

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, July 6, 1966.

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

### QUESTIONS

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS FEES.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: I ask leave to make a brief statement prior to directing a question to the Minister who represents the Premier in this Chamber.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: I noticed reports that a question was asked in Parliament about the cost of Royal Commissions and that an answer was declined. Because of that, will the Minister who represents the Premier in this Chamber say whether Parliament is to be denied official information on matters affecting the public interest and involving public expenditure?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Parliament has not been denied the information sought about the cost of Royal Commissions now sitting; it has been advised of the cost of those Commissions. However, I will refer the question to the Premier and obtain a reply.

The Hon. Sir LYELL McEWIN: The Minister said that the information had been given about the cost of the Commissions, but that information was purely tentative and an estimate. The information sought related to the remuneration of the Chairmen, Commissioners and officers of the respective Commissions, which is rather a different question from that replied to. Will the Minister bear that in mind in asking for a reply?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Yes. I will refer the matter to the Premier for reply.

#### WEEDS.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I ask leave to make a statement prior to directing a question to the Minister of Roads.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: Yesterday, in answer to a question, the Minister replied:

Trees on main road reserves are subject to a regulation under the Highways Act for the preservation of trees and vegetation on main roads.

Unfortunately, this responsibility does not extend to the weeds that grow on the sides of main highways. In many areas of the State these weeds are becoming a problem, particularly when roadmaking material has

to be carted for some distance. As we all know, under the provisions of the Weeds Act the destruction of noxious weeds on roadsides is the responsibility of the adjoining landholder. However, in many areas, and particularly Eyre Peninsula, this is a big problem, especially where the roadside area is very wide. Over a large area of Eyre Peninsula the sides of the roads where highway construction has taken place are left in a rough condition and it is impossible in some instances for adjoining landholders to get weed-spraying plant along the sides of these roads. Will the Minister take up this matter with his department with a view to having the roadsides left in a condition in which plant can travel along to spray these weeds?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: I will take up the matter with the department.

#### TREE SHELTER BELTS.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Has the Minister representing the Minister of Agriculture an answer to my question about tree shelter belts in the South-East?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: Yes. My colleague the Minister of Forests informs me that his department maintains an active interest at all times in the subject raised by the honourable member. A bulletin shortly to be made available to the public contains the best up-to-date information about construction of windbreaks or shelter belts as well as specifying a number of individual species suitable for various geographical areas in South Australia. Extension work is at present necessarily confined to the answering of many queries from the general public, discussions with individual landholders and lectures to agricultural bureaux, and so on. In the South-East several well-known forest headquarters are established, and the officers in charge of these various areas are always available for advice.

#### GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: On the opening day of Parliament I asked two questions, one concerning the proposed Government Insurance Office and the other concerning a statement made by the Premier. Can the Minister representing the Leader of the Government in this Chamber indicate when I shall receive replies?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: No. At this stage I cannot give the honourable member any indication, because I have not investigated these questions. I will do so and see whether answers cannot be obtained as soon as possible.

## NEW INDUSTRY.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Can the Minister of Mines say whether any discussions were carried on by him on his recent oversea tour with people, other than those associated with the gas industry, interested in establishing in South Australia and, if so, do the prospects of further industry coming to South Australia seem a little brighter?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: There were occasions during our oversea visit when we discussed with leaders of industry in other countries the possibilities of establishing industries in South Australia not directly connected with natural gas. The answers at that stage were non-committal. In one instance we were advised that if it were possible to obtain high-grade aluminium ore of not less than 98 per cent aluminium which, I understand, is not obtainable here, an industry would, in all probability, be established in South Australia.

On another occasion, we interviewed an industrial leader in relation to setting up an industry in South Australia. He was previously interested in property held by the Mines Department at Port Pirie and which had been used previously in the treatment of uranium ore. At that stage we were informed that that particular industrial leader considered that there was not any possibility of coming to South Australia at present and establishing an industry and taking over the plant at Port Pirie. However, he would make further investigations. On one or two other occasions we were given non-committal answers. We were informed that different people would have a look and see whether or not it would be economically feasible to set up plants in South Australia.

## HANSARD INDEX.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: I ask leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: Last week the Chief Secretary was good enough to advise the Chamber regarding the arrangements that have been made for *Hansard* indexes, etc., and with regard to the remaining volumes. Can the Minister representing the Chief Secretary say whether any steps are being taken to assist the Government Printer in his mammoth task of providing honourable members with the Statutes of last year, which involves as much a problem as the *Hansard* index for the previous session?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: I will have inquiries made in relation to the Statutes and advise the honourable member as soon as possible.

