

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, August 19, 1970

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

### QUESTIONS

#### RATE REVENUE

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Has the Minister of Lands obtained from the Minister of Local Government a reply to my question of August 13 about rate revenue?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: My colleague reports:

The honourable member will appreciate that the question of loss of rate revenue by local government authorities because of land holdings by both the State and the Commonwealth Governments is one that has no simple answer. Preliminary investigations into this matter were commenced during the term of the previous Government. Undoubtedly, rate revenue is being lost to councils, but there are many matters that must be considered in determining the extent of any compensation that may be desirable. For instance, regard must be had to the advantage, if any, to any area of the existence of Crown property. In addition, as the honourable member is no doubt aware, considerable sums of money are made available to councils for many and varied purposes. Consideration must be given to the extent to which such grants are related to the loss of revenue by councils from Crown properties. The Government is aware of this situation and I assure the honourable member that investigations will proceed to see whether a satisfactory solution to the problem can be found.

#### DROUGHT-STRICKEN SHEEP

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The Minister invariably gives lengthy and considered replies to questions. Last week I asked him whether he would consider, as a matter of urgency, asking the Metropolitan and Export Abattoirs Board to consider the problem of allowing drought-stricken sheep into the abattoirs. The Minister said "Yes", he would take it up with the board. Has he taken up this matter with the board and can he say whether it will be possible for store-type sheep in poor condition to be allowed into the abattoirs, as has been the past practice?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I have taken up this matter with the board, but, as the honourable member will recall, it recently issued a

statement on why it had had to put an embargo on this type of sheep going into the abattoirs, because there is a limit, which is not uncommon and has applied in years gone by, restricting the number of sheep entering the abattoirs. First and foremost, the abattoirs tries to fulfil all its obligations; its No. 1 priority is export lambs. The point is that in these days many more lambs are coming into the abattoirs than ever before, as well as there being more sheep. It is difficult for the abattoirs to handle both efficiently, and one can gain only at the expense of the other. I am expecting shortly a condensed reply with a full report on the situation. I will check on that and get it as soon as possible.

#### SEASONAL PROSPECTS

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: In view of the present drought throughout the State and the concern it is causing many people, can the Minister of Agriculture make any statement about seasonal prospects?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Yes. I am delighted that the honourable member is concerned about the seasonal prospects for South Australia. For the benefit of honourable members in general I will now give a condensed report. I have, too, a full report on the matter, which I shall seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard*.

Due to below-average rainfall in many parts of South Australia this year the harvest prospects for cereals, particularly wheat, are not very favourable. The adverse conditions which have prevailed for wheat so far this season are similar to those of the 1967 drought year. Upper Eyre Peninsula and parts of the northern area and Murray Mallee are the worst affected, and it seems unlikely that they will yield much more than 1,000,000 bushels of wheat this year. Rainfall in the main cereal-producing areas has been patchy, and generally below average. Estimates based on production from these counties during 1967 indicate that instead of yielding the normal 55 per cent to 60 per cent of the State's total wheat harvest, they can be expected to produce 17,000,000 to 18,000,000 bushels this season. Other areas of the State seem likely to yield between 10,000,000 and 11,000,000 bushels—something approximating the average crop in these districts. In general, it appears that the impact of delivery quotas on areas sown to wheat, and the adverse seasonal conditions could result in a harvest delivery below the

State quota. For barley and oats, the harvest prospects are brighter, and are not expected to be seriously affected by the seasonal conditions. I have endeavoured to summarize briefly the cereal prospects for the information of honourable members. I have had a comprehensive report prepared setting out the situation in much greater detail and, because of the importance of this matter, I seek the approval of the Council to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave granted.

#### CROP PROSPECTS, 1970

##### (1) Wheat

The adverse conditions that have prevailed so far this season are similar to those of the 1967 drought year. Rains have been light and patchy and the general soaking rain needed to provide subsoil moisture has not occurred. The effect of these conditions has been most severe in the "early" districts and little or no harvest can be expected from these areas. The counties so affected are Hopetoun, Kintore, Way, Dufferin, and part of Robinson on Eyre Peninsula; Dalhousie, Frome, Kimberley and Eyre in the North; and Albert, Alfred, Young and Hamley in the Murray Mallee. In a normal year these counties would produce about 15 per cent of the wheat harvest from about 23 per cent of the area sown. Based on the performances of these counties in 1967 they could not be expected to yield much in excess of 1,000,000 bushels of wheat this year.

The main cereal producing areas of the State have received below average rainfall. For the April-July period the following counties have received between 4in. and 6in. of rain all of which has fallen in light and often patchy falls:—LeHunte, Robinson, Musgrave, Buxton, and Jervois on Eyre Peninsula; Burra, Victoria, Daly, and Sturt in the North and Buccleuch, Chandos, and Russell in the Murray Mallee.

The rainfall for these counties varies from  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. below average in Russell to 2in. below average in Robinson. Conditions are patchy within counties and some contain areas as badly affected as those of the worst affected counties mentioned above. Normally these counties would produce about 57 per cent of the State's wheat from 54 per cent of the total area sown. Compared with the production from these areas in 1967 they could now be expected to yield from 17,000,000 to 18,000,000 bushels of wheat this season.

