I make is that in country areas any industry which uses sufficient power is on a rate competitive with that in the metropolitan area. A large cannery in the Upper Murray can compete successfully with another large cannery in

the metropolitan area, because of its power usage. The prices are comparable when a large quantity of electricity is used. No industry—and I am open to challenge on this by the Opposition—has stayed away from the country because the power rate was higher in the country than in the metropolitan area. The Electricity Trust and the Government are happy to get a large industry to go anywhere, and will ensure that a special rate will be available to that industry so that it will not be at a disadvantage in the country.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: The Labor Party always advocated that policy.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Advocating it and putting it into practice are two different things.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: We are not the Government.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: It is fortunate for South Australia that you are not. If Opposition members followed the policy they advocated around the country during the last election campaign this State would be in a parlous position. Our policy is now a reality and the other is pure kite-flying. I am entirely in favour of the equalization of power rates between the city and country when the trust and the Government can do it economically. In supporting the second reading, I hope I have made my position clear in regard to what I think of the Labor Party's proposals.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): This Bill should commend itself to all honourable members and I am pleased that the Government has introduced it. It is evidence of the sincere desire of the Government to equalize the charges between city and country consumers as soon as it is practical to do so. I am completely in accord with that policy when the time is right for it. However, I believe it would be unwise to try to do the impossible, namely, to effect a complete equalization now, having regard to the financial position at present. The record of electricity undertakings in this State, as honourable members must agree, is a very good one. The fact that electricity tariffs have been kept as stable as they have been in the face of continually rising costs is in itself noteworthy, and this, together with a constant expansion of our electricity undertakings over a wide area, is a real achievement. It is widely accepted that the trust has done an excellent job, and it has had the full backing of the Government in carrying out its task. It is vital that the task of extending our country installations

should continue unabated, and therefore I fully agree with the contention of the Government that the trust should not have to effect this reduction in tariffs wholly from its own resources.

The Hon. Mr. Bevan commented on the fact that the trust made a profit of £400,000. Perhaps the honourable member would use that money for the equalization of charges rather than for the extension of services. I believe that that is a socialistic type of policy and I could not support it. In any expanding undertaking it is only good business to plough the profits back. I am fully in accord with the aim of the Government in introducing this legislation, clause 2 of which provides that £500,000 be paid to the trust for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Bill. A further £100,000 is available if required. I am pleased to see that the Government proposes to extend this subsidy scheme to other country suppliers of electricity as provided in clauses 3 and 4. I support the second reading.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1): I did not propose to speak in this debate, but being a member of this Chamber when the acquisition of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company took place, it is amusing for me to hear some of the commendatory remarks of members, not of the Labor Party, but of a Party which used all its power and effort to frustrate the acquisition.

The Hon. C. D. Rowe: Which members are you referring to?

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: What Government acquired it?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: The acquisition of the Adelaide Electric Supply Company could not have taken place had it not been for the vote of four Labor members of this Chamber who supported the Government's proposal, which was carried by one vote. It is nauseating for me to sit here and hear charges against the Labor Party as to their position regarding the extensions and subsidies to be provided in country areas. I suggest to those members, who are prepared to flagellate and castigate members of the Labor Party, that they should consider the history of this matter.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Don't get too excited!

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: I shall not, but I want to be more emphatic on this point rather than speak in my usual whimsical sort of way. The Hon. Mr. Potter would have us believe that in order to provide this

subsidy to country areas the money should be taken out of the hides of the workers. He complained because there was a peaceful conference.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: Did he say that?

The Hon. C. D. Rowe: He did not say anything of the kind.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: He implied it!

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: The trust and the representatives of the organizations arrived at a working agreement whereby the employees were to be paid a margin for skill and a rate comparable with the work that they were doing, and to make their wage rates equal to those applying in other undertakings throughout Australia. My honourable friend takes exception to that because apparently he does not believe in conciliation. He would rather have industry in pieces than peace in industry. He complained that the only return to the trust is that the employees have given an undertaking that before going on strike they will have a conference with the trust. He has a lot to learn regarding the economic set-up of the various industries in this State.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Are you going to teach him now?

