

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, July 13, 1967.

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

QUESTIONS

IRRIGATION.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my questions of June 22 and July 4 about water licences for pumping water from the Murray River? Can he give a clear indication of Government policy on this matter?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I am in a position to advise the honourable member that the committee's report dealing with the subject and giving the Government's policy will be laid on the table of this Council in a few minutes' time.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: My question refers to a circular letter presumably sent to all district councils and inspectors at present administering weights and measures inspections. This circular has been sent by the Warden of Standards. It advises that all inspectors will be expected to qualify under the new Act by November, 1967. In view of the fact that in many other cases of registration, etc., there is a precedent for existing officers to be regarded as being qualified by experience (and even, in this regard, I believe it has now been said that some justices of the peace have been qualified by experience), is it intended that all existing inspectors, some of whom have a great deal of experience in this matter, will have to qualify by examination; and, if so, is any extension of time likely to be granted, in view of the very heavy commitments of some inspectors?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: I shall refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and obtain the information as soon as possible.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Will the Minister of Roads ascertain when his department expects that traffic lights will be installed, first, at the intersection of Greenhill Road and Fullarton Road and, secondly, at the intersection of

Greenhill Road and King William Street-Peacock Road? In the former instance, will he ascertain whether there are any special reasons for the installation being delayed?

The Hon. S. C. BEVAN: The matter of the installation of traffic lights at the first intersection referred to by the honourable member is in hand; plans have been drawn up and submitted. The suitability of the proposed traffic lights has been discussed, and this matter is now being examined by the Road Traffic Board. After finality has been reached, which I hope will occur very soon, the traffic lights at the intersection of Greenhill Road and Fullarton Road will be installed immediately by the Highways Department. I appreciate that these lights are urgently needed. I shall have inquiries made regarding the installation of traffic lights at the intersection of Greenhill Road and King William Street-Peacock Road, and I shall bring back a report as soon as possible.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Adjourned debate on motion for adoption.

(Continued from July 12. Page 516.)

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): Yesterday, when I sought leave to continue my remarks, I was dealing with agriculture. However, during my remarks I referred to the recent judgment of the President of the Industrial Court, Judge Williams, in relation to nurses' salaries. I take it that everybody is happy that at last the worth of nurses has been recognized and that they have been granted salary increases commensurate with the duties they perform. Previously, the nurses' salaries were not a matter for arbitration; they were arrived at by negotiations between the Nurses Federation and the Government. However, on this occasion the Government was not prepared to accede to the request of the federation *in toto* and therefore the matter was referred to arbitration, and this is possibly how it should be.

There was one matter in Judge Williams's judgment that I thought was rather interesting. I would be interested to know how the present Government reconciles the judge's decision with its own policy, particularly regarding equal pay for equal work. The judge, in handing down the judgment, said that there would be increased rates of pay for male nurses. However, if we are entering a period where we are to have equal pay for equal work, surely the nursing

profession is one sphere where the work value of a female should be equivalent to that of a male. In fact, it may be that the female nurse is a better nurse than the male nurse, but this is an instance where the salary of the male nurse has been increased. If the Government in its wisdom, or otherwise, decides in favour of equal pay in the nursing profession, what effect will this have on the profession? Will it reduce the salary of the male nurse to that of the female nurse, or will it increase the salary of the female nurse to that of the male nurse? This is a matter that will have to be examined by the Government when the occasion arises. Recently, I asked the Chief Secretary a question regarding overtime being paid to police officers. In his answer, he said:

Overtime is not paid to police officers who work additional hours: they are given time off in lieu. However, many members of the force consider their duties to be a public service and do not claim for the additional hours that they work.

That is a rather strange answer to the question, and I should like to know what is the attitude of the Police Force on this matter. Yesterday, I said something regarding "one man, two jobs". Obviously, the members of the Police Force have to rely on their one job, as it is a section of the community that is not able to take two jobs. When members of the force build up an excessive amount of overtime, it is not of much use to them. What is the use of their taking time off? There is nowhere they can go on the salaries they are paid. The Government should consider whether members of the Police Force should be paid overtime.