In the remainder of the State where conditions are close to average prospects are better,

but the counties contained in this area normally produce about 28 per cent of the State's wheat crop. Here again all counties involved except Gawler and Hindmarsh have received below average rainfall for the April-July period and some contain areas with poor prospects. The counties in this category are Flinders on Eyre Peninsula; Stanley in the North; Adelaide, Carnarvon, Gawler, Light, Hindmarsh, and Fergusson in Central division; and Cardwell, Buckingham, MacDonnell, Robe, and Grey in the South-East. Based on performances in average years this group of counties could be expected to yield from 10,000,000 to 11,000,000 bushels of wheat this year.

In summary, it can be stated that the effects of quotas on the areas sown to wheat and the adverse seasonal conditions on the crops sown can be expected to result in a harvest delivery short of the State's quota. A "copy book finish" could substantially improve prospects in the less drought affected areas.

##### (2) Barley

An increased acreage was sown to barley this year and because close to 50 per cent of the crop is grown in the areas which have received close to average rainfall the prospects are much better for this crop than for wheat.

##### (3) Oats

Approximately 40 per cent of the oat crop is grown in the areas which have received close to average rainfall and for this reason the total harvest should not be as badly affected as wheat.

##### Pastures

Growth from pastures has followed the same pattern as the development of crops. In the worst areas stock numbers have been reduced over the past six weeks and this reduction in numbers is continuing.

To a lesser extent this has been happening in the zone which has received from four to six inches of rain in the April-July period. Over most of this area the feed situation is serious and prospects of conserving for the coming summer and autumn are poor.

In the area which has received close to average rainfall pastures are better and prospects for conserving hay are reasonably good.

Stocks of conserved fodder from the 1968 and 1969 seasons have been seriously depleted in all areas.

##### Water Supplies

Parts of the State (viz, Upper and Eastern Eyre Peninsula) are extremely short of surface

water for stock. Other areas which rely on surface catchment for irrigation, for example, parts of Central district, will also be short of supplies if good spring rains do not occur.

The following classification indicates the rainfall for each county and prospects for each of the three areas into which the State may be divided:

(1) Severely affected

Area	County	Rainfall (April-July)	Remarks
Western	Hopetoun		In these counties rainfall is approximately the same as in 1967. They are not likely to produce anything above the requirements for seed and feed.
	Kintore	3.53	
	Way	3.04	
	Dufferin	4.13	
North	Dalhousie	1.83	Normally these counties would produce 15% of the State's wheat from 23% of the total area sown.
	Frome	3.18	
	Kimberley	1.89	
	Eyre	3.03	
Murray Mallee	Albert	1.79	
	Alfred	2.31	

(2) Below average

Western	Le Hunte	4.30	Counties in this group have received between 4 and 6in. of rain. However, all are below average. This varies from ½in. below in County Russell to 2in. in County Robinson. Condition are patchy within counties and some contain areas as bad as those in category (1).
	Robinson	5.71	
	Musgrave	5.00	
	Buxton	5.06	
	Jervois	5.73	
North	Burra	5.78	Normally these counties would produce 57% of the State's wheat from 54% of the total area sown.
Murray Mallee	Buccleuch	4.10	
	Chandos	4.98	
	Russell	5.72	

(3) Close to average

Western	Flinders	7.57	The "best" areas of the State are contained in these counties. Here again all but Gawler and Hindmarsh are below average for the April-July period but rainfall has been sufficient to indicate reasonable yields.
North	Stanley	6.36	
Central	Adelaide	9.45	
	Carnarvon	9.05	Normally this group of counties would produce 28% of the State's grain from 23% of the total area sown.
	Gawler	7.48	
	Light	6.72	
	Hindmarsh	17.92	
	Fergusson	7.00	
South-East	Cardwell	7.20	
	Buckingham	8.17	
	MacDonnell	7.54	
	Robe	10.08	
	Grey	12.93	

## ROAD TRANSPORT

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I seek leave of the Council to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: My question is directed to the Chief Secretary as the spokesman in this Council on Government policy. It is timely, I think, that the Minister of Agriculture has just made a report on seasonal conditions. It is obvious that the low production of grain will affect the South Australian Railways in the amount of freight it carries. Also, from the reports we hear of the position of machinery manufacturers, there will be less freight travelling through the rural areas. The cost of transport is of real concern to those who have to earn a living under these conditions. Can the Chief Secretary give a firm undertaking that the Government will make no attempt to further restrict road transport?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I cannot give a firm undertaking at this stage. As the question is one of policy, I will refer it to my colleagues in Cabinet and bring back a reply as soon as possible.

## BARLEY STORAGE

The Hon. L. R. HART: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. L. R. HART: Recently barley-growers throughout South Australia were required to complete a questionnaire stating their production figures, I think for the last five years, with a view to rationalizing deliveries this year into the bulk handling system. I believe the amount that it was expected could be delivered into the system by barleygrowers was 50 per cent of their average over the last five years. In view of the Minister's statement a few moments ago to the effect that wheat deliveries this year will be well below normal, it can be assumed that surplus storage will be available in the bulk handling system. If this is so, will the Minister investigate the possibility of barley-growers being permitted to deliver larger quantities of barley to the bulk handling system than is at present expected?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Yes.