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: No. I will let him learn by hard experience. I did not hear my honourable friend complain that, when the acquisition took place, for every £1 share that was held in the Adelaide Electric Supply Company a bonus share of £1 was given. He must know that all ordinary and preference shares were turned into gilt-edged debentures. Those who opposed the acquisition in this Chamber were the first to turn their securities in the company into gilt-edged debentures. As a political bait for the public, the dividend rate was reduced from 7 per cent to 3½ per cent. That 3½ per cent applied to the £1 which they got as a bonus share. Therefore, with the amount of their capital in the trust they still got their 7 per cent.

The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin: They did not get anything additional.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: I have a vivid recollection that the Minister quivered and shook, wondering whether the Bill would be passed. On the first occasion it was introduced it was rejected by one vote. There was one recalcitrant member of the Liberal and Country League. A special session of Parliament was then called and the honourable member recanted his opposition to the Bill, and it

was passed with the support of Labor. L.C.L. members do not like the facts and the truth. We hear a lot about the socialistic Labor policy. The Leader of the L.C.L. in this place said it was a socialistic tendency forced on the people by the Labor Party, but he was not in the Council when the Bill was passed. However, he rose in his place today to take some of the reflected glory for what the trust is doing. Labor members think that the trust is doing a wonderful job, and Labor foresaw that electricity should be distributed through the State. It was part of the Party's policy and it was brought to fruition. The Government will say that it thought of the idea; it brought in the plan because it was in office; it could not have been done by any other Party but the one occupying the Treasury benches.

I will now deal with the lament by the Hon. Mr. Potter regarding the increases in the wages of tradesmen employed by the trust. In the learned profession of which my friend is a member, article clerks get only £3, £4, £5, or £6 a week. My point is that some boys and girls after leaving law school at about 21 go into the offices of some lawyers to receive only £3, £4, £5 or £6 a week when doing adult work, because it is part of their training as article clerks. If my friend wants to do justice he should work for an increase in their salary instead of criticizing an organization that has been built up by its employees to one of a high standard. Instead of there being a strike there was an agreement satisfactory to both sides. When we discuss these things we want to be fair. We do not want any sniping on the sidelines. Wherever there has been a desire for development and progress in the State it has been proved ever since I have been in public life that the Labor Party has always been to the fore. I compliment the trust on maintaining peace in industry, and extending power to the country, and making it available on a basis comparable with that of the city.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES (Southern): I rise, as has been the fashion this afternoon, to support the Bill and to congratulate the Government on having introduced it. Naturally I speak as much mention has been made of the South-East because of the £1,000,000 recently granted to the trust from general revenue to enable a powerline to be constructed to the South-East. There is to be a removal of one zone from the differentiation in the cost of electricity in country areas. I will not try to cover the ground dealt with by the Hon. Mr. Story, who put into relief the problems involved in the equalization of electricity charges in the

State. When about 60 per cent of the articles manufactured in this State are sold in New South Wales and Victoria it is, as the honourable member put it, dissipating our advantage. It is an advantage we cannot afford to dissipate and I wonder whether the Labor Party's attitude on uniform electricity charges is genuine. I wonder whether its attitude on uniform charges is a bait for political purposes. I wonder whether if the Party were in office it could substantiate what it is busy talking about now. Can I ask Labor members this question? When the £1,000,000 was taken from general revenue to build the powerline to the South-East, was it a fact that their present Leader had pointed out publicly in the South-East that it was a waste of public money? Wherever I went in the South-East at the time it was openly discussed amongst groups of people. Does this attitude fit in with their present line of talk?