In the report of the Commissioner of Police it is stated that in the last 12 months, 71 police officers left the force to seek other employment. That is 71 out of a total of about 1,500 officers which, I consider, is a fairly high percentage. I would be interested to know why those members left the force. The report of the Commissioner of Police is an interesting document. He makes one or two submissions in it, of which the Government should take heed. One is in relation to extraneous duties. The Commissioner said:

The personal service of summonses (and this is only one of the time-consuming extraneous duties) is a task in which over 60 per cent of the cases involves more than one visit to the address in order to effect service. At the Elizabeth police station during the month of March, 564 summonses for service were received from the Postmaster-General's Department and 264 in April.

This is only one police station and one department, so it is not difficult to visualize how much time is taken up servicing the 7,000 summonses, excluding local court processes, that are handled annually by the personnel at police stations. The Commissioner of Police went on to say, dealing with the extraneous duties:

It is hoped that the enactment of legislation to provide for the service of summonses by post will receive favourable consideration.

I asked the Minister whether it was the intention of the Government to bring down legislation during this session of Parliament to give effect to the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police. The Minister's answer was that it was unlikely that sufficient time would be available during this session. I doubt whether there would need to be any far-reaching amendments to the appropriate Act in order to give effect to the recommendation, so this is another matter the Government should examine. He went on to say that a substantial increase in the active strength of the Police Force would be imperative next year.

I know that the Chief Secretary, like all members of Parliament, is very proud of his Police Force, which does a remarkably good job. However, let us face facts. We are not holding our numbers in the force, even without taking into account the increased population. An extra week's annual leave will necessitate recruiting 35 additional police officers. National service training to date has taken an additional 13 officers, while another 22 are awaiting call-up. Therefore, taking into consideration only the 13 already called up there is a loss of 48 police officers, and as the net increase in the last 12 months has been only 37 we have a net loss of 11 in the force.

I believe this is a rather serious matter, particularly in view of the vast amount of rather violent crime that is taking place at present, and I consider that every endeavour should be made to recruit officers into the Police Force. If there are reasons why the force is not attractive to more recruits, then these things should be rectified. I have already referred to the extraneous duties that are taking up an excessive amount of the time of members of the force. Dealing with this matter, the Commissioner said:

Last year an equivalent of 152 police officers were engaged continuously on extraneous duties.

It may be that some of the officers cannot be relieved of these duties, but at least we should do something to relieve some of them and to make some of those 152 officers available for active duties.

Mr. President, notwithstanding the fact that the Governor's Deputy's Speech contained $1\frac{1}{2}$ pages in relation to agriculture, the agricultural industry today is still not receiving the assistance and encouragement that perhaps it should receive. In the last 12 months we have seen freight rates increased rather considerably. We have also seen an increase in water rates, and at present many people are receiving accounts for excess water even though they have never had excess water before. Also, a new charge, termed a service charge, is appearing on the horizon. Nothing has ever been mentioned in Parliament regarding a service charge, and I am not too sure what it means. Obviously, it is something that the Government has introduced by regulation.

In addition to all this, the agricultural industry is facing another very serious problem in relation to drought. This drought is widespread, and it will have a detrimental effect on the incomes of people in the agricultural industry in the next 12 months or possibly even two years, because the end of the drought is still not in sight. This brings me to the question of the need to have adequate fodder reserves not only in this State but throughout Australia, because the whole of Australia is periodically subject to droughts.

The fear of drought, without doubt, has a restraining effect on the potential stocking rates in Australia today. Many graziers are restricting stocking rates through the fear that they may be compelled to sell their stock because of drought or of incurring heavy expense in purchasing fodder. It can be shown by economic analysis that heavy stocking and drought feeding can return substantial profit. It must be remembered that increased stocking rates increase drought vulnerability. When I speak of fodder reserves I do so in the context of short-term reserves, which are best supplied by the farmer himself.