## SOFTWOOD PLANTINGS.

The Hon. L. R. HART: I ask leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Local Government, representing the Minister of Forests.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. R. HART: On February 24 this year, it was reported that the Commonwealth Government was prepared to contribute \$20,000,000 in the form of long-term loans over the next five years to the various State Governments to enable them to increase the plantings of softwoods in Australia. The Federal Cabinet believed that Australia should increase its softwoods plantings from 40,000 acres a year to 75,000 acres a year over the next 35 years. The proposal envisaged the annual planting of 65,000 acres a year by the various State Governments and 10,000 acres a year by private enterprise. The Minister of Forests said that he believed that South Australia would use its share of the loan to purchase land on which to plant forests. At a later date he said that the State Government this year had purchased 2,770 acres, had approved the purchase of another 1,210 acres and also had an option over another 794 acres, making a total of 4,774 acres. Can the Minister representing the Minister of Forests say in which localities this land has been purchased and what has been the purchase price an acre?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: I shall refer the question to the Minister and obtain an answer for the honourable member as soon as possible.

## ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from July 5. Page 252.)

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES (Northern): I concur with the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to the Speech delivered by Sir Mellis Napier, the Lieutenant-Governor, in opening the second session of this Parliament for the benefit of the people of South Australia. I agree with the remarks that have been made by the mover of the motion in relation to the visit of Her Majesty the Queen Mother to South Australia last year and declare that I myself am a Royalist to the core in connection with the present controversy in some

sections of the community as to who should be the head of State of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I suppose that these people who wish to have a republic, or a president as leader of the Commonwealth, have the privilege of expressing their opinions on these things. However, when a president is put forward, there must be some voting capacity to elect him to office and, if he gained a majority, whether it be outstanding or small, many of the people would not like him and would have expressed their dislike by not voting for him. Therefore, it would not be any easier to swear allegiance to a president that one did not like than to adopt the attitude taken by these people who say they do not like a member of the Royal family being at the head of the Commonwealth.

It was indeed a memorable occasion when the Queen Mother opened the Flinders university, which is a stepping stone in overcoming the problems of education at university level and which marks another step towards progress for the State. It is surely some measure of the wealth of the State that we now have two universities and I expect that, somewhere in the back rooms, there is a proposal for the provision of yet another. The name is most apt, and I hope that out of the university will come people who can give the same intrinsic attention to detail that Flinders did when he mapped the coastline of Australia years ago. If that is possible, we can be assured that the upper level of education of the State will be fostered.

I agree with the Lieutenant-Governor's remarks about the Minister of Lands. He was a soldier and is a good citizen, and I hope he will find the duties of his office not too heavy for him. I agree with the remarks made by other members about the death of Sir Frank Perry, Sir Richard Butler, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Craigie, and express my sympathy to their next of kin.

We have read and heard much about the problems, accusations and promises of what the Premier's Department can, will or may do in relation to industries for the State. I am sure that at the bottom of it the Government desires to get new industries, so I do not want to pursue the matter here. However, I read with intent a press report of a statement made by Mr. M. A. F. Pearce, the former Agent-General for South Australia in London, who suggested that it would be sensible for the Government to have another officer in London to look after the problem of getting companies

to come to South Australia. He said this would relieve the new Agent-General, Mr. Milne, of some of his duties and enable him to devote his whole time to his other duties as Agent-General, which make it difficult for him to do the necessary spade work to get British or European companies to come here. The British Budget, which expects to control the capital flow out of the United Kingdom, will no doubt produce some repercussions for us, but over 100 years ago many German people came to South Australia to live, so why could not people in West Germany be indoctrinated into sending plant, capital and their tremendous know-how here to open up industries?

The Hon. C. R. Story: Most of Germany is in the East, and the people cannot get out now.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: That is so, but I do not think we would reject German people if they brought some capital with them. The Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament (Mr. Calwell) made an interesting comment that was reported in today's *Advertiser* about off-shore oil and gas. I understand this has become one of the planks of Labor Party policy for the coming Commonwealth elections. He said that the Party would not nationalize the off-shore gas industry when it was formed but that the industry would be owned and controlled by the people of Australia through existing Government instrumentalities. I do not want to quibble with him on the meaning of those words, but I only hope that one day he will say that he has been misquoted in the press again. If it is to be the policy of the Party not to nationalize off-shore oil or gas but to have it owned and controlled by the people of Australia, why have no statements been made about the problems of Gidgealpa and Moomba faced by the Government now? I do not like the idea of nationalizing the industry at this stage, before the facts are before me. I am mindful of the problem that existed in the Province of Alberta, Canada, which did not have sufficient financial resources to finance entirely the pipeline necessary to distribute natural gas. A Bill was introduced there to allow the producers of the gas, who had provided the capital necessary for the drilling, to contribute some share of the costs and have some share of directing its distribution, the producers, the distributors and the Government each having a share in the problem of financing the total distribution. To control distribution, two producer directors, two Government directors and one distributor director were appointed. I mention this because, until the Commonwealth Government

shows its hand in relation to the problems of the State, alternative methods should be considered.

