

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, September 2, 1970

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

QUESTIONS

BOLIVAR EFFLUENT

The Hon. L. R. HART: I understand the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Works, has a reply to a question I asked on August 27 about the possible re-use of water reclaimed from the Bolivar Sewage Treatment Works.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My colleague, the Minister of Works, has furnished the following report in reply to the honourable member's inquiry:

The recent restrictions placed on extractions of underground water from the northern Adelaide Plains basin has renewed interest in Bolivar effluent. The Engineering and Water Supply Department has three apparently firm applications before it from private interests that have proposals for irrigating a golf course, almond trees and vineyards. These people have been offered the effluent under the same standard agreement as has been available for over two years. These three groups will utilize less than 25 per cent of the available summer flow. In addition to these proposals, the Government has been approached on several occasions to reticulate effluent throughout the Virginia area to offset the restrictions being placed on market gardening operations as a result of depletion of underground water. Although preliminary investigations have been made previously, the Government has now directed the Engineering and Water Supply Department to carry out a full-depth investigation to determine the feasibility of such a scheme. The engineering design and construction offer no difficulties, but the three following vital considerations need to be resolved before the scheme can be proceeded with: (1) Is there any likelihood of a public health hazard? (2) Is the effluent chemically suitable for the crops proposed to be irrigated? (3) Can the effluent be delivered at an economical cost?

MORATORIUM

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to directing a question to the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Previous moratorium demonstrations have been supported by members of the Chief Secretary's Party, including the Premier. My concern centres around an astounding article that appeared in the *Sunday Mail* headed "Revolution in the Streets". According to this article, the principals of an organization called the New Left, who

are also moratorium leaders, have made it quite clear that the main purpose of the moratorium is not to end bloodshed in Vietnam, as some people think, but to cause disruption within our own community. Now that the lie has been clearly given to the purpose of the moratorium, can the Chief Secretary say whether Government members are still prepared to support a group of people who, under the guise of pacifists, are in fact planning civil war and bloodshed within our community?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I thought that press and television media were the only people who exaggerated statements, but I am becoming accustomed to members in this Council exaggerating things beyond all recognition. I say frankly that, as such a question is what we call a social question, no member of my Party would be bound by any decision of the Party but would be able to make up his own mind on this question.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Can the Chief Secretary say whether he saw a press report of a statement by Mr. Whitlam, who was reported to have said that anyone who did not support the Australian Labor Party policy concerning Vietnam should leave the Party?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I did not see that particular report, but if what the Leader was reported to have said was true, I do not think it would be binding on members of my Party.

RED CROSS HONOUR

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: My question is addressed to you, Mr. President. Has your attention been drawn to the high honour conferred on one of our colleagues by the Australian Red Cross Society? I refer to the Hon. V. G. Springett, who has been decorated by the Awards Committee of that society for meritorious service in Nigeria.

The **PRESIDENT**: My attention had not been drawn to this report, but I have heard about it. Knowing the modesty of the honourable member concerned, I could not go to him and ask him if it were true, although I understood the honourable member had received information about this award. All I can say in reply to the question is that I accept the report with gratitude, knowing of the work of the honourable member not only in this Council but outside it for many years. I am sure it is a well earned and meritorious honour, which takes with it the congratulations of all members of the Council.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: May I, through you, Mr. President, thank honourable members for their good wishes and thoughts. At the same time I say that it was a great privilege to go to Nigeria as one of the Australian Red Cross team, a privilege added to by the fact that, of the four members of the team, three came from this State. Thank you, Sir.

PORT PIRIE STATION

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister of Lands, representing the Minister of Roads and Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: It has been brought to my notice that facilities at the Port Pirie railway station (and these conditions may apply to other railway stations in the State) are not what would be desired to promote good relations between passengers and the Railways Department. The incident I have particularly in mind is of a young mother who, with her three small children, alighted from a train at the far end of the platform at the station. The platform is very long. As her children were small it was necessary for her to have luggage with her in the compartment. She was offered no assistance towards taking her children and her luggage to the main part of the station, where it was necessary for her to ring for a taxi. There are no taxis standing near the railway station. I realize that the Railways Department has no jurisdiction over taxis and that the people do not desire that there should be open competition between the railways and a bus service to Port Pirie; I think they are happy to travel by rail. Will the Minister bring this matter before his colleague to see what can be done to rectify the position?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring down a report.