Government schemes for this purpose would not be well run, necessary or even desirable. However, Government incentive, not only on a Commonwealth level but also on a State basis is necessary and justified. Possibly one of the reasons inhibiting the provision by farmers of fodder reserves is the fear of liability to pay estate and succession duties on it. It should be possible to devise means whereby

fodder conserved as drought reserves could be nominated by the farmer and be exempt from estate and succession duties.

Because fodder is a wasting asset there would be little fear that the primary producer would use large quantities of conserved fodder as a means of avoiding duty. Such a scheme could well make conservation an investment rather than an insurance, and what would it matter if huge fodder reserves were put away, because the Government would receive indirect benefits in a time of drought? A severe drought extending over a long period would require fodder reserves which farmers would be unlikely to supply for themselves, and it may not be economic for them to do so without incurring heavy investments and diversion of capital from other essential farm developments. To cover such emergencies would require what one may term a national fodder reserve scheme. Such a scheme would require national grain reserves to be located at places best suited to grain production, transport and distribution of such fodder when necessary.

Any scheme of this nature would suggest Government involvement and would possibly face rejection on the ground that fodder conservation was, as a matter of principle, the responsibility of the individual grazier. This could well be so, but the question may also be asked whether this country can once in every decade, and perhaps more often (certainly so in some areas) afford the ravages of drought without having some sort of mitigation plan capable of being put into operation. Grain from a national fodder reserve could be paid for with drought bonds. I appreciate that this would then become a Commonwealth matter, but State Government sympathy would still be essential.

The bonds could be purchased from the Commonwealth Government at any time, they would bear interest at the current short-term rate, and they should be assessable as income in the year of encashment rather than in the year of purchase. Such bonds should be available for the purchase of both livestock and fodder, as in some areas it may be preferable drought strategy to sell and then re-buy stock rather than drought-feed it. In those areas drought bonds would enable graziers to sell stock earlier, safe in the knowledge that, in doing so, they would not have to pay most of their profit away in taxation. Such a scheme would be one of self-help and be worthy of Government encouragement and consideration.

I have always been closely associated with the livestock industry and it is of interest to me to examine the annual report of the Abattoirs Board, particularly the statement of receipts and expenditure, in which one finds that in 1965 the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board incurred a loss of \$98,050. In 1966 the deficit was only \$33,611; it had been reduced by one-third. Figures for 1967 are not yet available—or, if they are, I have not been able to see them—but it is generally anticipated that the loss will be very high. In the past, to recoup the loss of the Abattoirs Board, it has generally been the Government's policy to permit increased charges. This, on its face value, may seem to be justified, but the high cost of killing in South Australia has had a detrimental effect on the abattoirs. Killing rates in the other States are considerably lower than those in South Australia. At present firms operating in the saleyards of the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board are buying stock and sending it to the other States to be slaughtered and dressed. Some of these firms are returning carcasses to South Australia for sale in this State. This proves, of course, that the cost of production, about which we hear so much today, is not always lower in this State, and it is definitely not lower in a semi-governmental institution like the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board. I suggest to the Government that any increase in killing charges in South Australia will only intensify the existing situation, which we should be setting out to eliminate rather than intensify.

There are reasons why the losses of the Metropolitan Abattoirs Board are as high as they are. I suggest that one of these is that it is Ministerial policy (in fact, it has been Ministerial direction recently) that the abattoirs should continue to employ staff surplus to its needs. I appreciate the problem that the Minister faces near Christmas time, when it is necessary that a number of men be dismissed from the abattoirs works through being surplus to requirements. After all, this is not the time of the year when any employer likes to dismiss employees, but we must realize that this is one of the employment hazards in this industry. Every person seeking employment as a slaughterman or a slaughter hand knows that at any time his employment may be terminated, because of a number of factors, one of which may be that no stock is available or, as I stated just now, that the stock is being taken to another State for slaughter because of the high killing charges in South Australia.

So, if the Abattoirs Board wants to reduce its costs, it must consider employing only sufficient staff to cover its immediate needs. I know it is necessary at certain periods of the year for staff to be engaged ahead of needs because we anticipate that later in the year there will be (and there often is) an influx of stock. Therefore, it is necessary to engage additional staff, although work may not be immediately available for them. But, once we have passed that peak period of the year and know that conditions will get worse rather than better, we should consider reducing our staff and so reduce our costs.