## MEAT

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Much publicity has been given to the present meat situation and the cancellation of the export of meat to the United States of America, engineered largely, I believe, by the meat producers of America rather than the American consumers' concern about health standards in Australia. However, there has also been a cancellation of a Russian order for meat which has been given no publicity. Has the Minister any information about why the Soviet Union has also cancelled meat orders?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I have not heard of any cancellation of meat exports to the U.S.S.R. Perhaps it was tainted green instead of red. I should be pleased to hear more about this matter from the honourable member, privately if he so desires, so that I can take up the question and see what the situation is.

## RAILWAYS INSTITUTE

The Hon. C. M. HILL: On August 11 I directed a question to the Minister of Lands, representing the Minister of Roads and Transport, concerning possible progress made since May 30 in the calling of tenders for the construction of the proposed new Railways Institute building. Has he a reply?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: My colleague has supplied me with the following information:

The explanatory statement made by the honourable member prior to asking his question does two things. First, it confirms the attitude the present Minister of Roads and Transport continually expressed as an Opposition member prior to May 30 that the then Minister of Roads and Transport and the Hall Government agreed to demolish the Railways Institute without first providing for proper replacement accommodation for the many thousands of railway employees who regularly used the facilities of the institute. Secondly, the explanatory statements contain misleading statements and inaccuracies, and as a result the question is asked on false premises.

The honourable member stated that the Hall Government, prior to its defeat on May 30, decided on a site for the new Railways Institute and issued authority to build the new institute, with a limit of \$500,000, and the Railways Commissioner was advised to proceed. The facts are that on January 8, 1970, the honourable member, in his Ministerial capacity, advised the Railways Commissioner that the Government had decided on the site for the new Railways Institute, but on January 29 the Railways Commissioner advised the then Minister that the cost of building on the site selected by the Government would involve an additional cost estimated at \$251,000. As the honourable member's advice placed a \$500,000 limit on the replacement of the institute, the Railways Commissioner properly advised the then Minister that the proposal of his Government was not practicable and sought clarification of just what works were to be carried by the \$500,000.

On February 13, 1970, the honourable member directed the Railways Commissioner to confer with the Director, Public Buildings Department, and the architects involved, for the purpose of determining the feasibility of the siting of the South Australian Railways Institute and also the closing down of the Railways Laundry, the Railways Bakery and the Railways Tarpaulin Shop. These reports were made to the former Minister on March 3, but no decision appears to have been made, and quite certainly the Railways Commissioner was never advised of any decision. Indeed, he could not be, because of the fact that many associated factors remained both unconsidered and unresolved. It is not factual for the honourable member to claim that the former Government gave the Railways Commissioner approval to proceed as the proposed new institute has never been referred to or approved by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works as required by the Public Works Standing Committee Act.

Within a week of assuming office, the present Minister of Roads and Transport conferred with the Railways Commissioner and learned that planning was at a standstill because the former Minister had not replied to the request made on January 29 this year by the Railways Commissioner for instructions. A subsequent report made on June 22 this year by the Railways Commissioner to the Minister clearly shows that the former Government had decided to build the festival hall without giving thought to the resultant effect it would have on railway operations. This point was also strongly made to the former Government by the Under Treasurer on May 13, 1969, when he claimed that scant consideration appeared to have been given to the replacement of the reasonable requirements of the railways and that the planning of the festival hall as agreed to by the former Government would reduce the ability of the railways to provide adequate service for the movement of vehicles needing access to the parcels, luggage and passenger platform areas.

In view of this most distressing position the present Minister asked the Director, Public Buildings Department, to provide an urgent report on ways and means of overcoming the problems. On receipt of this report the Minister called a conference at which the Minister of Works, the Director, Public Buildings Department, the Commissioner of Highways, the Railways Commissioner and the Minister discussed the problems, and the Government hopes that as a result some solution may be found. In anticipation of the resolution of the matters referred to, the Government has provided \$200,000 from this year's Railways Department loan estimates.

#### POLICE POWERS

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am sure that all honourable members sympathize with the

Chief Secretary for having to support a statement made by the Attorney-General. I noticed last night on television and again in today's press that the Attorney-General is to appoint a committee to inquire into police powers in South Australia. Can the Chief Secretary give me the names of the people who will serve on this committee to be appointed by the ruling "ad hococracy"?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: No. I assure the Leader that I am not in any embarrassing position in this matter. I do not want the embarrassing sympathy of honourable members, because I am quite capable of looking after myself. It is not true to say that the Government is appointing a committee to inquire into the prisons and police sections alone: it intends that the committee shall investigate all criminal law statutory bodies. There is no difference between this committee and the committee appointed to inquire into nurses' conditions or the committee appointed to inquire into the whole of this State's health services. The committee will consider all the criminal laws and the departments associated with them. It is most unfortunate that the media have seen fit to inflame this matter out of all proportion to the real position.

#### DERAILMENT

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Will the Minister of Lands ask the Minister of Roads and Transport to state the cause or causes of the serious derailment that occurred at Murray Bridge last Saturday, August 15? Is the rehabilitation programme of the South Australian Railways, which was implemented as a result of the Schroder inquiry into derailments during the term of the previous Government, being continued by the present Government and, if it is, what special expenditures and works were involved in 1969-70? Have Maunsell & Partners completed their investigation and reported on the causes of derailments on the new standard gauge line from Broken Hill to Port Pirie and, if they have, will the Minister table that report in Parliament?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I shall be pleased to refer the honourable member's questions to my colleague and bring down a reply as soon as possible.