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: It did not do your Party much good down there.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: I am not concerned about that at present. I wonder whether the Labor Party's attitude on this matter of equalization of electricity charges is sincere. I do not think, from the remarks of their Leader at the time, that it is. When I was discussing another Bill earlier, I wondered at their Leader's choice of words, when he hesitated and referred to the fair tactics adopted during the last election. It is easy to drive a few wedges here and there and to cause trouble, and to try to appeal to the side of human character that is related to insular and human problems. That attitude will catch up with the Labor Party. A principle is involved in this matter and it is on these principles that I congratulate the Government and support it for having brought this immediate relief to country people. I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Story for highlighting the fact that we need more electricity spur lines in country areas. The putting of all business arrangements of the trust on a doubtful footing, which may be the case if the trust has to increase city tariffs in order to achieve uniform tariffs, is something to be remembered in the overall consideration of the Bill.

It is fair to say that the Hon. Mr. Bevan spoke on the following lines. What he insinuated was that the Government spent £1,000,000 in the South-East in the confident expectation that a pulp mill would be established there. The further insinuation was that he wondered whether that £1,000,000 would

have been spent for that purpose if the Government had realized that the mill would not, unfortunately, be constructed. I think that was the basis of his remark and I hope I have not misquoted him.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: That could have made a difference.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: The Leader says that that could have made a difference, but I do not think it would have made any difference. The evidence, I think—and I have no official way of getting this evidence—was that the pulp mill people made it clear that they did not want industrial power in the South-East for the operation of their plant. That statement may be right or it may be wrong, but I believe it to be correct. They wanted electricity, perhaps, for domestic purposes and for use by their employees. No doubt the power would be necessary for other industries that could snowball or, to adopt a phrase used by Mr. Bevan, the ability of industry to increase or snowball in those areas.

That was the reason why the Government was prepared, as I understand the position, to regard as urgent the extension of electricity to the South-East. The pulp mill needed no electricity at all. What about other industry in the South-East? Did Nangwarry want electricity? It has its own means of making electricity from timber waste, and I draw the honourable member's attention to this, because I do not like his insinuation that the Government might now be sorry that it invested £1,000,000 in the area. The important point is that a network of electricity powerlines will soon operate throughout the South-East to the great advantage of the people living there, and the cost of electricity will be much lower than it is today. That is an important point affecting the people in the Southern District whom I, with other members, have the honour to represent.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: The Bill was passed in 1960.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: The honourable member is going back into history. I was not aware of the reason for that, unless the honourable member wished to reflect on the member whose place I took in this Council. I cannot see the importance of past history in this case. The South-East is looking into the future. We are not thinking of politics, and the people wish the country to go ahead. The Government has introduced this Bill in an effort to achieve that end, and I add my congratulations to the Government on its

attitude in this matter. Mr. Bevan also mentioned that, in his opinion, the Government should not call tenders on important projects such as this.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: I did not say that.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: I thought the honourable member suggested that these firms would be acceptable if they came from certain areas, but that this particular contractor provided no work in the South-East. That statement is basically incorrect. I know of two people performing maintenance work on plant for this contractor. They were not brought from another State, as Mr. Bevan hastened to point out. They were people living in Millicent and, as I know of two people, I suggest there may be many more who have directly benefited from the operations of this contractor in the area. Furthermore, anyone who has travelled that area knows full well the great speed and efficiency with which that line was erected. Is it not a fact that the Government, as custodian of the funds raised through taxation from the people of this State, should adopt efficient methods to have public works completed?

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: Are you suggesting that we do not have workers or contractors in this State who can do that work?

