

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, July 23, 1963.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Appropriation (No. 1),

Supply (No. 1),

Pulp and Paper Mill (Hundred of Gambier) Indenture Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.**PORT ROAD INTERSECTION.**

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: Has the Minister of Roads a reply to my question of June 12 regarding the acquisition of land at the intersection of Clark Terrace, the Port Road and Cheltenham Parade?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: The Commissioner of Highways reports as follows:

The department has not finalized the complete acquisition of land at the south-eastern and south-western corners of Port and Cheltenham Roads. Negotiations regarding values are proceeding as quickly as practicable, but no indication can be given at this stage when the negotiations will be completed due to problems associated with cross-overs in the median strips. It is expected that this matter should not take more than another two or three weeks. The report continues:

The traffic lights will be installed as soon as land acquisition has been finalized. Tenders have been let for the lights.

SPEED LIMIT THROUGH ELIZABETH.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Has the Minister of Roads a reply to my question of June 12 regarding the speed limit on the main North Road through Elizabeth?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: The question of speed zoning on this road has been deferred until traffic lights have been installed at Elizabeth. When this has been done the Chairman of the Road Traffic Board (the Commissioner of Police) will give immediate attention to zoning.

FISHERIES ACT.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: In the Enfield suburban court sitting at Prospect last Friday a man was fined £16 10s. and £2 costs for having retained fish he had caught under the prescribed weight. I understand from the report that they were snapper. The magistrate, Mr. J. J. Redman, made some very

pertinent observations about the relevant section of the Act. He said that it was a most fantastic and stupid definition that weight should include length. Will the Government consider amending the Act to remove the anomalies in the section, as mentioned by the magistrate, in order to provide a more comprehensive and detailed Act?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Agriculture. I was not aware that Parliament was stupid. I take it that there must be some reason for this legislation, and I will ascertain from the Minister whether it is stupid or requires attention.

RATING ASSESSMENTS.

The Hon. K. E. J. BARDOLPH: As various rating authorities are adopting different methods for assessments, which tends to create and perpetuate an inflationary spiral of values, will the Government consider the appointment of a Valuer-General to fix land and property values for the purpose of uniform assessment? A similar system operating in New South Wales has proved most satisfactory over the years.

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: I shall consider the honourable member's question and get a detailed reply. The only comment I make is that I do not agree with the statement that the appointment of a Valuer-General in New South Wales has proved most satisfactory. It may be satisfactory from the Government's point of view, but I understand that from the point of view of the people concerned there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction.

HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL FUNDS.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: I refer to a short article in this morning's *Advertiser* about the gap existing between the payments by hospital and medical funds and actual costs to patients, due to medical reasons. As I see it, there would be perhaps three variables: added payments to enable better rebates to be made; perhaps lower medical fees; or perhaps more Commonwealth subsidy to the funds. I feel that the 60 per cent average payment toward actual cost is probably too low for many people in this State. Can the Minister of Health comment on the matter?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: The matter raised by the honourable member is one that has been taken up by the organization representing voluntary insurance, with the support of the A.M.A. It is a matter that is

related to Commonwealth and not State jurisdiction. I would not feel called upon to comment on something that is a matter of negotiation at present between the organizations concerned and the Commonwealth authority. As regards State matters, I would certainly prefer that the Commonwealth Ministers would keep within their own spheres, and I try to observe what I think is proper in these matters and as I expect others to behave with me. Therefore, I think that at this stage it would be improper for me to comment. I do not know what will be the result of the negotiations. My concern as Minister of Health would be that we are able to collect fees in order to give the best possible health and medical attention to people in this State. If it will help in that direction I am all in favour of the proposal.

BLANCHETOWN BRIDGE.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: There has been a great deal of interest all over the State, and particularly in Upper Murray areas, in recent months in the construction of the Blanchetown bridge, and also in the provision of extra ferries for Berri and Kingston. There has been some concern as to when these extra ferries will be available. Has the Minister of Roads any further information as to when the Blanchetown bridge will be completed, when the work will proceed on the construction of the additional approaches for the ferries before their installation, and how soon the ferries at Berri and Kingston are likely to be in operation after the completion of the bridge?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: In view of the somewhat detailed nature of the question I ask that the honourable member put it on notice.

PRIVATE ROAD BUS SERVICE.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Recently the South Australian Railways called for tenders for the continuance of a private road bus service to operate between Riverton, Spalding and Jamestown in conjunction with the rail passenger service. The previous contractors were unsuccessful on this occasion and I am informed that they were told that they should apply for the road service between Gladstone and Wilmington, where now there is a railcar service. The discontinuance of this service would not be in the best interests of the districts served, nor in the best interests of the State. Can the Minister of Railways say whether a tender has been let by the Railways Commissioner for a private road service to operate between Gladstone and Wilmington, and, if so, will it supersede the railcar service now catering for Laura, Stone Hut, Wirrabara, Booleroo Centre, Melrose and Wilmington?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: I ask the honourable member to put the question on notice. I will obtain a report.

MONTEITH SCHOOL.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: Some time ago I took up with the Minister of Education the possibility of closing the Monteith school with the concurrence of most of the parents behind the move. Has he furnished a report at this stage?