COUNTRY DOCTORS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my question of last Wednesday about doctors in country towns, particularly Ardrossan and Kimba?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: Since the inception of the medical cadetships scheme, 11 cadetships have been awarded and the following is the current situation with respect to these awards. One doctor has completed his bond, having been directed to practise in the Millicent area for two years from June, 1968. Three have successfully completed the medical course

and are at present serving their compulsory year as Resident Medical Officers. They will be available to be directed to country areas in 1971 but the particular areas have not yet been decided. One is in the sixth year, three are in the fifth year, and three are in the fourth year of the medical course.

TRANSPORTATION STUDY

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE: Has the Minister of Lands obtained from the Minister of Roads and Transport a reply to my recent question about the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study?

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

Prior to their departure Dr. Breuning and Mr. Kettaneh were involved in a press interview at which reporters sought information regarding the preliminary investigation they had undertaken. During the whole period that Dr. Breuning and Mr. Kettaneh were here in Adelaide they were given complete freedom to go where they wished and speak to whom they wished, and this same freedom was maintained at their final press conference.

MEAT

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: Figures supplied by the Australian Meat Board show that 7,350 tons of beef, mutton and pigmeat was exported from Australia to Malaysia in 1969. Will the Minister ascertain how much of these exports came from South Australia?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will endeavour to get that information for the honourable member.

ATHELSTONE SEWERAGE

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Works.

Leave granted.

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER: My question concerns the deep drainage problem at Athelstone Heights. Earlier in the year, during the regime of the previous Government, a petition concerning this matter from the Athelstone Progress Association was handed to the Minister personally during his inspection of the area. Subsequently, the following reply was received:

Work on the sewerage of Athelstone extending from the Campbelltown scheme out to Wicklow Avenue is proceeding and will be completed about September this year. Prior

to the completion of the present work the situation in the area covered by the petitioners will be examined in detail and a report submitted to the Minister of Works covering the then current development of the area.

This is September, and the work referred to has almost been completed. The petitioners are becoming concerned as they have not yet heard of the present Government's intention. They are naturally worried about the continual health hazard. Is the Minister aware of this situation and, if so, what plans are being made to facilitate the provision of deep drainage in this area?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the question to the Minister of Works and bring back a reply as soon as possible.

STOBIE POLES

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: My question refers to the unfortunate incidents that have occurred in relation to stobie poles in recent times, one of which was tragic and the other one could well have been. I am aware that it has been suggested from time to time that stobie poles could be replaced, and I am also aware that this is completely out of court on the score of cost and resources. Will the Minister ascertain from his colleague and eventually from the Electricity Trust whether some consideration could be given to placing some insulating material around existing stobie poles in areas where children are prevalent (near schools and such places) and also whether some consideration could be given to some such safety measure being taken with the erection of new stobie poles as required in order to do away with the possibility of these serious accidents recurring?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to the Minister of Works and bring back a reply as soon as possible.

WINE PRICES

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Has the Chief Secretary, representing the Minister in charge of the Prices Branch, a reply to my question of August 20 regarding wine prices?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: Wine is not subject to price control. As is the case with all liquor, prices are set by the Liquor Industry Council after agreement has been reached by members of an appropriate subcommittee.

The duty on wine announced by the Commonwealth Government amounted to 50c a gallon or \$1 a dozen bottles. Representatives of the Wine and Brandy Producers Association and the Australian Hotels Association met on Thursday, August 20, when it was agreed that winemakers' wholesale prices would rise by \$1.25 a dozen. Hotelkeepers' mark-up of 40 per cent was applied to this with a resulting retail increase of \$1.75 a dozen or 15c a bottle. The same basis was applied to flagons of wine and this resulted in a 45c increase at the retail level. The last general increase in wine prices was in September, 1969. The present increase, ignoring duty, represents 25c a dozen or 2c a bottle to winemakers. Winemakers incurred the duty on all sales from the commencement of business on Wednesday, August 19.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The question I asked was what action did the Government intend to take to see that a realistic price was fixed and whether the Prices Commissioner would be asked to furnish a report.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I am unable to speak for the Government offhand, but I shall be pleased to refer the question back and obtain a considered reply.