#### POLLUTION

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER (on notice):

1. How many full-time people are employed by the Government to police clean air regulations?

2. What allocation was made in last year's Budget for work on air pollution?

3. What is the proposed allocation for this year?

4. Is any further anti-pollution legislation proposed as an aid to reduce smoke, smog and chemical fumes in the atmosphere?

5. What action is now taken against air pollution?

6. Have any prosecutions been made this year by the Public Health Department in respect of pollution?

7. Can or does the Government control the approvals for new installations of potentially damaging plants—such as boilers, furnaces and chemical plants?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: The replies are:

1. Certain powers exist under the Health Act for the control of air pollution, including specific clean air regulations to control dark smoke and burning in the open. Both the Central Board of Health and local boards of health are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the provisions of the Health Act are complied with. It is not known what proportion of time is spent on this aspect by people employed by local authorities. In the Public Health Department, which undertakes the administrative and executive work of the Central Board of Health, the work associated with air pollution is performed as a part of the work of the Occupational Health and Air Pollution Branch, which has a total professional staff of five full-time officers. These officers have the assistance of five full-time inspectors and two inspectors' assistants.

2. The total expenditure of the Occupational Health and Air Pollution Branch in 1969-70 was about \$85,000, but it is difficult to estimate the proportion that is directly applicable to air pollution work.

3. The information will be available when Budget Estimates are introduced.

4. The Clean Air Committee is at present considering draft regulations prescribing standards of emissions of air impurities from scheduled industrial premises.

5. Provision exists under legislation administered by local authorities for action to be taken against persons causing air pollution, and successful legal action has been taken on a number of occasions in the past.

6. It is not known how many prosecutions have been made by local authorities, but none has been instigated by the Public Health Department.

ment this year. Although penal provisions exist, officers of the Public Health Department and local authorities have achieved considerable progress in reducing air pollution by assisting and advising industry. A significant example of this is the cessation of burning of industrial wastes in the open at Wingfield.

7. Consideration is being given by the Clean Air Committee in the proposed draft regulations on standards of emissions to the licensing of scheduled premises and requiring the approval of all new equipment or alterations to existing equipment.

#### ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL Second reading.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE (Southern):  
I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

Last year, when I raised this matter by way of a contingent notice of motion, some objections were made on the grounds of lack of notice and technicality. Even my friend the new Chief Secretary (then the Leader of the Opposition) said I was entitled to my point but he wanted more time to study the matter. By the way, while rereading his remarks I noticed that he said that any mistakes in connection with the Senate election poll had occurred purely because of the incompetence of the clerks, and he then went on to say that they had acted according to the instructions they had received! That seems somewhat illogical and hard to follow, but I will leave it at that. Clause 1 is purely a machinery clause. Clause 2 amends section 21(1) of the principal Act, which states:

The rolls shall be printed whenever the Minister directs.

Clause 2 inserts after "directs" the passage:

but separate rolls shall be printed and used for any Council election to be held after the commencement of the Electoral Act Amendment Act, 1970.

This means that, instead of the Minister of the day ordering the Council roll to be computerized into the Commonwealth roll, a separate roll will again be the statutory requirement for an election (until recently this had been the requirement for many years). Incidentally, section 18 of the principal Act refers only to the House of Assembly roll.

I am fully aware of the arguments that can be adduced for having every citizen enrolled on one set of rolls, and I know there are

people who would like full biographical particulars of everyone added—their Party affiliations, membership of trade unions, annual income, personal habits, and even their lady friends. However, a commonsense majority, fortunately, still prevails. The only real argument for a single roll is one of economy in printing, but honourable members should consider what has occurred in the last few years in connection with the gross extravagances involved in printing set after set of new rolls. Parliament House has been cluttered up with weighty packages, some of which have never been opened. Annual reports of every conceivable type clutter up the waste paper baskets daily, apart from our incinerators at home. The waste is deplorable.

We all know the real reason for a combined roll—a Party-political reason. This was done not legislatively but by administrative direction—the spoils to the victors. I suppose I should say that at least the Hall Government did not follow suit in this matter, but I still think it should have seized the opportunity. We all know that voting for the House of Assembly is not truly compulsory: one does not have to enrol. But, of course, the Commonwealth enrolment card leads to a general acceptance of it. Why should it? It is purely political. I am quite consistent in these matters: all enrolments should be voluntary, and many existing problems would be cleared up.

The Australian Labor Party invites and strongly canvasses (and I have no objection) tradesmen and manual workers to join a union, but even it stops short of legislating for compulsory unionism. I wonder why. Clause 3 of this short Bill is important and far-reaching. It is a simple clause that merely repeals section 118a of the principal Act, which section was inserted in the present Act in 1942. Subsection (1) of that section provides:

It shall be the duty of every Assembly elector to record his vote at every election in the Assembly district for which he is enrolled.

At this moment there is a general belief that that section was inserted in the Electoral Act by a Liberal Party Government. Nothing is further from the truth. That provision was inserted at the insistence and "push" (if I may use that word) of a very wellknown Independent in this State, Mr. Macgillivray, who was responsible for compulsory voting for the House of Assembly—not the Liberal Party or the Labor Party. Honourable mem-

bers like the Hon. Mr. Shard will realize that at that time there were many Independents in another place.