The Hon. C. D. ROWE: The Minister of Education has supplied me with an answer. He recommends that the Monteith school should be closed and consolidated to Murray Bridge, either from the end of this term or as soon after the beginning of the next term on September 16 as a contract can be arranged or a departmental bus allotted. It seems that the request of the residents of Monteith has been granted and that it will be implemented either at the end of this term or soon after the beginning of the next term.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Can the Minister of Local Government say whether the Government intends to introduce legislation early in this session to amend the Local Government Act?

The Hon. N. L. JUDE: That matter is immediately before Cabinet.

RIFLE CLUBS.

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: I ask this question of the Chief Secretary because I believe he has more than a nodding acquaintance with the subject matter of the question, which relates to rifle clubs. I believe that for some years after the war a Commonwealth subsidy, operating through the C.M.F., existed to help rifle clubs to purchase ammunition. Progressively the subsidy is being cut out and I believe that in some years to come the subsidy is due to be removed completely. Whilst agreeing that perhaps in the training of youths to shoot this could be of doubtful benefit I ask the Chief Secretary whether he would not think that the training of youths in this way, whilst aiding social clubs, would prove a useful adjunct to the defence of the nation by the continuance of the subsidy. Because of his great knowledge of rifle clubs, will the Minister take up the matter with a view to helping clubs operating in my district?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: The honourable member has asked a question about a

subject that is close to my heart. Rifle shooting is an old movement; in fact, its origin was as a voluntary defence corps in the days before there was a Commonwealth of Australia. It has gone through changes in consequence of the changes in the Constitution of the Commonwealth and the taking over by the Commonwealth of the responsibilities of defence. There have been changes in the weapons used, and the old muzzle-loading Schneider is not in use today. The Lee-Enfield is still in use in rifle clubs although its use by the Army has been discontinued. It is right to say that rifle clubs were reserve forces for a number of years, between the First World War and the Second World War. Further changes have taken place because of changes in the use of weapons in warfare and methods of training. It is considered by those whose responsibility it is to decide the defence requirements of the country that rifle clubs no longer serve a useful purpose.

There is a division of opinion upon this even among high military authorities. However, the authorities' decision is that rifle clubs are no longer to be associated with the Defence vote. A rifle clubs' office used to be established within the Army from which ammunition was made available. For years rifle clubs used old ammunition which would otherwise have been dumped as unfit for further storage. Possibly, the value of that ammunition was exaggerated, because it was due to be disposed of, anyway. Grants were provided to assist in sending teams to Bisley and shooting in the Commonwealth. Some three or four years ago it was decided that that would cease and that in future rifle clubs should stand on their own feet: in other words, that they would no longer have the financial guardianship of any vote from the Commonwealth and would have to supply their own ammunition, which would cost £36 for every thousand rounds. At that time I was chairman of the Commonwealth Council of State Rifle Associations and, as a result of my discussion with the authorities, it was reduced to £10 a thousand rounds for purchased ammunition. It is too big a story for me to deal with at present. We were given an allocation of free ammunition based on previous consumption, and that to be reduced by 20 per cent every year for five years. All free ammunition was then to disappear from the picture and purchased ammunition reduced to £10 a thousand would continue while present stocks lasted. This ammunition would have become out of date and the only alternative for its disposal was in unknown quarters, either inside or outside Australia, through channels other than those under the control of rifle

clubs. That is the present position, which is expiring. The free ammunition was made available to State Associations and through sales to the clubs the scheme envisaged was that they should build up sufficient financial reserves to be able to carry on the administration of their own rifle club movements.

As a result of further representation by me whilst still in that office, a further modification was made. The period was extended and a little more free ammunition made available to State associations to sell in order to afford further help to them and assistance in administration of rifle ranges. Naturally, the new arrangements were not well received by riflemen, who had for so long had assistance in obtaining ammunition at cheap rates plus Ordnance administration and storage facilities. Once it was taken out of the defence movement, it then became a sporting body. I am happy to say that in this State positive action was taken and I have no doubt that the rifle clubs can continue to exist and perform a useful purpose. I remember the Governor-General at that time (Sir William Slim) was a great believer in everybody being trained in the use of personal arms. It was he who stressed the fact that, whatever new arms were introduced, there would still be use for the rifle as mopping up ground forces. Once a person is trained to aim and fire, I do not care what weapon is put into his hands subsequently, with the practical background he can use it. During my term of office every effort was made to place the merits of rifle shooting before the appropriate authority, but I do not decide how the Commonwealth moneys are spent.

The Hon. G. O'H. GILES: Does the Chief Secretary think that in view of his remarks a case could be substantiated to help rifle clubs under Civil Defence measures operating in this country today?

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: I can safely reply to that by saying that every possible representation has been made in this regard. The aspect of Civil Defence personnel and guards required in wartime to look after special interests has been explored. I feel that no stone has been left unturned in putting forward all the views and comments not only of people interested in this movement, but of authorities from America where a special vote is provided by Congress for the training of individuals in the use of what are called "personal arms". All that has been quoted and photostats have been produced of what has been done elsewhere. Nothing has been left unsaid about this movement.

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS.