WOOL SUBSIDY

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: The sum of \$30,000,000 was provided in the Commonwealth Government's Budget as an emergency assistance grant to Australian woolgrowers. I understand that most of this money is to go to Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. The qualifications necessary to apply for this assistance seem to be somewhat clouded. I think the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industry (Mr. Anthony) said that further details would be made available later. As I have not seen these further details, I, together with many other graziers, am interested to know what the necessary qualifications are. Can the Minister also say what portion of the \$30,000,000 will be allocated to South Australia?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I think the whole answer is contained in the statement made by Mr. Anthony after the Budget was brought down by the Commonwealth Government Treasurer (Mr. Bury). If the honourable member were to read the article, he would

see that it sets out the whole basis of how the scheme will work, and I think he will find his answers there. I remember reading the article in the press to the effect that if more than a certain proportion of a woolgrower's income was derived from wool production, he would be eligible to apply for a subsidy. However, I will endeavour to get the information the honourable member requires and bring down a reply as soon as possible.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 26. Page 1052.)

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): I was rather surprised when the Hon. Mr. Story introduced this measure into this Council and gave the second reading explanation because, during the term of the last Labor Government, the honourable member voted against a similar measure when it was introduced by that Government. I do not know why the change of heart has occurred, why it was that on the first occasion (when it was introduced by a Labor Government) he voted against it whereas now, when it has been introduced by a private member (a Liberal Party member), he supports it wholeheartedly. If the Leader of the Opposition will look at previous *Hansard* reports, he will see that that is a statement of fact.

Be that as it may, I support this measure wholeheartedly because I think it is high time the Act was amended. The year 1955 is a long time ago, and that was the last occasion on which the principal Act was amended to alter the minimum cost of a project, which at present stands at \$200,000, that must go before the committee. This Bill seeks to increase that to \$400,000. I am sure that honourable members will agree that the value of money today is much different from what it was in 1955 and that \$400,000 would be a truer reflection of the value of \$200,000 back in 1955. One point that is evident, too, is that many more building projects come under review today than in 1955. It would appear to me that the Public Works Committee (which, I must say, has done a remarkably good job since it was set up in this Parliament) has made very few mistakes indeed; I will not go so far as to say it has not made any

for that, to put it mildly, would be a ridiculous statement to make.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The mistakes are hardly noticeable.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: True. That is evident from the facts I can collate, that the mistakes made by the Public Works Committee have been minor; but what it has done is to ensure that the projects placed under its care or scrutiny have been dealt with as efficiently as possible. One of the earliest problems that honourable members will agree any Government has to face is the fact that, when a project has been recommended to the Government and it is referred to Cabinet and the expenditure has been approved, it naturally reverts to the department concerned, which then has to draw up preliminary sketches and prepare all the matter relevant to that project. It is then submitted to the Public Works Committee and, as soon as that happens, all the work that would normally be done by the department is suspended, because it cannot proceed with the planning of the project any further until the Public Works Committee has completed its findings.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: How long does that take?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Sometimes a long time, depending on the nature of the project and where the work is to be carried out. This is one of the biggest problems facing any Government or any Government department.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: But how long would it take?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I am not a member of the Public Works Committee. I suggest that, if the Leader wants to get some specific time factor, he take it up with the members of the committee.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: I have.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Then why ask me if you already know? There is no point in it. All I am saying is that any work held up means loss of time, which is not beneficial to the general community. That is the point I make. There are projects that necessitate the involvement of a committee of this nature, for obvious reasons, but there are many projects today that could be carried out capably by the department itself. Let us bear in mind, too, that the Minister has the power to refer any matter at any time to the Public Works Committee, should he consider it is necessary to do so. In those circumstances, I am sure this Bill satisfies most honourable members. I do not think there is anything in it that is in any way controversial.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Have the salaries been increased?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Not to my knowledge. I think the members of the committee are quite happy with the present situation.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Have you checked with them?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: This is an important measure because, if we are to get on with buildings and projects of the size coming to Government departments today, we should ensure that they are carried out as expeditiously as possible.