Following this simple subsection, which I have just read, there appear 11 subsections, taking up two pages of the Statute, setting out in a detailed form the pains and penalties for electors who, unless the Returning Officer is satisfied that they are dead or ineligible to vote—I will leave it at that; ye gods! That is the type of legislation that occasionally got into the Statutes under the rather peculiar state of the House at that time. Let me state the greatest truism that exists in regard to voluntary voting, one that is reiterated time and time again by eminent students of political economy. It is that the only person who wants compulsory voting in political matters is the politician. Can anyone in this Chamber deny that? Why does he want it? It is because it lessens the work that the politician has to do to get his supporters to the poll, and thus reduces his Party's electoral expenses. Mr. Macgillivray moved this amendment. He was an Independent, and obviously an Independent has a greater disadvantage in relation to financing election campaigns than has any member who is backed by a Party. The result is that first one Party and then the other decides it will gain some advantage, and it alters the Act to suit itself; but has the elector ever been consulted in these matters? First trade unionists, then university students, and now we have the problem of reducing the age of majority to 18 years of age. Are we to rush all these people into compulsory enrolment?

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Do you agree with compulsory voting at the age of 18?

The Hon. SIR NORMAN JUDE: No, I favour voluntary enrolment and voluntary voting in all matters.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: At 18 years of age?

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: Voluntary voting at 18 years of age—yes; I prefer to see it that way. If we give young people the vote, let us see what will happen. If they are keen on it, many of them will go to the polls. There will be problems hard to solve, but they must be overcome. We hear a lot about referendums at the moment.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Not yet.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: I suggest the Government tries one on compulsory voting for any political seat, and we will see who wins. Perhaps we could add a question

to the isolated one on September 12. To return to the subsection—"It shall be the duty . . ."—I pose the question, "What duty?" Suppose I am what is known as a "floating voter". What is this duty? To record an informal vote, possibly at considerable inconvenience, because I refuse to support either candidate (both of whom I do not like) is, I suggest, worse than the marriage service, where one takes a partner "for better or for worse", but that was not compulsory in the first place.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: One can always get a divorce.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: Simple words again. There is nothing democratic in being forced to vote for anyone or anything, and it is surely stupidity to force people to vote on something or someone about which or about whom they may be the first to admit they know nothing. Let us be consistent in these matters and remember that some of the greatest countries in the world—Britain, the United States of America, and France, to mention but a few—have no compulsion and their systems work, even under de Gaulle and proportional representation. In Great Britain, under voluntary voting over the last 20 years, some 79 per cent of the people have gone to the polls voluntarily, which proves their interest.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: No.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: I can quote figures for that. The great local government and shire councils of England work well on a voluntary basis.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: And they do here, too?

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: Yes. The Government is trying to push compulsory voting on to local government here. Perhaps we should have a referendum on that matter, or has the Government a mandate? It is obvious it is not quite certain, as is the case with the shopping problem. Local government has already made it quite clear what its view is, and I sound a generous word of warning here. The Government may try to browbeat the Legislative Council while it appears fashionable, but let it leave local government alone, for it may bite the hand that sometimes feeds it. I have taken this opportunity, as suggested last year by the Hon. Mr. Shard, to introduce this Bill, and I trust he will now be able to support my colleagues and me. "Franchise" in years gone by meant "freedom". I support the second reading.

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

#### MOTOR VEHICLES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### ADVANCES FOR HOMES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### EUDUNDA AND MORGAN RAILWAY (DISCONTINUANCE) BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 18. Page 727.)

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): In rising to oppose this Bill, I say that I can see only one thing in its favour, and that is that it does not include a provision for life insurance as did the Bill introduced in 1967. Although it does not include this provision at the present time, I have heard that this is the beginning and that less responsible supporters of the Government have hinted that life insurance is just around the corner. Therefore, even though it is excluded at present it is something that could come in the future. Nevertheless, as the Hon. Mr. DeGaris has said, the force of what I consider was a very well-considered argument which took place in this Chamber in 1967 against the inclusion of life insurance has apparently had its effect upon the thinking of the Government.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: There is nothing wrong with life insurance, anyway.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Life insurance is very well covered at the present time. I believe that the debate in this Chamber three years ago had a beneficial effect on the thinking of the Government, for the present time at least. I compliment the Hon. Mr. DeGaris on his very careful and well-reasoned speech on this Bill the other day, and I endorse much of what he said. He pointed out the experience and the wide base of the large and well established life insurance companies, and he also pointed out how it would not be possible for a State office, restricted as it would be to operational fields in its own State, to compete successfully with the great experience and also the breadth of base of those old established and solid, mutual companies, some of which are Australia-wide and some of which are virtually world-wide.



I will admit, nevertheless, that when we survey the general insurance field we can find too many companies. I have heard some people say that 35 companies are operating in this State, and I have even heard others say that there are about 100. Whether or not the latter figure referred to this State or to the whole of Australia I do not know, but certainly the number is large, and I agree that probably it is far too large and that some of these companies need more careful investigation and supervision and also they need to be required to provide more evidence of financial stability before being accepted as approved operators in this field.

I think it was the Hon. Mr. Potter who mentioned this and also said that some tightening up could be included in future legislation to make it more difficult for what are known as "shonky" operators to operate and sometimes to cause losses to the general public. I accept that some tightening up may be needed in this way, but I do not think this justifies the intervention of the Government in insurance as a business. I am aware that other States have Government insurance offices, and I have even admired one or two of the rather ornate buildings that some of them have. But the history of Government insurance offices in Australia does not to my mind justify the Government's entry into this business.

