

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, August 21, 1969.

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

### QUESTION

#### BILLBOARDS

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister of Roads and Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Two days ago I saw an announcement in the newspaper by the Minister that the billboards appearing on some railway property outside the 35 m.p.h. limit area were progressively to be removed and, as I read the statement, it was to be for aesthetic purposes. When I was the Minister of Transport and was approached about this, although in some places I should have liked to take down some of the billboards, my main consideration was whether or not they were safe: I was not so much concerned about their aesthetic aspect. I was informed by the Railways Commissioner then that a considerable amount of revenue was derived from this source. Can the Minister tell the Council the amount of revenue in this last financial year that was derived from this source and the effect that his decision will have upon it?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I shall obtain the figure of the amount of revenue to which the honourable member refers. I hasten to point out that I hope that, as a result of new arrangements that the Railways Commissioner will be able to make with advertising agents, space will be found within the area of restricted speed limit on the fringes of country towns but on railway land, so that the present revenue received by the South Australian Railways Department from that source will not decrease in the future. I shall have to obtain from the Railways Commissioner the figure of the actual sum involved.

#### 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:

Engineering and Water Supply Department  
Ferrous Foundry, Ottoway,  
Grange Primary School.

#### TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Adjourned debate on the motion of the Minister of Roads and Transport:

(For wording of motion and amendment, see page 883.)

(Continued from August 20. Page 1074.)

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): Like other honourable members, I speak to this motion with some concern. My first reaction to the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study plan was fairly similar to that expressed by many people both within this Council and outside it. This plan has caused much concern both from the financial viewpoint and from the view-point of its effect on the city of Adelaide. The financial aspect has caused much concern in country areas, where it was believed that a plan of such magnitude could seriously affect the development of country roads. However, the more one studies this plan and possible alternatives to it the more clearly one sees that some co-ordinated plan must soon be accepted for the transport system of the metropolitan area. Any failure to do this will inevitably lead to higher costs and greater inconvenience.

The present plan is causing distress to people who believe their houses may be acquired, but at least they know something definite about the future. It is now obvious that some kind of road plan will be needed in the future and, if we have no firm proposals, there will be a lack of confidence throughout the community.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: You have no firm proposals now.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: We do have a plan, which could be subject to amendment; indeed, I believe that, under wise administration, it probably will be subject to amendment. At least, however, there is a starting point. At the outset I must make it clear that I am not suggesting that this plan is perfect or that I entirely agree to the motion. The sum of money to be spent appears, at first glance, to be almost beyond reach within the 20-year period, but I believe this point was very ably covered by the Chief Secretary yesterday.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Didn't he say that no extra taxes would be raised?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: He said that the plan could be financed without additional taxation. When I was considering the large sum of money required, I looked back through the Auditor-General's Reports of past years to note the growth of the Highways Fund. The Highways Act was first introduced into this Parliament in about 1926, and although they could hardly be called horse-and-buggy

days they were at least partly so, and road transport, particularly commercial road transport, was very much in its infancy. The funds available at that stage would have been small indeed. In 1948 (which is only 20 years ago, and we are talking of a 20-year period in regard to the M.A.T.S. plan), the Highways Department's expenditure was \$2,821,000, and that sum grew to \$35,161,000 in 1968.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: All this money for M.A.T.S. will not come from the Highways Fund.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: That is true, and that is set out in the Minister's explanation.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Where will the other money come from?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: If the honourable member cared to look at the Minister's explanation and at the additional information given by the Chief Secretary yesterday, he would see that this money will become available both from Commonwealth and from State sources through the natural growth of motor revenue.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: That is contrary to the report itself, isn't it?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: When we are looking at the M.A.T.S. plan we must remember that it covers not only road expenditure but also rail expenditure, and in looking at this expenditure we must relate it to a road programme that will take place. Of course, we are discussing in this motion whether the planning and construction should be carried out in a co-ordinated fashion under a master plan as a guide, or whether we should throw out the M.A.T.S. plan and spend a similar sum of money on unco-ordinated road construction.