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the following reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

- Beetaloo Trunk Main Replacement,
- Pennington Primary School,
- Royal Adelaide Hospital Additional Buildings (final),
- Yorke Peninsula Water Supply (Extension of Water Mains to Additional Areas in the District Councils of Minlaton and Yorketown).

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN (Chief Secretary) brought up the following report of the committee appointed to prepare the draft Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Speech:

May it please Your Excellency:

1. We, the Members of the Legislative Council, thank Your Excellency for the Speech with which you have been pleased to open the present session of Parliament.

2. We assure Your Excellency that we shall give our best attention to all matters placed before us.

3. We earnestly join in Your Excellency's prayer for the Divine Blessing on the proceedings of the session.

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): I move that the Address in Reply be adopted. I appreciate the fact that the honour of so doing is one conferred by invitation and not by right, and I am conscious of the high standard set by those who have performed a similar task in previous years. In witnessing the opening of this session of Parliament by His Excellency the Governor (Lieutenant-General Sir Edric Bastyan), one could not help being impressed by the dignity and the decorum of the occasion. His Excellency delivered his address in a clear and concise manner and I consider that we in South Australia are indeed fortunate in having Sir Edric as the representative of Her Majesty the Queen. The people of this State received with great satisfaction the decision of Her Majesty to confer on Sir Edric the honour of Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and we extend to him our sincere congratulations. Sir Edric and Lady Bastyan have displayed a devotion to duty and an understanding of their high office that has endeared them to the people of this State. They have travelled widely, often under severe weather conditions, and they have given many country people an opportunity of meeting

them in person. This has been much appreciated. Lady Bastyan left for England the day before this session opened and we look forward to her return later in the year.

This year South Australians were again privileged with a visit from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and H.B.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. Although the weather was not always pleasant, thousands of South Australians paid allegiance to Her Majesty. This visit was highlighted by the fact that the Queen's personal flag specially designed for her use when in Australia was flown for the first time at all functions attended by Her Majesty. During her stay in South Australia Her Majesty also visited for the first time the satellite town of Elizabeth, which was named after Her Majesty. Australians were delighted when Her Majesty conferred on the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, the Most Noble Order of the Thistle, as a personal recognition of services rendered to the Throne and to Australia. This is the highest order of chivalry ever conferred on an Australian.

Sadness came upon this Parliament several times last year. It is on a sombre note that I refer to the passing of four of its members. The late Sir Cecil Hincks, a member for 20 years, 16 of which were spent as Minister of Lands, was a man revered by all and who under a severe physical disability carried out his high office with distinction to himself and benefit to the State. Mr. R. F. Ralston, whom I did not have the pleasure of knowing, passed away two days before I was sworn in in this Chamber. Shortly after, my friend the Hon. Allan Hookings passed away. I had the privilege of being associated with him in organizations outside this Council where his knowledge pertaining to the man on the land was equal to that which he displayed in this Chamber.

In September last year the Hon. Alex. Melrose died after a long illness. It is my great privilege to follow in the seat which he held in this Council from 1941. Prior to entering this Chamber the late Mr. Melrose was a House of Assembly member for the electorate of Burra from 1933 to 1938, and for the electorate of Stanley from 1938 to 1941. His property, "Kadlunga", was one of the show places in the lower north of the State and is noted among other things for its breeding of Percheron horses. Besides being a valued member of this Council Mr. Melrose was a true primary producer in his outlook and at all times expressed the will of his constituents. He was prominent in the world of commerce and

actively associated himself with many charities. In particular he carried on the good work of his father with the Royal Institution for the Blind of South Australia, and he was on the board of governors of the Wild Life Reserve on Kangaroo Island. The late Mr. Edgar Russell, who represented the State in the Commonwealth seat of Grey, also passed away during the year. He was held in highest esteem and will be greatly missed by his electors. The Hon. L. L. Hill, a former Premier of South Australia, also died. He guided the destiny of this State through a very difficult financial period.

During the year another milestone in South Australia's history was passed when we recorded a population of 1,000,000. Coupled with this increase of population there has been vast industrial growth. Much credit for this must go to our Premier (Sir Thomas Playford), for his very resolute and dynamic leadership, supported by a Ministry pursuing the vigorous planning of essential services. The availability to industry of these services at favourable costs when compared with those of other States has been a great attraction to industry, despite the fact that South Australia is far removed from the main consuming centres of the Eastern States. Harmony in industry has been another factor assisting in this development.

Possibly the Government has no greater story to tell than that of the supply of electricity and water. The supply of these two services at costs which bear comparison with those in other mainland States has not only been of great assistance to industry, but also a considerable benefit to country residents. With the opening of the new Myponga reservoir last year and the bounteous rains this year possibly all reservoirs will be filled this season. The duplication of the Morgan-Whyalla main has allowed continued expansion of industry at Whyalla and other northern Spencer Gulf towns. Although pumping of water is a costly business, it has become a permanent feature of the South Australian economy; and I believe its use will continue to expand in the years ahead. The £14,000,000 Chowilla dam is a project that will be not only the first major storage on the River Murray in South Australia, but also the biggest single storage in Australia. The River Murray system takes the run-off from an area of one-seventh of this continent. Looking back on history, we find that in 1902 the 760 mile long River Darling was dry for a period of 11 months, and it was only by the construction of these huge storages

that we can ensure South Australia of a continual and adequate water supply.