It has been admitted that natural gas will open up a new era in the prosperity and economic development of this State. I was therefore surprised to read a press report indicating that a spokesman for the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited at Whyalla said he was not interested at this stage in the use of natural gas in industry at Whyalla. The statement could well have been made by an irresponsible person, but it certainly made headlines in the press. I cannot see why such a cheap and efficient product could not be used or wanted there. Contrasted with this, it was interesting to read that the Mayor of Port Augusta was taking active steps to see whether the main could come through that town to give it an economic boost. Also, I understand that the Mayor of Clare is travelling overseas to visit towns of about the size of Clare and see how natural gas has been of benefit to them.

Greater co-operation between the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, as mentioned by the Lieutenant-Governor in his opening Speech, must be looked at again. The problem of Aborigines is not new, but it will not be solved by the simple application of welfare assistance to adult Aborigines. The natural inheritance of the Aborigines produces problems that have not been appreciated in the past, and we must take care that the children of Aborigines, whether full-blood or otherwise, are better educated. We must see that there is greater understanding of these children so that they can learn to live with us. The problem of the Aboriginal cannot be glossed over. Parliament can do its best, but there must be a great resurgence of training and understanding to educate them in a better way.

I read with interest a report of Professor L. C. Birch, the Challis Professor of Biology at the University of Sydney, on the use of television as a medium for providing lectures at that university. I realize the Government has little control over how universities spend their money, so I direct my remarks to the members of this Parliament who are members of the respective university councils. Professor Birch said:

We are pushed towards running parallel lectures with half a dozen people each taking a separate group of first year students in the same stage on the same subject, and this makes it extremely difficult to obtain uniformity of tuition. So as to counter that problem the University of Sydney put in television on an

internal circuit so that it could teach up to 1,000 students at one stage by the medium of television.

Apparently, their technical area was modest—three cameras, some video tapes, eight salaried men and 30 part-time students. This method of television teaching was reaching out to 1,000 students at the one time. They were teaching adult education, surgery and psychology and a far greater and higher standard of uniformity was being achieved by this medium than ever before. I understand that 53 per cent of the students trained in the universities of America are taught by this method, and a survey of 1,500 students at the University of Sydney showed that 70 per cent of them accepted and approved this principle of television lectures instead of having classroom lectures.

The capital cost is not cheap. In this case it costs \$280,000 for the equipment to get the ball rolling but apparently the running costs are considered cheap, \$5,000 a year being the approximate operating cost. The whole question of education is very much like the frying pan with the fat in it: it is bubbling this way and that. The question of free books and various types of aid for State schools and other schools is boiling around and it is difficult to get an answer. But there is the basic principle that our children must be better educated than children have been in the past, and it is up to the Government to give the lead in that direction.

As regards hospitals, and particularly the staffing of hospitals with doctors, especially in the more isolated areas of the State, I listened with interest to the report given by the Minister of Health a week or so ago when he said that those students having financial difficulties in getting through their courses in medicine at the university would be bonded to and financed by the Government on the condition that they, in turn, would provide some service for the Government in country districts when they had passed their courses. In theory this sounds a step in the right direction. It may take us a long time to get this problem completely covered, but at least it is a start. But it produces different problems because in medicine, of all things, surely the right man must be for the right job. If we have complete regimentation of patient to doctor—patients in one area being told that they must go to a certain doctor and he being told that he must attend them, a type of regimentation I hope we shall never see—we then can have the problem of the doctor who has not the interest of the patient at heart, or *vice versa*.

What other alternatives can we look at to try to if not solve at least alleviate this problem of doctors in the country? I understand that the Whyalla City Commission in its wisdom is considering sponsoring a medical student through university. Whyalla has its own particular problems. It has a number of doctors in its area but, because so many of the inhabitants have come from countries where completely free medicine exists, they run to the doctor for the slightest thing and have not that ability to put on a Band-aid or take an Aspro, as the average Australian citizen can. This produces an overloading on doctors in that area. So the city commission is considering this method of sponsoring a student so that he will return to that town and there provide medical service.

There are suggestions put forward by Dr. Mark Jansen at Orroroo. I understand that the College of General Practitioners is concerned that so many doctors are taking on specialist status and there are not enough general practitioners coming out of the universities, whether going into the country or living in the cities. So the principle that Dr. Jansen puts forward is that the student in his final year spend a period of, say, two or three months, or possibly longer, being trained by a qualified general practitioner in his practice so that not only does the student get a wider conception of the application of medicine to the patient but also he sees the merit of the life that a general practitioner leads. That is the second possible alternative to dealing with the problem of doctors in country areas.