Doubtful companies still operate in those States where there are State Government insurance offices. The creation by the Government of yet another insurance office will not in itself correct the position where these are in operation. I believe that in South Australia the rates at which one can obtain insurance compare favourably, generally speaking, with those in other States. I question whether they will continue to do this. The overall effect of yet another office, run by the Government, may well mean that in due course these rates will rise.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Is there any reason why they should?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Well, one reason is that I think that in other States where Government insurance offices now operate, the rates generally do not compare favourably with the rates available in South Australia. However, I do not suggest that the State Government insurance office will not pay. I believe that it will probably be made to pay in the way in which Governments have a habit of making things pay. I believe that Trans-Australia Airlines, for example, was

made to pay for a considerable number of years, after it finally got out of the red, by either cheap money or a lack of sales tax or of other charges normally applied to private enterprise companies.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Do you think we should take T.A.A. away?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: No, but I think T.A.A. was given an armchair ride for many years.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: So was Ansett.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I think the State Government insurance office also may be given something in the way of an armchair ride in order to assure the public that this is a viable proposition.

The Hon. L. R. Hart: Do you think the Government might do that?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: The Government might even try to do that if it spends a few more amounts like the \$6,000,000 it spent on various over-award payments.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Don't you believe in people getting a fair deal?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I believe in everyone getting a fair deal, but I do not know that the Hon. Mr. Banfield is always the best judge of what happens to be a fair deal.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: No, but you are!

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I should like the Chief Secretary, when he replies, to answer some of my questions. I wonder whether the Government will insure many public buildings that are not now insured; in other words, instead of carrying the risk of loss (or the insurance) itself, will the Government pay many premiums to its own office in order to cover many buildings for which it now carries the risk so as not merely to cover these buildings but to cover up the losses that the State Government insurance office might otherwise incur?

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Do other States do that?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I will leave it to the Minister to check that and find out for himself whether they do that.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: I thought you would have the information readily available.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I ask the Chief Secretary to say what plans his Government has for reinsurance. It is a well-known fact that most companies that are

dealing in fairly big business reinsure in order to cover what could be very big and almost ruinous claims; in other words, they spread the risk amongst themselves. I ask the Government whether it has any such intentions in this matter. Does it intend to spread the risk with other State Government insurance offices? I wonder whether it is possible for this to be done, because I doubt whether it will get, very readily at least, any ready-made agreements with private companies. Or does the Government intend to get, or can it get, further cover overseas? Or does it intend merely to chance it on very big risks? This would mean that it would be chancing the risk of very large outgoing payments at taxpayers' expense. I also wish to know whether the Government intends that there shall be any compulsion or coercion on semi-governmental bodies to insure with the Government insurance office, because I am sure that many of these bodies, particularly in the field of local government, have had considerable satisfaction and very good treatment from the companies with which they have insured over many years at very reasonable rates. I hope the Government will not try to compel semi-governmental bodies to insure with the Government office.

When speaking on this Bill recently the Hon. Mr. DeGaris asked: why is this commission to be so different from the Housing Trust, the Electricity Trust and the State Bank, in that it will be so closely subjected to the Minister's direction? I endorse this query. If one looks at clauses 3 (3), 8 (2) and 12 (1), just to mention three places (and I am sure that there would be other places), one will find that they state that the commission will be at the Minister's direction. Clause 3 (3) states:

In the exercise and discharge of its powers, duties, functions and authorities, the commission shall, except for the purposes of section 16 of this Act, be subject to the control and directions of the Government of the State acting through the Minister; but no such direction shall be inconsistent with this Act.

Clause 8 (2) provides:

The procedure for the calling of meetings of the commission and for the conduct of business at such meetings shall, subject to any directions that may be given by the Minister, be as determined by the commission.

Clause 12 (1) states:

Subject to this Act and the directions of the Minister not inconsistent with this Act, the commission is hereby authorized and empowered . . .

I understand that a semi-governmental authority such as this commission must have some fairly

close association with the Government of the day but, on the other hand, the Housing Trust, the Electricity Trust, the State Bank, and the Savings Bank have been remarkably successful when they have been given very considerable independence of action and when they have been free from any kind of political interference by the Government of the day. The tying of the commission to the Minister's direction, as this Bill seeks to do, would be a retrograde step. If the commission is established, the Government would be well advised not to tie it so closely to Ministerial control. Some of our more successful semi-governmental undertakings such as those I have mentioned have not been subjected to tight Ministerial control, which could possibly, but not necessarily, become too rigid, too stringent or too restrictive: it would be much better if the commission were substantially free from Ministerial direction.

I remind honourable members of what the Premier said in 1967, and I do not apologize for repeating it. He said:

I want to make a realistic explanation of the insurance Bill. It is not intended to be another branch of the Public Service. It will be a commission, a semi-government enterprise, just like the Electricity Trust and the State Bank.

I suggest that it would be a good thing if the Premier still had that attitude. If the commission became just like—and I emphasize "just like"—the Electricity Trust or the Savings Bank it would be subjected to a minimum of Ministerial direction and this would be a much better state of affairs. The Premier also said:

There is no question of outlawing, absorbing and putting out of business private enterprise organizations but rather to participate and enter into competition. The Bill before Parliament will take particular care to ensure that competition will be fair and on its merits.