The Hon. G. J. Gilfillan: Can you quote any instances of delay?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The only delay that is caused, apart from the necessary delay caused by the committee itself while it is investigating a certain project, is where a Government department has drawn up its initial plans and prepared all matters for that project and, while that project is in the hands of the committee, the department responsible for it has to sit tight: it cannot do any more work on that project until it is referred back to it. In many cases, this means that many key personnel who were engaged in the first place to work on the sketch plan and other matters relating to the project may not necessarily be available when the project is referred back to the department. That is where the delay occurs; it is not beneficial to the community. If we could eliminate this delay—and that is where it is—

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: You are implying no criticism of the committee?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: None whatsoever; I thought I had made that quite clear but, in cases where the work can be done as quickly as possible without any interference, I think it should be. I support the Bill.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN secured the adjournment of the debate.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND BANKING GROUP BILL

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

RIVER TORRENS ACQUISITION BILL

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

STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1129.)

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I shall speak briefly, because this measure has

been covered in some detail by previous speakers. A similar measure was introduced during the previous term of the Labor Government, but it was finally lost because it was substantially amended in this Chamber and was not then acceptable to the Government. However, I believe that different problems face Parliament today when considering this legislation than were apparent when the Bill was introduced previously. At that time the State was in a grievous financial position with little prospect of the proposed insurance office being successful, and its introduction could have meant an added financial burden that might have been disastrous. The financial position at present is much better, because the present Government has inherited a surplus from the previous Government and is also receiving far more financial help from the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: That wasn't the Government's fault, was it?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I am not suggesting it was.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The Commonwealth Government knocked us back, and told us to go to the Grants Commission.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: These interjections are side-tracking the main issue—

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You raised it.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: —in relation to this Bill, because the State is in a better financial position, largely because of the efforts of the previous Government and of added assistance from the Commonwealth Government. I believe that this Bill is not in the best interests of the State, but the Government has been elected and I am sure this House does not intend to be unduly obstructive, provided the interests of the State are truly guarded. However, with this Bill as presented there are grave risks that the public is not being protected and can be subjected to unfair treatment. Provided some minor safeguards are placed in the Bill, I consider there is no real justification for denying the Government the right to put into effect its policy to establish an insurance office in South Australia.

Other States have Government insurance offices in various forms: some are successful and some are not. The successful offices were established many years ago when insurance problems were not so grave, so that they built up substantial reserves which assisted in financing the losses that would otherwise have occurred. On a world-wide basis, it has been shown that an underwriting loss of \$38,400,000 on fire, accident and motor

business was suffered in 1969 by members of the British Insurance Association, compared with a loss of \$12,900,000 in 1968. This period was the worst of five years of statistics. Motor insurance business had a bad year with a loss of \$39,700,000, although fire and accident business turned a \$33,000,000 loss in 1968 into a \$1,300,000 profit. On the other hand, invested funds increased by 9 per cent to \$14,341,000,000 and investment income totalled \$932,000,000.

These figures showed clearly that the underwriters concerned relied heavily on investment funds to maintain their business. We have the prospect of a State insurance office being set up without any capital funds, starting from scratch at a time when insurance businesses throughout the world are losing money. I believe that such an office could add to the burden of taxpayers in this State. Much has been said about injustices that have occurred with existing insurance companies, but I believe that every member will admit that there are sound insurance companies and others that are not so sound. The sound companies have met their obligations, and I am sure that the public has been satisfied with the services they have provided. Adding a Government insurance office to the long list of companies in South Australia will not improve the situation but will merely add another company that can be good or bad for the public, and only trial and error will show what it will be.