Another suggestion is that those doctors coming from Europe whose qualifications do not suit the Australian Medical Association in this State and who are expected to do more training at the universities before they can practise should be sponsored through university by the Government, on the understanding that they, in turn, would serve their bonding period at a place or places to which the Government sent them. The only other alternative is for a greater subsidy to be paid to and a greater interest to be taken in the Royal Flying Doctor Service, for towns like Hawker, and Wudinna on the West Coast, and possibly other areas of the State where a service can be provided. The problem of doctors in the country is growing; the problems of people living in the country are growing. Once upon a time people were called pioneers if they went into the North and more or less kissed their loved ones in the city goodbye and came back in about ten years' time with or

without their fortunes. Today young married couples demand, expect and are entitled to comforts and privileges similar to those enjoyed by people living in the cities. The general practitioner is a dedicated man: he is the salt of the earth, and we must somehow find an alternative way of helping him in the first instance, and of getting him to stay there as time goes on.

It was interesting to hear the Lieutenant-Governor say that progress had been made on port and harbour facilities at Port Pirie, Port Lincoln and other country areas. The construction of new areas of wharfing at Port Lincoln for the fishing industry is urgently needed. When this is done it will greatly assist those working on the growing tuna industry. I hope that the oil berth at Port Pirie will soon be moved from its existing site, which is about 400 yards from the centre of the town. Should an accident occur there similar to the one that happened in New York harbour a few weeks ago when a British tanker went up in flames, there would be an appalling loss of life.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Nobody can quite decide who will pay for this.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I am applauding the Government for having this on its books; knowing that the Government has good intentions is half the battle. These things will ultimately come to pass. It was unfortunate to read that the Minister of Works has been unable to provide water for Kimba, but I understand that one of Kimba's problems is that it is situated on land that is excellent for holding water. Everyone in the Kimba area has to live on the catchment of water in dams. There are many examples in Western Australia of towns without permanent water supplies but having excellent man-made catchment areas to assist and promote the flow of water into the catchment areas. I consider in the past there has been a "this can't work" attitude to the methods that could be adopted at Kimba. I realize that a main from the Poldia Basin or from Iron Knob will ultimately be laid. Every summer the Government has to spend much money on carting water from the Murray main, but if greater attention were paid to the method of catching water I feel sure that a saving in costs could be made.

The Hon. C. R. Story: How far is the nearest piped water away now?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Fifty-eight miles from the Murray main, and I understand the main from the Poldia is approximately 40 miles

away. The position regarding the quarantining of oversea shipping to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease at Port Pirie is one that needs close watching. I realize that this is no longer a State problem, but that the Commonwealth Government has undertaken to provide the necessary finance for the incineration of rubbish that comes off ships. This is under the control of the Agriculture Department. Port Pirie as a quarantine port has been neglected in the past and needs urgent attention today.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Do you think it will improve matters when the Harbors Board comes under the Minister?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I approve of the principle of boards. I believe in the principle that another man's point of view is always worth something. When we bring the complete control under a Minister (this is not criticism of the efficiency of any Minister, but criticism of one man's view), his view is not always as wise as the view a board can put forward. The board would inform the Minister of what action it was taking.

Recently, there was a conference in Canberra between oversea companies, Australian manufacturers and representatives of State port authorities to discuss the possible implementation and use of containers for the import and export of products to and from Australia. Most people are familiar with the use of containers and have seen them on railways or semi-trailers travelling in the Eastern States, but this is of far greater magnitude. Because of the cost structure shipping authorities are suffering from, they realize, by the hard force of circumstances, that this would bring a change to a non-conventional type of shipping by providing this new type of service for the movement of cargoes overseas. It should and could bring a reduction in prices because of the fact that it will be able to deliver directly from manufacturers overseas to the retailer in Australia—a type of door-to-door service. The name given to this new method that is being envisaged is "containerisation," so our dictionaries are now out of date, unless they have the word "containerisation" (spelled with an "s", not a "z" as I like to spell it).

It means that 80 per cent of Australia's export goods and approximately 60 to 70 per cent of our import goods will be able to be handled by this method. Wool, meat, canned and dried fruits would be able to use it: in fact, almost every product of the land will be able to be containerized.

The Hon. C. R. Story: What about frozen foods?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Frozen foods can be containerized; I understand they can be put into refrigerated or insulated containers.

The Hon. Sir Norman Jude: "Refrigeratorized"?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: They will be put into containers, which will be put into the holds of refrigerator-type ships and exported in that manner. Bulk wheat, because of its shipment in bulk, will not need to be shipped in containers.

The Hon. C. R. Story: How will you get on with the return of containers?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Industry considers that 80 per cent of our goods can be exported by this method and also approximately 60 to 70 per cent of our goods could be imported by it; therefore, there could be a slight problem with surplus containers, but the industry at this conference considered that it could be overcome. It is thought that this new method of bringing cargoes to this country will be in force in three to five years. The sad point (and this is the point I wish to make) is that it was agreed at this conference that special port facilities would be provided in Sydney, Melbourne and, possibly, Fremantle. The extra planning that is necessary by port authorities consists of heavier wharves capable of taking heavy loads, cranes capable of lifting heavier cargoes, and an area immediately behind the wharves large enough for the parking of these containers until they are trucked away.