The supply of electricity to country districts has continued to expand over the past year. Many new areas have been connected to the single wire earth return system. A Bill passed by this Parliament last year provided for a subsidy of £500,000 to the Electricity Trust of South Australia enabling that body to reduce its tariffs to country consumers to within 10 per cent of that paid in the metropolitan area. This has been of material benefit to country residents. Also, because of increased consumption, many country consumers have had their standing charges reduced. South Australia can also be proud that there has been no increase in the cost of electricity since 1954. In fact, there have been several decreases. No other Australian State can boast a similar record.

Decentralization is a subject that has received much publicity. The first essential required to encourage industry to country areas is adequate services—roads, water, electricity and those other essentials that provide the amenities enjoyed by city dwellers. I am pleased to note that this Government recognizes and supplies these services. Furthermore, through the Industries Development Committee, the Government will supply finance on generous terms. I know of several country industries that are today flourishing because of financial and technical assistance by the Government. I commend it for providing subsidies and assistance to the emergency fire fighting services. No other cause is more worthy of Government assistance. By their dedicated voluntary services in the prevention and the control of fires these people are rendering a contribution to this State that is surpassed by few. They are entitled to every encouragement.

Many actions taken by the Government over the past year should be applauded by every citizen. At great cost the fight for the eradication of fruit fly has been continued. Further finance has been guaranteed to the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited for the erection of much needed terminals, particularly the one at Port Adelaide. The lifting of a number of transport restrictions has allowed a more flexible movement of stock and produce. The appointment of the Land Valuation Committee to investigate the methods of land valuation for land tax, council rates, water rates and succession and probate duties is a step that will be applauded by all holders of rural land, not

only in the near urban areas, but throughout the State. Inflationary pressures in the Australian economy in recent years have increased land values far above their earning capacity. As the main basis for Australia's overseas export earnings is rural production, the value of our declared rural land should be market value based on the concept of agricultural use. Death duties based on unrealistic land values tend to prevent the succession of properties from father to son after the latter has worked for a long period on a relatively low income while property improvements were being effected. The provision of funds through mortgages and loans to pay succession duties prevents properties from being worked by beneficiaries to their fullest capacity. With the exception of wool, which seems to be one of the few primary products that has scope for increased production without fear of marketing difficulties, many primary producing organizations today are tending to think in terms of stabilized marketing schemes. All bodies displaying evidence of self-help are entitled to every encouragement.

Egg producers have production and marketing problems, which they are trying to overcome, and the dried fruits industry is endeavouring to promote a scheme of orderly marketing.

It is gratifying to note that in a recent poll in the northern Yorke Peninsula area the residents overwhelmingly voted in favour of the district's being declared an abattoirs area. Previous efforts to establish an abattoirs in this area have not been successful, but on this occasion the enterprise is a community one, and as such is deserving of success. Abattoirs in this area would be strategically placed for supplying a quota of meat to the metropolitan area and, if need be, export lambs could be shipped from Wallaroo or even Port Adelaide. I trust that the Government will give every encouragement to the establishment of this industry, which is a much-needed facility. This could be a positive step towards decentralization and an encouragement of community effort. Large numbers of lambs are produced in the Midland District, and many lamb producers in the early districts are able to market them at a satisfactory price at a time when the local market is able to consume them. However, producers in the later districts seem to have the problem of marketing their lambs when prices are more depressed. These people would have been encouraged by the announcement by the Australian Meat Board that the guaranteed price

that operated for a limited period last year will again operate. The fund, which amounted to £242,300, and which is available for this purpose, was not touched last year, and is therefore intact.

I commend the work of the State Lamb Committee, which works with meagre finances and renders sterling service to lamb producers. It is a shining example of what can be achieved by producer-unity. I commend lamb producers who have followed the advice of the committee and extended production over a longer season, thus avoiding a glut period of marketing.

Throughout the Governor's Speech is the theme of great expansion, plus a survey of achievement. Paragraph 14 deals with housing activities, in which the Government has a proud record. Possibly one of the greatest factors contributing to migrants coming to South Australia, particularly British migrants, is the wonderful record of the Housing Trust. It is South Australia's biggest landlord and is building one-third of the houses built in the State at the rate of 14 every working day. It has come a long way from its original purpose of building houses for people in the lower income groups.

I pay a tribute to the Good Neighbour Council and its members. These people give unstintingly of their time and energy to make possible the happy assimilation of new arrivals in this country. It must be a grand feeling for a lonely migrant to be met on arrival and be assisted in the many problems that beset a stranger in a new land.

It is pleasing to note that the Public Works Committee has endorsed the Government's plan for the extension of the water service on Yorke Peninsula. It is unfortunate that the supply mains will not permit the entire peninsula to be watered, but the new extensions will provide valuable land with adequate supplies of water under pressure. I am pleased that there are investigations to locate another underground basin on southern Yorke Peninsula.

It is gratifying that a Harbors Board survey has indicated an area of deep water at Point Giles on southern Yorke Peninsula. This deep water will enable the establishment of a deep sea bulk-handling terminal to serve the lower peninsula. A permanent water supply and a deep sea bulk-handling facility will mean a new era for many settlers in the locality.