The Government maintains that the unemployment situation is not as bad as we are trying to make out. Of course, that is so when the Government itself is employing people, through its semi-governmental bodies, for whom no useful work is available. Possibly the same thing is happening in the housing industry. This Government continually blames the private sector of the building industry for the lack of employment in the building trade, but we find that the Housing Trust is continuing to build houses surplus to present requirements. Figures have been given in this Chamber of the number of unoccupied Housing Trust houses in South Australia being in excess of 500. In addition to those, many Housing Trust houses have, by design, not been completed. They require painting or some other little finishing touch to be completed. If we add those houses to those that are completed but are unoccupied, the figure becomes much higher than 500. What is the use of the private sector of the industry carrying on and trying to build and sell houses when this huge number of Housing Trust houses is unoccupied?

I was told this morning by a person who knows the situation that at present 8,000 houses are for sale in Adelaide. These are not new houses but houses from which people want to move. He did not say why they were moving or why the houses were for sale, but it is obvious that people are out of work, that they are leaving Adelaide, that they are leaving the State because of the employment position. These facts should be known to the Government. Perhaps they are, but the Government is not prepared to admit them. As time goes on, the Government is probably learning.

When the basic wage case prior to the last was before the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission soon after the advent of this Government to office, it sent its own

advocate into the court supporting the claim for a \$4.30 increase in the basic wage. It is past history that the amount granted was only \$2 a week, but that \$2 a week cost the Government \$5,750,000 in increased wages. Had that \$4.30 increase been granted, which the Government advocated, it would have cost \$13,250,000. However, as I have already said, the Government is learning as time goes on, because on May 2, when there was a further application for a basic wage increase, the Government again sent its advocate into the court, but this time not in support of that claim. This time the Arbitration Court was told by Mr. E. G. Tattersall, Senior Industrial Officer of the South Australian Public Service Commissioner's Department, that the granting of the full increase of \$7.30 a week in the basic wage sought by the unions would cause the South Australian Government financial embarrassment and would cost the South Australian Government \$20,000,000 a year. Here, we have a case of the Government, having gained some experience, realizing that this State is not in a position to meet the demands for wage claims being made today. We appreciate that wages should be adjusted as costs increase (that is inevitable and nobody objects) but, when we have a Government prepared to support the excessive wage claims of unions (and some of them are militant unions) then it is no wonder that this State is in its present financial distress.

I am directing most of my remarks to agriculture because that is the one industry in which I have had some experience. I wish to refer now to a matter into which there should be research; indeed, research into it may be proceeding at present. I refer to the damage being caused to many gum trees in South Australia, particularly red gums, by an insect known as a lerp; it is also known as the fire blast insect because of the effect of its attack on the gums. These are sap-sucking insects that attack the tree when it is in a low state of resistance. Along many South Australian rivers and in other areas there used to be many beautiful gums. Today, these trees, although not dead, have a considerable amount of dead wood in them.

The attacks of these lerp are increasing year by year. In past years, we are told, the Aborigines used these insects for food, and this helped to keep them in check. Indeed, their natural enemies also kept them

in check, but these enemies lived in virgin scrub which today has been cleared, thus destroying the plants that provided the food for the adult parasites of these insects. I suggest that the Agriculture Department, in conjunction with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, look closely at the possibility of dealing with these insects. If we do not do something many of our fine gums of which we are so very proud will disappear.

I have endeavoured to be constructive in my remarks. I do not believe that one should always be critical and I trust that the Government will take heed of the suggestions made during this debate and that it will act accordingly. I support the motion.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary): I rise to move an amendment to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. I move:

To insert the following new paragraph:

2a. We express the sincere hope that His Excellency the Governor will speedily be restored to the best of health.

I want to confine myself for a moment to the amendment and to say that I know that I express the view of every member, including you, Mr. President, and the officers of this Council, when I say how deeply we regret the illness which His Excellency has suffered over the last four or five weeks. I have often mentioned to His Excellency (and I have said it publicly) that all people, no matter what their manner of living or their political views are, admire very much his work and that of Lady Bastyan since they have been with us in South Australia.