The Hon. C. R. Story: The railways will have to do something, too.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Yes, I want to deal with the problem of railways and roads and the cartage of heavy goods in a moment. As I have said, at the conference South Australia and Queensland were satisfied with the principle of the exclusive port usage being allowed to the Eastern States. That means that the containers with cargo for South Australia will have to be brought here either by ship, road or rail. It is envisaged that these boxes will be about 20 to 40ft. long and about 20 to 40 tons in weight. In Europe, Great Britain and the United States of America the regulations allow heavier weights to be carried on the roads. However, we will be at a major disadvantage if these ports are used to unload the containers, because cargoes for this State would have to be unloaded and broken down to be brought here. Similarly, our exports would have to be taken over and built up into

containers in the Eastern States. This would involve greater costs for the producers and sellers in South Australia. The Government should again examine this problem.

Recently we had complaints by the Government that there was a falling off in the amount of money coming in from wharfage, customs and other sources of revenue because of seasonal conditions and other factors. If 80 per cent of our exports are to be dispatched from Melbourne and Sydney, South Australia will suffer even more. There will be an additional cost to industry, including primary industry, and new industry could be lost if the product had to be shipped to the Eastern seaboard before it could be taken overseas, although we know that the Commonwealth Government is anxious for new industry with export potential to establish itself here. The Commonwealth Government gives tax concessions to such new industries.

Similarly, because our roads could not be used for the carriage of the weight involved, our exports would have to be broken down in Sydney or the Eastern State port to which it came. All this would lead to a lessening of initiative. The State Government should carry out research with a view to establishing port facilities necessary for the loading or unloading of ships by this container method in South Australia.

It was with regret that I saw that the cartoon in yesterday's *Advertiser* had President de Gaulle aptly portrayed with his head in the clouds after he had let off a nuclear device in the Pacific. I recently read an interesting report by the Australian National Radiation Advisory Committee, which has a series of specialists who monitor the radio-active contamination along the food chain from the soil to milk, food, bread and flour and measure its final concentration in the bones of Australians. The committee is under the chairmanship of Professor E. W. Titterton, and the monitoring programme has agencies in all the capital cities of the Commonwealth.

I am bringing this matter forward because of what has happened in the Pacific in the last few days. The last report was in October last and it was reported that the contamination in Australia during the last three years was fairly satisfactory. It is stated that any biological consequence of fall-out levels would be insignificant in comparison with the hazards of everyday life, as the authorities saw the position. The problem is that milk is not only the most important source of calcium in the Australian diet; it is also a means of

getting strontium as a result of these falls from the atmosphere. The Australian diet accounts for about 80 per cent of the total intake of milk.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Strontium 90 is one of the non-dissipating elements, too, isn't it?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Yes, it is like mercury. It sits at the bottom and stays there. There is an elaborate testing system in every capital city based on sampling of the milk of the city concerned on one day of each week. The officers measure the amount of radio-active substance in the milk and try to follow it from there. It seems that the transfer of radio-active strontium from the fallout through the food chain may be twice as effective under Australian conditions as it is in Britain or the United States. Thus, a given fallout is likely to be twice as dangerous in this country. Although the cause is not certain, it seems to be associated mainly with milk and is probably due to different dairying practices.

It is thought that the method of dairying in Australia is slightly different from that in the United Kingdom or in the United States of America. It is understood that the fallout from the recent explosion will not produce any dry fission on Australian soil, as was the case after tests at Maralinga some years ago, but the fission could be brought here by the high-altitude westerly jet stream that dominates the upper atmosphere around the earth. The scientists are watching this problem and we citizens and our children also have to watch it.

I read in today's paper a statement by the Leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas Playford, in which he said that whether the Liberal and Country League will succeed in future elections will depend not on the number of people in the State but on how well the Party caters for the State. Similar advice could be given to the members of this Government. The people of this State want honesty and sincerity in Government, and they must have integrity. I support the motion.

The Hon. H. K. KEMP (Southern): I endorse the remarks of previous speakers in this debate about the sterling service of the Lieutenant-Governor and the great contributions to the State's progress by former members who have passed on recently. The things I wish to discuss in detail are numerous. The agricultural side of the community in the Southern District is very important, and the attitude of the present Government and the complaints that have arisen therefrom are

bringing us into a dangerous state. Yesterday I had occasion to draw attention at length to the higher inspection standards being imposed on the potato industry this year. I did this as a desperation measure, as there was no other way in which the attention of the Government could be drawn to the dire consequences of its actions.