Producers in the Warooka area, particularly those on newly-developed land, are experiencing unthriftiness in their crops during the

later part of their growing period. Some unthriftiness has been noticed in animals. Many of the settlers concerned have been among the Peninsula's most successful farmers. Thousands of acres of country with an ample rainfall are involved. I commend the Minister of Agriculture for his decision to make available officers of the department in an effort to solve this problem. It is pleasing that many settlers in the area are lending their properties and facilities for the purpose. I submit that this method of approach will give results sooner and at much lower cost than the establishment of a research station on the Peninsula.

Recently I had the pleasure of witnessing the opening of the Gawler by-pass by the Minister of Roads. I was pleased to note in the Governor's Speech that the widening of the Port Wakefield Road is a project in hand. I trust that now that the Gawler project is finished there will be no delay in commencing this other work. The need for a dual highway on the Port Wakefield Road, at least as far as the Salisbury turn-off, is a matter of extreme urgency.

South Australia has population centres widely dispersed. Many of the centres are connected by good roads and of necessity they run north and south. I believe we have now reached the stage where consideration must be given to providing more sealed roads running east and west through the more populated areas. At present we have the anomalous situation of traffic coming from New South Wales and the Upper Murray regions, travelling along the Sturt Highway, possibly crossing the river three times in South Australia, proceeding as far south as Gawler, then crossing to the Port Wakefield Road, en route to Port Pirie, Woomera and other northern towns, and even to Western Australia. I would like a sealed road constructed with as little gradient as possible from Morgan to Port Pirie. This would reduce congestion at the River Murray crossings and diminish the wear and tear on the roads in the lower north by heavy transports. It would also provide a direct link for produce from the Upper Murray areas to the industrial and consuming centres in the Spencer Gulf areas. One of the first works should be to complete sealing of the Spring Cart Gully road through Monash to give a more direct link with Morgan.

When travelling from my home at Two Wells to Adelaide regularly each week I am pleased to see the progress being made on the Bolivar sewage treatment plant. By the use of modern

machinery the laying of huge underground drainage pipes to the Elizabeth area is being carried out with expediency. When these works are completed the question of the disposal of the effluent will be a matter to be considered in relation to our meagre water supply. Although the effluent is completely pure and free from bacteria it will have a certain saline content, but not an amount that would make it unsuitable for all irrigation purposes. If the cost of channelling it to areas where it could be used for irrigation is too high, serious thought should be given and investigation made into the possibility of returning this water to the sub-artesian basin. The mineral content of the water in this basin varies in different localities, so possibly the effluent could be delivered into the basin at a point where the water is not now of a low mineral content.

Since my election to this Council I have made a number of trips to the River Murray areas and have been heartened by the steady progress being made towards the completion of the Blanchetown bridge. It is to be hoped that this method of bridge construction, using pre-stressed concrete, will prove successful and will be the forerunner of the construction of further bridges over the River Murray. When the bridge is completed I trust there will be no delay in commencing another bridge on the upper reaches of the River Murray and transferring the ferries at Blanchetown to Kingston and Berri, thus duplicating the services at these two crossings, pending the completion of bridges at those places.

South Australia is fortunate in being endowed with fine areas of natural beauty, both wooded mountains and fine beaches on the sea coast. With the rapid increase in population and the spread of the capital city many of these areas are being lost as places of recreation. It is important for the individual and the nation that leisure hours be used for the psychological development of the mind and the maturing of the body. The provision of adequate facilities to attain these ends becomes more pressing as the size of the urban area increases.

In the Town Planning Committee's report, a most valuable, comprehensive and detailed document, a number of places are listed as being needed for future recreation area. Some of these are at present privately owned and, unless they are soon acquired, may lose some of their natural advantages. I refer to one area in particular—the Port Gawler beach. This is one of the few places in the State where the land

(or the beach, in this case) is privately owned down to below high-water mark. This area contains valuable shell grit deposits, some of which are being mined at present. North of this area, on leasehold country, shell grit has been mined for many years at a rate of over 1,000 tons a week, and what was once an area of great natural beauty is now a place of desolation. I respectfully urge the Government to consider procuring not only the Port Gawler beach area but also other places possessing natural features and advantages, ere it is too late.

When the sewage farm at Islington becomes surplus land, great care must be taken to ensure that sufficient of it is retained for future recreation purposes. In moving around this State, one cannot help but be impressed by the many fine new school buildings of solid construction being erected, together with playing fields and other amenities. We are very fortunate in having in South Australia a Minister of Education with an appreciation of the needs of present-day education in all its phases. This Government is making a commendable effort to provide for the expanding requirements of education in this State.

In the last financial year, from an estimated total Budget of £96,800,000 the proposed expenditure for education purposes was £26,000,000. The cost of education to consolidated revenue over the last five years has increased by over 100 per cent. In a similar period the average intake of students into State schools has increased by only 28 per cent. The average cost of education a head of population in South Australia is £18 14s. 2d. and, if this is applied to the taxpaying population, it becomes relatively higher. Obviously South Australia is using its resources to the utmost but, if the needs for education are greater, the only answer can be Commonwealth aid, without the surrender of State control.