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: I suggest that the first consideration should be what is the most efficient method of getting the work completed when a big job has to be done. The honourable member has pointed out that we should help unemployed people when work has to be done. The period referred to was 1961. The single wire earth return service was due for completion in the Millicent area by Christmas, 1961, but by November, 1961, or a little earlier, it was found that this particular contractor—and this is not the firm mentioned by Mr. Bevan—was not able to get enough men to complete the work. They were the conditions applying at that time. What other alternative would the Government have but to employ the most efficient method to have the job completed as quickly as possible for the benefit of the South-East people? Whichever way we look at the doubtful viewpoints advanced this afternoon there is a truthful answer readily available, and I hope that has been made clear by the debate. Before sitting down I emphasize that the people of the South-East are interested in one thing only, that they receive their powerlines and network, and that they receive electricity at the cheapest rate at which it can be supplied as a business proposition. They do not care whether the

funds come from one source or another. The people I represent want the job done and I congratulate the Government on introducing this Bill.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary): I acknowledge the attention and consideration that honourable members have given to this important measure. Everybody has claimed to support the measure in some qualified form or other, and that has inspired discussion perhaps more than anything else. The Hon. Mr. Bevan said he supported the measure, but he continued to damn it with faint praise inasmuch as he suggested that if this money was available why wasn't it made available sooner to relieve unemployment? I point out that this money represents a surplus that occurred at the end of the year's trading and it was not something that could be under consideration at an earlier date. The Government did far more than this to meet the unemployment position when about £1,500,000 was put into circulation to assist and promote industry. Our own public works were speeded up, men were kept in employment and unemployed men were put into employment as a result of the action that the Government took at that time. As a result, South Australia was able to produce the lowest unemployment figures despite what happened in the motor industry here. Although many men were out of employment in that one industry alone, our employment figures were still better than those of the other States. I think that is the answer to what has been said regarding unemployment.

Regarding electricity, I think the Hon. Mr. Bevan said that money should have been used for direct employment at the time. There are two ways to assist employment—the direct form indicated by the honourable member and the indirect form (that is, providing the essentials for the promotion of industry and employment). The latter enables people in private industry and in all types of employment to help themselves. That has been done, not only with electricity but with other things. Electricity is only one necessity related to decentralization—a word so often vaunted. It is only one phase. Water is just as important, and no other State has a record for water reticulation as good as this State's record.

It is also essential that there shall be houses for people employed in industry. This State's record in housing is unique inasmuch as, having provided water and electricity at

reasonable rates, we have a housing organization to assist industry. So there is nothing to debar an industry from starting in any part of the State where conditions are favourable to allow it to carry on economically. May I go further and say that railways are also an essential? We do not even confine our people to using the railways. This is the one State that does not put any embargo on transport by imposing mileage charges, which are applied in certain other States. Traffic from other States can use our roads without paying additional taxation, so we do not just give lip service to decentralization or the establishment of industry; we have over the years adopted a policy that does, and has done, the very things upon which the honourable member said that money should have been used. It was also suggested that this legislation was thought of only because of the policy of the Opposition.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: That is right.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: Some honourable members have short memories. Although electricity rates in other States have been raised, they have never been raised in this State. The only alterations in charges here have been downward, and they have been all applied in zones outside the metropolitan area. Members opposite are talking with tongue in cheek when they talk about these things. The Government has assisted the Electricity Trust at every opportunity, and has used surpluses to do this. One honourable member said he hoped this would never happen again; I should like to see a surplus every year. Our budgeting has been remarkable when it has not only produced ambitious and progressive Budgets but has enabled us to have a surplus. It is a good thing that we are in that position. That we are able to do these things indicates the healthy state of South Australia.

I can remember when I was acting as Treasurer and certain elements interfered with a part of the metropolitan area. I am referring to storms that did much damage at our beaches. On that occasion several hundreds of thousands of pounds was made available. There was no benefit to country people; they do not live at the beaches. That money could well have been spent on highways, which would have assisted decentralization, but country members did not object to giving that benefit to the city. I am delighted that even though some members spoke with tongue in cheek, this measure had the unanimous support of the

Council. I am glad that honourable members have supported this measure so that it can give immediate benefit to many people.

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

**MENTAL HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT
BILL (No. 2).**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 829.)