We have had no evidence of a detailed survey of how this office will operate and what services it will provide. Replies to questions seeking details have been vague, and it seems that the Government has decided on a Party-political course of setting up this office without considering fully the ramifications of the insurance business. One honourable member said that any other insurance organization setting up business on such a basis and sending out a prospectus containing so little information would be liable to prosecution, and I believe this is so. Parliament and the taxpayers of South Australia are being asked to support an organization whose only prospectus is a Bill that sets up a Government insurance office; however, there is no detailed programme showing how it will operate and no assurance that it will be under experienced direction. It is unusual to set up a Government instrumentality in this way in South Australia.

Clause 3 (3) provides that the commission will be subject to the direction of the Government of the State, acting through the Minister.

This is a completely wrong concept. Other Government instrumentalities, while completely free from Ministerial control, have provided valuable services to the State in other fields. Of all Government instrumentalities, I can think of none that would be more dangerous to place under Ministerial control than a Government insurance office. Claims in connection with motor vehicle insurance, fire insurance, and workmen's compensation will have to be dealt with, and to be successful the commission must be free to work impartially. If agreement on claims cannot be reached, the disputes should be settled through the courts. If we have Ministerial control, the Minister concerned will be subject to all kinds of political and personal pressure in connection with claims. It is not in the best interests of the State, the insurance office or the Minister concerned for him to be placed in such a position.

The use of officers from Government departments will give the Government insurance office a decided competitive advantage over other insurance organizations. It can be argued that it is only right that such officers should be used. This is difficult to deny, but in order that a clear picture can be obtained of the office's operations, where commission would be payable (if the service was provided by an agent of a tariff company) that commission should be credited to the Government departments concerned if their officers are used. I hope that during the Committee stage an amendment will be made to cover the risk that officers of Government departments and instrumentalities will coerce people, who seek services from them, to insure with the Government insurance office. Obviously, it would be easy to make the taking out of a policy a condition of the provision of such services. Those services would cover a very wide field, including housing loans and purchase of houses through the Housing Trust. No pressure should be brought to bear on local government to insure through the Government insurance office.

Since Government departments will, I believe, be forced to insure through the Government insurance office, they should not be required to pay any more than the premium rate charged by tariff companies. It would be very simple to offset book losses in the Government insurance office by charging excessive premium rates to Government departments. So, generally speaking, in setting up the Government insurance office every possible protection must be given to the people, both as

taxpayers and as individual citizens seeking services through Government departments and instrumentalities. The final picture presented to Parliament on the operations of the office must be clear and detailed. With the reservation that I believe that certain amendments must be made to the Bill during the Committee stage, I support the second reading.

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

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1133.)

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I support the Bill. The Government is in an excellent situation at present because the framework for the Loan Works programme was made before it came to office. I heartily endorse the references made yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition to the work of Sir Glen Pearson and to the prudent way in which Ministers and heads of departments conducted this State's business during the previous Government's term of office. Any Government is in a very healthy position if it has \$38,000,000 more to disburse than the previous Government had. That is the situation that this Government finds itself in today. It has \$38,000,000 more at its disposal than the previous Government had, yet one hears and reads that increases in taxation are likely in order to bring us into line with other States. I just cannot understand what must be in the Budget which, of course, I have not yet had the opportunity to see. Why should it be necessary to increase taxation when this Government has an additional \$38,000,000 to spend?

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Costs have gone up a little, you know.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The previous Government announced in its policy speech that it would reduce land tax.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Only in certain areas, wasn't it?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: In primary industry.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Then it was qualified.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The point is well taken. However, the previous Government's intention was to reduce taxation not only in that sphere but in other spheres as well.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Such as what?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Such as succession duties. This Government has \$38,000,000

more, yet it talks about increasing taxation. When I look at this Loan programme I cannot match it with what I know are the requirements of the Agriculture Department, the increase for which is not going up in the way I would have expected the money out of Loan funds to go up. I heard yesterday that the same thing applied to the Hospitals Department. Where is the money to be spent?