On more than one occasion I have told His Excellency and Lady Bastyan that I think they both work too hard. I think I may be right in saying that possibly His Excellency's illness is linked with the hard way in which he has worked in the interests of this State; he has placed too big a burden upon himself.

I am happy to be able to say that the latest report concerning His Excellency's illness is good; he is now definitely showing progress towards complete recovery. I know it is the hope of all members that his progress will be rapid and that it will lead to complete recovery, so that he may continue his work, perhaps not so strenuously as in the past, and so that he may have the opportunity of visiting all the places and country centres that he desires so much to visit before his term of office ends next year.

In conclusion, I want to say that I have listened for the most part to the speeches of all honourable members during this debate, and I thank them for their efforts, which have been willingly and freely made. Some matters to which honourable members have referred, such as Murray River salinity, are being dealt with, and in the next few weeks I shall also reply to other matters raised during this debate. As I have intimated to the Leader of the Opposition, I would not have spoken at this stage had it not been for this amendment to the motion. I support the adoption of the motion, as amended.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL (Central No. 2): It is my privilege to second the amendment just moved by the Chief Secretary. In doing so I shall not repeat his remarks; I shall merely say that I subscribe to everything he has said and I am sure that every other honourable member does. If he had the opportunity, I am sure that every honourable member would like to send to His Excellency his personal best wishes. The Chief Secretary has referred to Lady Bastyan, who also has a very busy life as the Governor's wife. In addition to her public duties she must have a full-time and exacting job in running a large and very important household. We all know what extra cares illness bestows on us, not only in worry but also in additional physical effort, and I am sure that all members feel for Lady Bastyan, too, in the worrying and trying time she must have had during her husband's illness. I am sure that all honourable members would like to join with me in indicating to her our high regard and very best wishes.

It had not been my intention to intervene in this debate, although I have some very important things to touch on at some time. However, we are very early in the session, and there will be plenty of other opportunities in general debates for me to raise these matters quite soon. So, I propose to reserve the remarks that I have to a later stage. I consider the matters I shall raise to be of great importance, but by the same token they are not of great urgency at present. I know that there are other matters that this Council must deal with, so I shall defer my comments on these matters to a later but early date.

I should like to join with other honourable members in the personal remarks that have been made about the personalities who have been referred to, but it is unnecessary at this late stage of the debate for me to go into detail. This matter has been thoroughly can-

vassed; so I consider there is no need for me to take it any further. I support the amendment and the Address in Reply.

Amendment carried; motion, as amended, carried.

The PRESIDENT: His Excellency the Governor's Deputy will be pleased to receive honourable members of the Council at 4 p.m. this day for the purpose of receiving the Address in Reply.

At 3.50 p.m. the President and honourable members proceeded to Government House. They returned at 4.5 p.m.

The PRESIDENT: I have to inform the Council that accompanied by the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply to His Excellency the Governor's Deputy's Opening Speech, and by other honourable members, I proceeded to Government House and there presented to His Excellency the Governor's Deputy the Address in Reply adopted by the Council on this day, to which His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:

I thank you for your Address in Reply to the Speech with which I opened the third session of the thirty-eighth Parliament. I am confident that you will give your best attention to all matters placed before you. I join with you in your hopes that His Excellency the Governor will speedily recover from his illness. I pray for God's blessing upon your deliberations.

MORPHETT STREET BRIDGE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

PRICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

LAND SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

FRUIT FLY (COMPENSATION) BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

SUCCESSION DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT
BILL.

Received from the House of Assembly and read a first time.

MURTHO RESERVE.

The House of Assembly transmitted the following resolution in which it requested the concurrence of the Legislative Council:

That Forest Reserve No. 58, hundred of Murtho, as shown on the plan laid before Parliament on June 27, 1967, be resumed in terms of section 81 (1) of the Crown Lands Act, 1929-1967, for the purpose of being dealt with as Crown lands.

ADJOURNMENT.

At 4.9 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, July 18, at 2.15 p.m.