I have some figures that I think will make it clear why the residents of the Adelaide Hills must hold the Government responsible and seek some action. About 20,000 tons of potatoes are grown in the Adelaide Hills each year. This year it has been estimated conservatively that 20 per cent (4,000 tons) of the crop, which normally would have been marketable, has been fed to cows and pigs or disposed of by dumping. Some of these potatoes are used as stock feed, but most are wasted.

The present price is about \$36 a ton, so the waste has cost growers the huge sum of \$144,000. This sum has been lost by probably fewer than 400 people, and they are not big landholders or farmers, as most of our potatoes are grown on small holdings by men who milk between 20 and 30 cows and grow potatoes as a sideline to build up income from comparatively small acreages. There are some big growers, but most potatoes come from the small men for whom the Government should surely have some sympathy. The Government pays much lip service to them, but in this case its action has resulted in huge loss.

My reaction would not have been as great as it was yesterday but for another incident earlier in the year about which I have unwillingly remained silent for some time. However, it must now come forward, because the standards of inspection, which were required by a Commonwealth authority but administered by a State department, led to heavy loss. I refer to the apple industry, which suffered early losses from hail. In November a disastrous storm, which went through the most densely occupied apple district, wiped out many crops and severely damaged others. The crop, which was lighter than normal, was badly damaged. Before long the South Australian apple crop will be well over 2,000,000 cases, and the industry has been gradually building export connections that have been taking our surplus efficiently.

This year the whole industry worked together with a will taking off damaged fruit and changing machinery in the packing sheds, despite the increased costs and losses that would be involved, to send away enough fruit to maintain export connections. The pack started and

two boats were loaded, but when the third shipment was being prepared a change in standard, similar to that which the potato grower has faced, was demanded. This materially stopped the working of many sheds.

Most of the apples exported come from two sheds, one of which takes apples from me. The industry had contracted to export 250,000 boxes, whereas in the previous year 600,000 cases were exported. The next crop shows promise of producing more than the latter figure.

To maintain export connections and keep faith with our customers this year, despite severe losses we undertook heavy expenditure, but we were stopped. One buyer who wanted fruit for Great Britain visited the shed and watched the pack. He had an order for 17,000 boxes of one particular line and was willing to pay a premium of 15c a box. He watched the fruit being prepared and even indicated to the girls in the shed what fruit he would like and the standards of culling he preferred.

He was thoroughly satisfied with what he saw. However, after the fruit was sent down we had to tell him we could not meet the contract because the fruit he had watched being packed was rejected. In our own shed, from a pack of 70,000 boxes that we were doing our utmost to assemble, we were finally permitted to send away less than 20,000. We are only a small community, yet 50,000 boxes were left there that had already been sold for an average of about 38s. sterling, boxes which, when converted to Australian money, were worth roughly 48s. each. That money would have been paid for them as soon as they had been loaded at Port Adelaide.

There was this loss of 50,000 cases in our small community of only 27 growers, and the loss in that one shed amounted to \$240,000. This was a bitter blow, because this money not only provides the livelihood of apple growers: it also is vital to the economy of our whole district.

I think it is accepted by everybody expert in economics that agricultural income by the time it has filtered through the community (and particularly export income) engenders three times its original value. If that is taken as true in our Adelaide Hills economy, we are down this year three times \$148,000 and three times \$240,000.

This is a serious matter. This week one of our good firms in Mount Barker, which supplies the needs of farmers, went into liquidation. The storekeepers and everybody involved in the supply services are suffering severely from

this. In the cutting down of our export from 250,000 cases, which we could have managed, with difficulty, to about 90,000, many man hours of labour were lost to the wharfrage and stevedoring industries alone in income they did not get. This is the sort of thing it seems to be impossible to get the Labor Party to appreciate—the immediate consequences of some of these comparatively minor things that occur from day to day in Government administration.

Today, I had the sorry task of standing by and watching several thousand boxes of cheese destined for export shipment not going to Port Adelaide. These were being shifted into fridgemobiles that were going to Melbourne for loading. Several thousand boxes of cheese does not sound a very big item, but we know that the wharf labourers in Port Adelaide who would have been engaged for several days handling this shipment will not have the opportunity of earning anything more than attendance money.

Why is this occurring? In this case I believe it is because the ship in question could not find enough cargo to take on board in Port Adelaide. These shipments have always been made through Port Adelaide but this year there is not enough cargo to warrant the ship's calling at Port Adelaide. To offset the cartage to Melbourne, there are no outward wharf dues payable on the other side of the border.

This is having a serious repercussion on the whole Southern District. We cannot ventilate this matter too widely. The advantage that the Portland shipping port has, with no export wharfrage payable, gives exporters of agricultural commodities working from that centre an advantage over a huge area of hinterland behind them, that huge area including the whole of our South-East. We are told that meat buyers working from Portland can profitably compete in our markets as far as the Murray Bridge area.