I commend the Hospitals Department for making a valiant effort to provide for the needs of the sick, both bodily and mental. Some fine country hospitals are to be seen, and more are planned. The incidence of tuberculosis, once a dreaded disease, has been greatly reduced through the efforts of mobile X-ray units. The inoculation of the people against disease is a step in the right direction. It is an old adage that "prevention is better than cure".

An alcoholics centre at Northfield and plans for new boys' reformatories are both necessary moves. Some country community hospitals are still having rather an uphill struggle, so I trust the Minister will be both sympathetic and

generous in the allocation of subsidies to these necessary institutions. A body often criticized but seldom praised is the South Australian Police Force. Displaying devotion to duty and courteous help to all citizens, this body of men and women is one of which the Chief Secretary can well be proud. The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin, besides being Chief Secretary, is also Minister of Health and Minister of Mines. Furthermore, he is the Leader and, in fact, the father of this House. Since my entry into this Chamber I have been grateful for his kindly advice.

I am pleased to note that later this year the Premier, Sir Thomas Playford, will have occupied that office for a continuous period of 25 years, a truly magnificent record. Despite his long period in office, he has always kept himself well abreast of modern developments. In fact, only this weekend he has returned from a trip overseas where he investigated the possibilities of nuclear energy as a source of power for the generation of electricity in this State. This will be the first time that such a source of power will be used commercially in Australia. This State is also fortunate in having Ministers of outstanding calibre and integrity, and none displays more energy and zeal than my colleague, the Attorney-General. I thank members of both sides of this Council for the cordial reception they have given me. As a new member, I have appreciated the help and guidance of the Clerk of Parliaments (Mr. Ball) his assistant (Mr. Drummond), and all members of the staff.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Southern): In seconding the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply, I am aware of the honour bestowed on me, a new member, of being invited to do so. I was pleased to be associated with the expression of pleasure at the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh to this State in February of this year. This visit was marked with the same spontaneous demonstration of loyalty and affection that marked the first Royal visit to this State in 1954. Like the 1954 visit, it was a source of great inspiration to Her Majesty's South Australian subjects. We look forward to possible further visits by members of the Royal Family and in particular to another visit by the Queen Mother next year.

I am pleased also to be associated with the congratulations extended to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Edric Bastyan, on the honour conferred on him by Her Majesty, of Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, at

the conclusion of the Royal Visit to South Australia. His Excellency and Lady Bastyan have continued to command the utmost respect from all people of this State by their ever-willing service and unfailing interest in all phases of activity in this State, and particularly, rural matters. Their wide travel throughout the length and breadth of the State is much appreciated by people in country districts.

Reference was made by the mover of this motion to the unfortunate deaths of many prominent members of Parliament: the late Sir Cecil Hincks; the late Hon. A. J. Melrose; the late Hon. A. C. Hookings; the late Mr. R. F. Ralston; a former Premier of this State, the late Hon. L. L. Hill; and a former Federal member, the late Mr. Edgar Russell. I join with others in paying a tribute to their memory. In particular, I pay my own personal tribute to my immediate predecessor, the late Hon. Allan Hookings. He was elected to the Legislative Council in 1959, representing Southern District. He was appointed a member of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation on April 18, 1962. At the beginning of the present Parliament he was elected by the South Australian Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to attend the Parliamentary course in London during May of 1962. Mr. Hookings undertook a world tour at his own expense, including visits to Great Britain, West Germany, Russia and parts of Asia, as well as attending his London Parliamentary course. I knew the late Allan Hookings well. We lived in the same district for the greater part of our lives. He worked extensively and gave his time freely to any community effort, establishing a long and distinguished service to local government. His knowledge of agricultural and pastoral industries was extensive and in this field he rendered sterling service to his own district as well as the State. I am only too aware of my difficulties in maintaining the high standard set by the late Mr. Hookings.

As a member for the District of Southern, an area of such diversity of activity, I am conscious of the responsibility of representing an area that in the future must play an increasingly important part in the overall development of this State. Wherever you look in this district you will see signs of development and expansion. Already there is expansion in the forestry industry of the South-East—not only in growing trees, but in industries that process the primary product—and further expansion in this regard is imminent. Then there are the agricultural and pastoral lands of the lower South-East, the mid-South-East

and the upper South-East. These are some of the most fertile areas in this State. They are already productive but are capable of still greater production. There is also the undoubted potential of the lower Murray valley; the lakes area; and the Adelaide hills with its farming pursuits—fruitgrowing, market gardening and dairying. Already the metropolitan area is spreading into the northern part of the Southern District with the industrial development near the oil refinery at Port Stanvac. Finally there is the potential, agriculturally and pastorally, of Kangaroo Island. The pattern is one of expansion and development and I fervently hope my service will allow the district to play its full part in the development of the State. There are many paragraphs of the opening Speech which could be applied directly to the District of Southern. I refer particularly to paragraphs 10, 12 and 24. Paragraph 10 states:

It is estimated that £12,000,000 will be spent on roads during the current financial year. The amount is expected to rise next year.