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): This Bill need not delay the Council for any length of time. It is actually giving legislative effect to an administrative practice that has already grown up, and in that respect, and for that reason I think it is unobjectionable in every way. Indeed, I think it will provide better administration than was provided under the original legislation. I support the second reading.

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

**MINES AND WORKS INSPECTION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 4. Page 830.)

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I support the Bill and stress the word "works" in the title, because this amendment is to apply in particular to the Broken Hill Associated Smelters Proprietary Limited's works at Port Pirie. This amendment was expected to be a comparatively minor one, but certain matters were raised yesterday by the Hon. Mr. Bardolph regarding the application of this legislation and its effect on the employment position on the wharves at Port Pirie. I can understand his concern because Port Pirie is facing a difficult period with the lead industry suffering from some disabilities and the introduction of bulk handling of wheat through silos on the wharf.

I have made investigations and understand that there should not be anything in this amendment to affect the employment position on the wharves. This amendment does not affect industrial awards. It is concerned with the safety precautions in mines and in works used to treat the ore from those mines.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: It could affect the union demarcation of work.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: It is designed to protect employees working in mines and works, and it offers protection for the public

in certain circumstances. The Minister in his explanation said:

When lead is being handled from point to point on its wharf at Port Pirie, the operations are uncontrolled and the company has sought an amendment to our regulations to cover these operations—in particular to require the reporting of accidents occurring on the wharf.

I understand that there is to some extent a no-man's land between the area covered by the regulations applying to the works itself and the Commonwealth regulations applying to the area for the loading and unloading of ships. This amendment is designed to give the Mines Department inspectors authority to supervise this uncontrolled section, particularly in relation to the reporting and investigation of accidents. From information I have received from the Mines Department its only concern is for the safety of people using this area, and it is not to be a participant in any move to alter industrial awards or conditions. This amendment has been framed to give further and added protection not only to the workers in that industry, but also to the general public who from time to time move about in those areas.

I have confidence that, if in the future anything unforeseen should arise, the Government will take steps to amend this legislation. It appears, however, that all eventualities have been covered and, as this legislation is intended to provide further protection against accidents, I support it.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

On the motion for the third reading:

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH (Central No. 1): I do not want to take the business out of the hands of the Leader, but I raised several questions which I thought were relevant to the working of this amendment, and I expected the Minister to reply to them. I think that this is the time to do so.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Minister of Mines): The honourable member questioned whether this amendment had any industrial effect, and I interjected at the time and said that it was to cover a hiatus between the Smelters and the ships. I asked the Director of Mines to report on the matter. He has done so and I think his report will leave no doubt in the honourable member's mind. It states:

The amendment was introduced following on a request from the Broken Hill Associated Smelters for some responsible authority to take

over control of the safe working of wharf cranes on the northern portion of the Smelters wharf. These cranes handle both inward and outward materials for the Smelters and traverse portion of the Smelters, portion of the wharf, and also over ships. With respect to safe working practices on the Smelters, the cranes come under the Mines and Works Inspection Act, over ships under Commonwealth maritime control, but on the wharf itself the cranes are at present no-one's responsibility, *e.g.*, accidents with the cranes on the wharf are not reportable to any authority at present. The whole purpose of this amendment is to ensure a competent authority that accepts responsibility for safe working conditions for the cranes operating on the particular portion of the wharf adjoining the Smelters. Any accident occurring on this section of the wharf with these cranes will then be investigated by the same officers who are at present responsible for the same equipment on the Smelters ("mine" within the meaning of the Act). Industrial conditions,

manpower employed, etc., are no concern of the Mines Department, which in this instance will be solely dealing with safe working practices for the benefit of the employees concerned, together with safety of the equipment. Regulations under this proposed amendment will only deal with safe working practices and the safety of the particular equipment and have no concern with industrial award conditions.

After hearing the honourable member's remarks yesterday and speaking to him privately, I think I have given the information he desires.

The Hon. K. E. J. Bardolph: It is quite satisfactory.

Bill read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.38 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, September 18, at 2.15 p.m.