We can see the practical effects of this but I do not think the Government has appreciated its significance. To maintain our interests the South Australian Farmers' Co-operative Union was forced to open a branch at Portland. In the first year of operation of that branch it has been necessary for it to double the wool store to handle the produce going forward—and that is just wool without any mention of the greatly increasing amounts of other commodities passing through the port from the agricultural community. I am not quite sure of the exact figures, because they must inevitably be an estimate, but I believe

that about 60 per cent of the livestock of South Australia is within reach of Portland buyers with this advantage.

This is tragic. We have over the last few years been able to attract to Adelaide an increasing proportion of the business in the South-East: we have got it running through our community instead of across the border, that direction being more or less its natural geographic loyalty. This business is not small. A fair estimate of its value is about \$60,000,000 a year in retail sales, which is about \$5,000,000 a month. This will be lost if we do not do something about it, because inevitably where our produce goes there must go our purchases.

If this is the case, I am afraid there is even less work going to be available for the wharf labourer in Port Adelaide and for the man who is running a business in Adelaide. This can truly be laid at the door of the Labor Party because of its need to obtain extra revenue, so increased wharfages have been imposed. This is a dire problem and one that the community is going to suffer from for many years.

These questions must be considered apart from politics. If they are considered as a political football, tremendous damage may be done to the community. I am not raising the plight of these potato growers in the hills with the idea of doing the Minister of Agriculture an injury, but as a South Australian trying to get the silly circumstance, which has given rise to it, corrected before irreparable harm is done. In the matter of the Bruce box, which we have been talking about recently, I want to make my position quite clear. I cannot accept the statement that was made at the end of a reply to a question of mine that my interest in this subject was selfish and purely because I liked the cheap, secondhand boxes in which River Murray oranges are brought down to Adelaide. As soon as it is possible to do so our co-operative will be switching to a fibre-board container because we find that this is very acceptable in the retail market and much cheaper to handle on a large scale. There is no selfish interest in this matter. We have the tremendously important task ahead of us in South Australia of finding markets for about 2,500,000 extra boxes of oranges, which is a major problem to be solved in 30 months.

The information that has come to us, and which has been supplied to the Minister without any restriction, is that everywhere in the world the Bruce box is not proving to be as acceptable to the retailing organization, as we

have been led to believe. No matter where you go the man who supplies the retailer has a preference for the pack which the female labour on the fruit stalls can handle efficiently and easily. In making the choice of Bruce boxes, it seems to be thought that the box is a success story, that it is the coming container for fruit, as has been stated in several publications by the Government, but that is completely and utterly the opposite to what I have been led to believe is the truth. The report that I have provided to the Minister is made up of many extracts of absolutely irreproachable integrity.

The extracts come from sources that we have come to rely on and cannot easily be discounted. When you have the Citrus Commission of Florida, the U.S.D.A., the California Department of Agriculture, people of these organizations advising the industry that a change should be made to a fibre-board carton instead of the Bruce box, I thought it was time I asked what investigation, what real proof is there behind the apparent Government choice of the Bruce box. If we start trying to market on the hugely-increased scale which is ahead of us in a container which the consumer does not want, it immensely increases the difficulty we shall have in disposing of our increased production of citrus fruits.

When you are selling, the customer is the only person who matters. He knows what he wants and it is to make sure that no mistake is being made in this regard that I want the question of Bruce boxes ventilated widely. I am glad to see that this is being done. If a mistake has been made, I have deep sympathy for people who may have been involved in expenditure, thinking that this box might become the standard container, but this loss would be a small-scale loss compared with what we would face as a community if we were to try to put fruit into containers that the customer does not want.

The line I would like to discuss next is one that concerns everybody in South Australia very deeply because it relates to natural gas, which is the greatest asset that Nature has provided for South Australia. The material I have to put before the Council is that which Sir Thomas Playford has given me permission to use and which, as far as I know, has never been published before. We all knew at least two years ago that Sir Thomas had put a target date of last December as the date by which he had to be quite certain as to what were the natural gas resources in South Australia, because it was the last date

at which construction of a pipeline to bring the gas down to the metropolitan area could possibly be started, if it were to be worked smoothly into the economy without check to our growth and development.

I am sure that every member in this Chamber (in fact everybody in Parliament) knew this date of December as the starting point for the pipeline construction. This is an immensely important matter. The complexity behind a community of our size undertaking a work that would cost £20,000,000 is of great magnitude. To make this pipeline practicable it was important that the gas find an adequate market. The markets that are available for gas in South Australia are limited at present to domestic gas consumption in Adelaide and the projected power station at Torrens Island which could, if necessary, be turned to gas for its fuel. Design of the power station was made in the early stage for the two alternatives of fuel, but the authorities had to know by December last whether the fuel would be oil or gas. Last February we had at Gidgealpa sufficient gas proved and available at the bore head to supply our needs for 15 years. Sir Thomas has said that there are at least 5,000 more sites in this and associated structures in the region, all of which would have fair chances of delivering comparable supplies.