I hope the Premier still subscribes to that statement that the competition will be "fair and on its merits". I hope that this will apply to the question of choice for local government and other semi-governmental bodies. Does the Government intend that these bodies will be able to choose freely and select the Government insurance office only if they consider it to be worth while and to be the best office for their purposes? I hope that the Premier and the Government will take notice of these points which were brought forward and to which he subscribed three years ago and which are still valid today.

I do not believe that it will be to the advantage of the State if this commission is

established. If the Bill should pass the second reading and if certain amendments are moved for less Ministerial control and a more independent basis for the commission; and if the commission's accounting procedures are amended to disallow the kind of thing that happened with T.A.A. whereby it got interest-free money and did not pay taxes that other companies had to pay, I expect to support such amendments. If the Government office is to compete fairly and squarely with private enterprise companies, it should operate on exactly the same terms as they do.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: What about life insurance business?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I believe the Government was wise in listening to the arguments in this Chamber three years ago. It realized it would be in difficulty in operating successfully in the life insurance field. I hope that the Chief Secretary accepts the situation that it would not strengthen the Government insurance office if it entered into that field. I hope that those people who support the Labor Party and who feel that the Government should enter the life insurance field realize that this would be a mistake in the long run.

I could continue my remarks and discuss various clauses of the Bill; I have mentioned some of the clauses that are of doubtful value. I turn to the financial provisions. I have no doubt that the commission will be set up with the aid of some State Government guarantee. Clause 15 (2) provides:

Any amount paid out of Consolidated Revenue pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall be deemed to be an advance to the commission and shall be and remain a charge on the funds of the commission to be recouped when funds are available.

Of course, it may be a considerable time before such funds are available. Clause 16 provides:

The commission may invest the moneys in the funds established under and for the purposes of this Act—

This refers to the time when the commission will have funds to invest. The clause continues:

(a) In any investments in which a trustee is by section 5 of the Trustee Act, 1936, as amended, or by any enactment substituted therefore, authorized to invest trust funds;

(b) In temporary deposits with the Treasurer upon such terms and conditions as the Treasurer may determine.

It appears that, if the office is successfully established, the investment of its funds may become a nice little nest egg of trust funds.

Because I can remember a previous experience with trust funds, I doubt the soundness of these financial provisions. At this stage I oppose the Bill.

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

#### REFERENDUM (METROPOLITAN AREA SHOP TRADING HOURS) BILL

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

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Minister of Lands): I move:

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

The Government intends to introduce legislation into Parliament during the current session to make a complete revision of the present laws which restrict shopping hours. There has been no major review of the Early Closing Act since 1950, and the hours at which shops within shopping districts must close are those determined during the early part of the Second World War under the emergency conditions that operated at that time.

The two main problems which exist at present are, first, the frustrations caused to the public by shopkeepers of exempted shops being required by law to lock away after normal trading hours many goods, particularly food-stuffs, for which there is a considerable public demand at night and weekends. Secondly, the unrestricted trading hours in the large area immediately surrounding the metropolitan shopping district have resulted in shops in those areas (often on the other side of a road from the metropolitan area) trading at night and weekends when shops in the metropolitan area are required to close. With the rapid developments on the fringe of the present metropolitan area that have taken place in the last year or so, the Government considers that it is urgent that some action be taken to establish equal trading opportunities for shopkeepers.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Throughout the whole State?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: That will be explained as I continue my explanation. The Government recognizes that the metropolitan shopping district, which was defined in 1926, is hopelessly out of date and it has decided that whatever new laws are to apply will be uniform in the metropolitan planning area, as defined in the Planning and Development Act, together with the municipality of Gawler. This will mean that the metropolitan area, for the purpose of shop trading laws,

will extend from Gawler in the north to Willunga in the south and include Tea Tree Gully and Bridgewater.

The Government intends to introduce a Bill later in the session to provide that non-exempt shops in this enlarged metropolitan area will not be permitted to open on Saturday afternoons or Sundays. There will be one exception to this as it is intended that there will be no change in the present arrangements for the sale of petrol, so that unrestricted hours will continue for those service stations which can presently trade on that basis.

The intended Bill will also considerably widen the list of exempted goods. The goods which it is intended will be unrestricted and, therefore, could be sold at any time if the Bill is passed are, with several additions, those contained in the Bill introduced into this House, but not fully debated, last session. The main additions to the present exempt goods are those sold by chemists, delicatessens (including a number of grocery lines), florists, fruit and vegetable shops, and newsagents and tobacconists shops, whilst drawings, etchings, paintings, and other works of art, as well as souvenirs, will also be unrestricted.

The Government intends that there should be uniform shopping hours within the enlarged metropolitan area. It is recognized that this will affect many people, both shoppers and shopkeepers, and that there are differing views as to whether all shops should be permitted, should they desire to do so, to open on Friday nights. The Government recognizes that there is considerable public interest in this matter, not only as to whether it should be possible to shop on Friday nights but also in considering the social aspect. Many people seem to regard the opening of shops on Friday night as the opportunity for an outing as well as for shopping. On the other hand, organizations of shopkeepers have strongly claimed that the general opening of all shops on Friday nights would not result in more goods being sold but would increase prices.