This is a large State, but compared with the Eastern States it is not a populous one. However, we have managed to maintain and extend a road system of which we can be justifiably proud. The progress made in this regard over a few years reflects great credit upon this Government and upon the department concerned. In the provision of an adequate State road service, local government has played a significant part, not only in expending moneys on behalf of the State and acting as an agent for the State, but also in meeting its own commitments from its own rate revenue, and meeting its own commitments towards the overall State road system. It is interesting to note that from rate revenue last year local government spent approximately £5,000,000 on South Australia's road system. The expected rise in the expenditure on roads in South Australia will be well received in local government circles.

Many people interested in local government doubt whether local government, under its present organization, can continue to function as an effective and efficient unit. This point is well illustrated in the recent unanimous decision of the South-Eastern Local Government Conference to ask the Minister to inquire into local government boundaries in the South-East. Broadly, local government falls into two categories: it can be an agent for the State, acting purely and simply on behalf of the central government; or it can be an independent body with considerable freedom, acting independently and able to use its own initiative,

although at the same time under the general direction of the State. I am sure we all agree that South Australia possesses the latter. However, it seems to many people serving in local government that the State is exercising more and more control over local government. This view is not restricted to South Australia: it has been expressed in local government conferences throughout Australia; and indeed, throughout the world where local government, as we know it, exists. Many authoritative writers on local government in Australia have expressed a similar view, which in many respects is true. For example, the generation and reticulation of power is a responsibility which local government is shedding quite willingly in most cases. Since the Electricity Trust began operations many local government power supplies have been taken over by the trust.

In the South-East in recent years the power supplies at Mount Gambier, Millicent, Port Macdonnell and Kalangadoo have been taken over by the trust. The number of consumers has grown appreciably as a result, and there has been a considerable price reduction. Since the trust began operations in the lower South-East, rural extensions have been made that would have been beyond the capacity of any locally operated scheme. Of course, rural extensions are continuing throughout the State. Rural areas connected to trust mains in the South-East include the hundreds of Mount Gambier and Blanche, part of the hundred of Young, the hundred of Mingbool, the Snuggery-Tantanoola-Glencoe area, Tarpeena, and Kalangadoo. The Hatherleigh-Furner single wire earth return will be connected in the next few weeks. Rural extensions are continuing elsewhere in Victor Harbour, Hindmarsh Valley, Currency Creek, Lameroo, Pinnaroo, Meningie, Narrung Peninsula and in other places as well. Here is a local government responsibility that is now being taken over by a State instrumentality—a responsibility which in most cases local government is willing to shed.

This is true also in relation to some aspects of road construction where the local governing authority is acting as the construction and maintenance authority for and on behalf of the State in the spending of State grants. This work is done under the control and supervision of the Highways and Local Government Department. There are many other examples where, in some respects, local government is losing some responsibility. An interesting case in point is paragraph 24 of the Governor's

Speech. Much of this loss of responsibility, of course, is due to the fact that the State Government is providing an increasing amount of finance to certain sections that are a local government responsibility. I believe in maintaining a structure that allows as much independence of action as possible and, what is more, I am certain that this Government thinks similarly. Seeing that this independence is maintained is the responsibility not only of the State, but also of councils, to see that, as organizations, they are capable of effectively and efficiently carrying out their functions. Also, councils must see that they are worthy of their independence and responsibilities.

The decision of the South-East Local Government Conference to seek an inquiry into the boundaries of the South-East spotlights one of the contributing factors to the claim that local government is moving more and more under the control of the State, and it shows, too, one of the grave difficulties facing the future efficiency and effectiveness of local administration. My own view is that small district council areas are not in the best interests of the ratepayers or the State. I cannot say whether this particular theme applies over the whole of South Australia, and I hasten to add that I make these comments purely from my own experience in a small section of the State. If a study is made of inquiries by Royal Commissions in Australia and in New Zealand, this view must be accepted—that small district council areas are not in the best interests of all concerned.

Mr. R. C. Kirby, who, until a few weeks ago, was chairman of the Mount Gambier District Council and is a man who has given long service to local government, made the following statement in the *South-Eastern Times*:

It is essential economically that some council amalgamations take place in the not too distant future. Small councils could do just as well in the days of the horse and the stone hammer, but today's huge overheads put them at a decided disadvantage. Graders and bulldozers were costing between £7,000 and £10,000, and required workshops, modern tools and trained staffs. Such costs could be absorbed by the large councils, but they tended to throw the budgets of the small councils out of balance. It is the inevitable consequence of the march of science and technical skills, and amalgamation provided the answer.

The annual reports of the Highways and Local Government Department regularly express a similar view, pointing out the need for consideration to be given to economic areas

in local administration. I believe that the Minister has agreed to the request of the South-East Local Government Conference for an inquiry into boundaries in the South-East and that in due course the findings will be made known. Whatever the findings, the final difficulty still remains to be overcome, namely, the acceptance of the recommendations by the councils concerned and the ratepayers. Alterations of the boundaries and amalgamations will always cut across local pride and tradition, and will arouse jealousies and possibly affect the development of a community spirit.