Some of these structures are the largest in the world. In fact, I understand that one is so large that for many years the fact that it could be a natural gas dome was not appreciated. It was more than 80 miles across. The instruction that Sir Thomas gave was, "Get on with the job of proving as quickly as possible."

The need was not so much to find extra gas as to ascertain whether the structures over the large area were of the same type as those that had yielded gas. This had been done long before December 20. In January or February of last year Sir Thomas took Dr. Coombs, the Director of the Reserve Bank, to Gidgealpa and showed him the extent and possibilities of the field. Sufficient gas had been proved to meet the needs for 15 years and, even if no further gas was discovered, the provision of a pipeline was warranted for an extension would tap the huge supplies from farther north at Mereenie.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: How far?

The Hon. H. K. KEMP: A short extension, as world pipelines go today. Sir Thomas then took Dr. Coombs to the bore head and said, "We have on deposit with the Commonwealth

Bank £19,500,000 in funds. We need to build this pipeline and the cost is £20,000,000. Would you consider our borrowing £14,000,000 from the Commonwealth Bank against our funds on deposit, to be amortized at the rate of £3,000,000 a year? I can find £3,000,000 from State Government funds. If you will provide £14,000,000, we can build this pipeline in two years and it will be paid for in six or seven years."

This was said months before the need for the pipeline arose. The project was not to be started unless the new structures some distance from the original Gidgealpa find showed the probability of yields as at Gidgealpa. The Commonwealth Bank pays interest on funds deposited with it. It would have charged normal bank rate interest of 6 per cent on that £14,000,000, if Sir Thomas had had his way. Dr. Coombs agreed that this was sound banking and the matter was to be brought up as soon as the character of the new fields had been shown to be similar to that of the first field.

I understand that, in the matter of development of a gas supply, the obtaining of money at reasonably low interest rates to build the pipeline is the big problem. If cheap money cannot be obtained the gas becomes expensive, particularly if the line is long, and throughout the world people are trying to sell oil at extremely competitive prices. It was realized that, unless the money required was available at a low rate of interest, it would be impossible for us to market the gas in Adelaide. It would be far too costly in comparison with other fuel costs for the Electricity Trust to use in the new power station. If the trust does not use it the market will be far too small to support the pipeline.

We had a market in South Australia for all the gas that could be delivered through a 20in. pipeline and, as the quantity of gas required increased, delivery could be increased by the provision of booster stations along the line. Sir Thomas Playford also appreciated the need to supply the gas at very low cost, because he knew that industry would establish itself where it could obtain gas at the best possible price.

Dr. Coombs gave no undertaking at that stage that the money would be provided, but there was a well thought-out pattern. Today it appears that that will not eventuate. The deposit funds have fallen too low. In fact, it is uncertain whether it will be possible for the present or any future Government within the next few years to obtain money at

the necessary low rate, and the whole exploitation of Gidgealpa depends upon this.

Many organizations in the world have much money available for projects such as this but their interest rate, instead of being 6 per cent, is about 13 per cent or 14 per cent. That would increase the cost of gas and would mean that a pipeline would not be practicable. We have been hearing a lot about gas from the Labor Party, but with a hazy background.

Nothing definite has been brought forward by the Labor Party to indicate that it even appreciates the true position; at present it seems to be doing nothing but talk about the problem. It is possible that the opportunity is already lost to the State; if not, it seems to be quickly vanishing.

It is necessary that the gas should be available in Adelaide at a cheap rate in order that ancillary industries may be attracted to the State. Even some of these industries considering establishing themselves in South Australia may find cheaper gas in closer proximity to other markets in Australia than will be available here. It is a serious matter and another subject which should be considered by the Government completely apart from politics.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: That is what the honourable member is playing at the moment!

The Hon. H. K. KEMP: I am merely trying to throw some light. To those people seriously concerned with the welfare of the State it seems that, unless rapid action is taken, we shall have completely missed the boat. This attitude on the part of the Government shows itself in other ways. For instance, today I heard that water mains allotted to the Keith supply are going to be diverted to Eyre Peninsula.

This is not just a political pipeline; it means that development of a big area of the South-East will be further delayed for a long time. Water in that area is a limiting factor as to what the country can produce; it is an important item. Withholding water from that area will prevent landholders from earning more income that would spread through the community. It is not just income from a wage-earner's pay packet but is money that doubles and trebles itself as it circulates. That is why it is so dangerous to interfere, unknowingly, with agricultural industries. I support the motion.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 4 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, July 12, at 2.15 p.m.