The Government does not consider that it should take the responsibility for making a decision which can significantly affect the lives of the people in the metropolitan planning area and Gawler and upon which they have not been able to directly express their opinion. The Government has, therefore, decided to introduce this Bill to provide for a referendum to be held of House of Assembly electors in the metropolitan planning area and the municipality of Gawler. As can be seen from

clause 4 the referendum will be to enable electors to vote on whether shops in the metropolitan planning area and in the municipality of Gawler should be permitted to remain open until 9 p.m. on Fridays.

The referendum is being confined to the enlarged metropolitan district, because conditions in most country areas of the State differ so markedly from the metropolitan area. The Government intends to introduce legislation to provide that the present country shopping districts should continue, but that the present system of petitioning and counter-petitioning should be abolished. However, provision will be included in that legislation for a local government authority outside the metropolitan area to apply for the creation or abolition of a country shopping district within its area. In making such an application the local government authority will have to report to the Minister of Labour and Industry on the inquiries that have been made to ascertain the wishes of the public in its district, as well as indicating the view of the municipal or district council concerned.

The Minister will be empowered to make further inquiries (if he wishes to do so) and if, after such application has been made, he is satisfied that the Act should or should not be applied in any country district, then he would recommend to the Governor that a country shopping district be created or abolished. It is intended that there be only one exception in country districts and, in accordance with the promise contained in the Government's policy speech, the intended legislation will provide that retail butcher shops throughout the State must not open on Saturday afternoons or Sundays.

I have explained the Government's proposal for other amendments to the present laws regarding shop trading hours in order that the public may have all the facts before voting at the referendum. The question whether shops should or should not open on Friday nights can then be considered in the light of what the proposed law will be, rather than being based on what has happened for the last 20 years. The Government hopes that this Bill to enable the referendum to be held will be passed by Parliament as quickly as possible so that there will be no delay in ascertaining the views of the public. It is proposed that a further Bill will be introduced immediately after the referendum to give effect to the decision of the people as expressed in the referendum. The Bill will also contain the

other matters I have already mentioned and it is hoped that it will be passed by Parliament and be operating well before the end of the year.

I shall now deal with the clauses of the Bill. Clause 2 of the Bill contains the definitions necessary for construing the Bill, and I draw attention to the definitions of "elector" and "the metropolitan area". An elector is defined as meaning a person whose name appears on a House of Assembly roll (in force at noon on August 11, 1970) as a resident of any place within the metropolitan area; and the metropolitan area is defined as meaning that area of the State which comprises the metropolitan planning area within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act, and the municipality of Gawler.

Clause 3 provides that as soon as convenient after the Bill becomes law the Governor may by proclamation fix a day for the referendum and that the Returning Officer for the State is to conduct the referendum. It is intended that the day to be fixed will be September 12, 1970, the day on which the by-election for the Legislative Council seat of Midland is to be held. This date is proposed so that electors in the northern parts of the metropolitan area will not have to vote twice within a few weeks, and will result in considerable saving in costs to the Government. Clause 4 sets out the prescribed question that is to be submitted to the electors at the referendum. The question is: "Are you in favour of shops in the metropolitan planning area and the municipality of Gawler being permitted to remain open for trading until 9 p.m. on Fridays?" Clause 5 provides that only qualified Assembly electors would be entitled to vote at the referendum. Clause 6 provides for the application to the referendum of such of the provisions of the Electoral Act and regulations as are appropriate and applicable, with necessary modifications.

Clause 7 provides for the voting at the referendum to be taken on the day fixed by proclamation for the referendum, and that each elector shall vote only once at the referendum. Clause 8 provides that the poll-

ing places within the metropolitan area appointed under the Electoral Act or by notice published in the *Gazette* shall be polling places for the purposes of the referendum. Clause 9 provides that the ballot-papers to be used at the referendum are to be issued by the Returning Officer for the State. Clause 10 provides for the manner of voting at the referendum. Clause 11 provides that only certain persons may be present at a polling booth. Clause 12 provides in effect that the roll in force as at 12 noon on August 11, 1970, is to be the roll for the purposes of the referendum.

Clause 13, which provides for compulsory voting, substantially follows section 118a of the Electoral Act. Clause 14 sets out the grounds on which a ballot-paper may be rejected for informality. Clause 15 provides for the scrutiny and is a machinery clause. Clause 16 provides that, as soon as convenient after the result of the referendum has been ascertained, the Returning Officer for the State shall, by notice published in the *Gazette*, declare the result of the referendum. Clause 17 provides for the declaration of the result to be made, notwithstanding outstanding ballot-papers, if the Returning Officer for the State is satisfied that the outstanding ballot-papers could not possibly affect the result of the referendum. Clauses 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 reproduce, with necessary modifications, those provisions of the Electoral Act which deal with bribery, undue influence and other illegal practices.

Clauses 24 and 25 likewise deal with posters and electoral matter relating to the referendum. These clauses substantially follow sections 26 and 27 of the Referendum (State Lotteries) Act, 1965. Clause 26 deals with the evidentiary effect of a certificate of the Returning Officer for the State that the referendum was duly held. Clause 27 deals with proceedings for offences; clause 28 provides for the making of complementary regulations; and clause 29 makes the usual financial provisions.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 3.32 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, August 20, at 2.15 p.m.