New Zealand has a permanent and almost independent commission that is constantly inquiring into all matters of local government, including the alteration of boundaries. In its 1958 report the New Zealand Royal Commission stated that it was in complete agreement that many local government problems would be eased by the rationalization and amalgamation of local bodies, but it did not agree with the existing provisions that a poll of ratepayers was necessary, or could be demanded, before any alteration could be made. Paragraph 115 of the report states:

To provide this elaborate machinery for independent and impartial investigation and decision, but to leave the final decision to a poll of electors seems to us somewhat farcical. The concept of a permanent and independent commission, as exists in New Zealand, to deal with all matters of local government is an appealing one. Any proposal for alterations to council boundaries or amalgamation raises all the basic issues of local government—finance, community of interest, and parochial jealousies. It would be of value if there were a continuing authority able to build up a store of knowledge and experience, not only on which to base recommendations, but to convey them to the councils concerned and the ratepayers. Unlike the statement of the New Zealand Royal Commissioners, I do not agree that the final decision should be taken out of the hands of ratepayers; it must rest with them.

Alterations to boundaries and amalgamations, without the support of ratepayers, are, in my opinion, not acceptable. The ratepayer, then, is the one who must be convinced of the advantages; and it must be the ratepayer who generates the desire for amalgamation or alterations to council boundaries. Here, I believe, lies the advantage of a permanent commission which, after making its investigations, presents its findings to the Minister and

the councils concerned; and if they are in agreement they can get to work on a public relations basis to present a complete case to ratepayers. The case of the ratepayers would then be put by a person or body not interested in departmental policy or the parochial issues involved, but purely in the interests of ratepayers and the efficiency and effective administration of local government.

From this point ratepayers must decide, and I am sure that if it can be explained to them that they will be better off with a larger council area, the generation of the desire for amalgamation will come from them. Not only must ratepayers be convinced that they will have a more effective and efficient council, but also that local government can maintain a higher service in other respects. The ability of a larger council to employ qualified staff enables better attention to be given to health matters, building controls, town planning, drainage, welfare and cultural activities. I believe that many other local government matters need investigation, such as finance, rates, assessments and community of interests.

The question of community of interests in council areas is interesting, because it is a constantly changing factor. I had the privilege of investigating a matter not so long ago in relation to a purely rural council. The whole of the rate revenue was derived from a rural community, yet the council found itself involved in responsibility for the provision of a large number of tourist amenities, as well as the roads leading to them. It derived no finance from the amenities. The commercial benefit from them went to a neighbouring council area. Here was a problem not related to efficiency of local government, but to community of interest. Now that the Minister has agreed to an inquiry it is time for all local bodies and electors to take an enlightened and unselfish view in relation to the general good and the future of local government, so as to enable it to carry out its obligation as an agent for the State more efficiently, and to safeguard its own position of independence, but retaining considerable freedom of action and the ability to use its own initiative. I have dealt with this matter because I am a firm believer in local government. I am concerned about its future place. I believe that the Government, local government and the ratepaying public must co-operate and make every effort to resolve the problems facing local government administration. It should be done in the interests of preserving a vigorous, independent and democratic system

in the light of modern administrative and technical advances.

Recently some soldier settlers in zone 5 received their final rentals and at the same time many received their assessments for drainage betterment and maintenance. The settlers are concerned with what appears to be an anomalous position. They called a special meeting at Greenways and a committee was appointed to meet the Minister of Lands. The Minister has now appointed a committee to investigate the position. I have had the privilege of investigating many matters in relation to this problem. I do not intend to deal with the matter at length but will refer to one or two points. Several of the settlers in zone 5 have been on their blocks for 12 years and many of the settlers have been in category 2 for periods of more than 10 years. They have repeatedly asked for their final rentals but were informed that the rentals could not be determined until their drainage commitments were known. They find now that they have to meet a substantial drainage commitment and at the same time an increase in their rental. In most cases the rental is more than 200 per cent above their provisional rental. This virtually means that any equity the settlers have established over 12 years of occupancy has been destroyed. The settlers in zone 5 have an overall case in comparison with other zones, but there are sections of zone 5 where the case varies from area to area. In some cases it is not a question of loss of equity but one of drainage and rental commitments being so high as to make the property no longer an economic proposition.

Consider the position of a settler with a drainage commitment of £9,500 and a final

rental of, say, £500. This means that he has a debt of £9,500 for drainage, which must be paid, and in order to capitalize his payments he must build up an equity in the property of about £30,000 before he really has any equity in that property. If we look at it on an operational basis it will be seen that many of the people recently settled in the Reedy Creek valley will have a commitment of about £1,250 a year. This works out at between 13s. and 15s. for each dry sheep carried, which I think is a commitment that makes the property an uneconomic proposition. I do not intend to deal with this matter at length, because the matter is now being investigated. It may be that I shall have an opportunity later to deal with the matter more fully. I agree with the contention of the settlers that an anomalous position has arisen, and it is particularly so when we consider the high rentals and drainage commitments.

In conclusion I thank all members for their kindness and assistance to me as a new member. It is deeply appreciated. I congratulate the Premier who will on November 5 this year complete 25 years of continuous service in office. I also congratulate the Chief Secretary who on August 8 of this year will commence his twenty-fifth year of continuous service in office. I express my satisfaction at being elected as a supporter of a Government that has contributed so much to the welfare, prosperity and development of South Australia.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 3.52 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, July 24, at 2.15 p.m.