The Hon. S. C. Bevan: Did anyone ever suggest that it should be thrown out?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: Yes, that was suggested. I do not say that that has been said in this Council, but some people are utterly opposed to the M.A.T.S. plan. I believe that to withdraw the plan at this stage would only contribute to the uncertainty that exists in the minds of the many people who would be affected. In speaking of a plan for the development of roads, I as a country member can see that, if the city should have an unplanned road system, which could mean that our roads might be cluttered with commercial traffic, this could add substantially to the costs of industry and production generally in the metropolitan area and could, in turn, affect country people who use the goods pro-

duced in the metropolitan area and who have to carry their own produce to and from the metropolitan area. Undoubtedly, it would also have some effect on South Australia's competitive position in the industrial sphere.

I now return to the matter of the money involved, from which I was somewhat sidetracked by interjections from members opposite. The point I intended to make (and this covers my attitude to the motion) is that we have seen the Highways Department's expenditure grow from just under \$3,000,000 a year to over \$35,000,000 a year in the last 20 years.

The lines in the Estimates, in respect of which Parliament does have some say in the expenditure of public funds, refer to only about \$5,000,000 of this money. Those lines relate to administration costs and expenses of the Motor Vehicles Department and miscellaneous expenses. Therefore, in effect the spending of about \$30,000,000 is under the control of the department and, although a report is presented each year by the Auditor-General to show that these funds have not been improperly used, the actual priorities of this expenditure are outside the control of Parliament itself. Certainly we have the Minister in this Council, but it would be a physical impossibility for the Minister to examine every item of expenditure. I believe that when we are considering the expenditure of such large sums in the future we should give thought to some oversight of this type of spending because, although the Minister's reference to the allocation of funds between the country and the metropolitan area has to some extent lessened the fears of country people about the possibility of less money being spent on country roads, we run the risk in the future of seeing a change of priorities.

After having served for some years on the Subordinate Legislation Committee and on the Public Works Committee, I am well aware of the value of some oversight of the spending of public funds. Although the members on those committees may not be experts in all fields, the existence of such committees gives other people the opportunity of giving evidence and of protesting if they are not in favour of certain proposals. The cost of such a committee is very small compared with the cost of many other items that we deal with in this Parliament.

We have heard something about different modes of transport in the future and about how in the space age the motor car may become

obsolete. However, the vehicles of the future will have to be of a certain capacity to carry the people, and they will need to have somewhere where they can travel. If we are not to build freeways and larger arterial roads to cater for the traffic, people must travel either underground or on elevated forms of transport. The sum of money to be spent in this period of 20 years may or may not run according to schedule. However, I do not believe it matters whether it takes longer than 20 years, provided that the plan is suitably carried out to meet the needs of the metropolitan area.

One thing that concerns me very much is the question of compensation. Although the setting up of a properly-constituted tribunal expert in this particular form of compensation would be a step in the right direction, I believe this only partly answers the question. We have found this out from what has happened in the Licensing Court, where leading counsel have been retained by one side thus forcing the other side to do likewise. It is not the time taken in court that proves so expensive in many instances, but the time and cost involved in preparing a case. I hope that under the M.A.T.S. plan a method of compensation can be devised that will allow full compensation at minimal cost; perhaps it may be possible for the Government to bear at least part of that cost.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The Government is responsible for that charge; why should

it not meet all the cost? It would be part of the compensation, wouldn't it?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: In conclusion, I say that I support the general principles outlined in the motion, but before voting for it I would like an assurance from the Minister concerning paragraphs (c) (i) and (ii). In the case of paragraph (c) (i), which deals with an annual report to be placed before Parliament on the work that has been done, I believe the words "proposed to be done in the following year" should be inserted, too. Regarding paragraph (c) (ii), I would like an assurance from the Minister that alterations to the Compulsory Acquisition of Land Act will be placed before Parliament during the current session. I know that the Government has appointed a committee to investigate that matter; it was appointed in March this year and has had an opportunity during recent months to study relevant legislation of the Commonwealth and of other States.

In being required to vote on a motion of such magnitude I do not think it unreasonable to ask for these assurances. With those reservations, I support the motion.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD secured the adournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 2.38 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, August 26, at 2.15 p.m.