The Hon. A. J. Shard: The Hospitals Department has gone on exactly as you planned it.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: That is the very point I am making. The amount provided is only a little more than we spent in the previous 12 months, yet clearly there is an increase of between 11 per cent and 13 per cent in the money available to the State. It seems to me that some departments are not getting a just carve-up of the duck. In the case of the Agriculture Department, \$5,000 is provided for research at Loxton, \$3,000 is for additions at Mile End, and there is \$90,000 for the Northfield Research Centre. Then there are a few rats and mice down the bottom. I cannot understand how a department of that importance is not being given a greater increase, because I know of projects that ought to go on at present. No mention whatsoever is made of Struan, which in this day and age could result in very important research in South Australia. I refer to beef breeding, which is one of the few things in primary industry that shows some real hope. We spent a good deal of money in gathering together the necessary animals down there, the object being that Struan would become the regional headquarters for the South-East; yet no reference is made to that subject.

The other point I should like to mention concerns the Roseworthy Agricultural College. We now have 19 students in the oenology course at the college, compared with eight or nine last year, and this is more than we have ever had before. There has been a real delay on the part of the Public Buildings Department in finishing the winery at Roseworthy, and this must be a source of worry to the present Minister as it was to me. When we have 19 students in this course for the first time and we are still messing around with the completion of the winery, which should have been completed a considerable time ago, it must provide a headache for the Principal of Roseworthy and for the oenology students, because they will not be able to make wine in the way they ought to

be able to make it in the course of their studies.

I am pleased to see that Roseworthy is progressing, because I think it was quite a breakthrough when it was advanced from its previous status to the status of a college of advanced education. With the assistance given by the Commonwealth Government, we now have laboratories at Roseworthy equal to any in Australia for the teaching of advanced science education. With the advance to this status, we will be able to take in an additional number of students, up to 190, when this present plan is completed and when the new dining-room, laboratories, and additional sleeping quarters are provided. This will put Roseworthy into a new category. I only hope that in a very short time the Minister of Agriculture will receive the report of the agricultural education committee which was set up and which has functioned now for well over two years so that he may be advised and the Government may act upon the plans for the other link to be put in the agricultural education book, and that is that those people such as farmers' sons and others interested in the land who do not want to complete the course at Roseworthy will have the opportunity to get an education which is not quite as far-reaching as Roseworthy but which will fit them for a life on the land. I may be wrong, but I believe that this is the way the committee will come down in its report. I think this is the way that the funds will be readily available to fill a gap which it has been obvious over many years has been there. The pilot scheme at Urrbrae that has been going on now for two years has given the Education Department a great opportunity to know whether the courses that have been set up and the proposed curricula are correct. I believe that we have to follow this through in regional areas throughout South Australia.

I was very pleased to see reference in Parliamentary Paper 11A to afforestation and timber milling and to see that the forestry undertaking had made quite a contribution to the income of the State during the last financial year. The main reason for the improvement in the payments and recoveries was the better financial position of the forestry undertaking as timber sales improved and its resultant ability to repay more of the funds previously invested. I hope that the forestry undertaking continues with the policy that was enunciated during my period in office that when a rise in timber prices is necessary it will be taken.

Prior to this, for political reasons timber prices were kept down; this meant that the department was always battling and in fact it was almost as cheap to bring in imported timber as it was to deal in our local radiata pine. I think that, provided the Government continues with the policy of taking the necessary rises (there will be no hardship on anybody, because the whole cost structure is going up), the department will continue to be a very good money spinner for the Treasury and for the Government. Its equipment is excellent at present.

Provision is made for further debarking machinery, which will pay for itself handsomely, because under the agreement made between the expanded industry in the South-East and the industry over the border, the debarker and chipper are necessary in order to supply the increased amounts of chips that will be of great benefit to the development of the South-East and in obtaining capital from Victoria. A little less money is provided this year for the purchase of land for forestry. Because land is not so readily available now, it is costing more. However, we should ask the Commonwealth Government whether we should plant a little less in new plantings because of the difficulties of land purchase.

The purchase of land for forestry purposes is one of the most difficult problems that a Minister of Forests must face. I do not understand why this should be so, because there is probably no better income returner from the land today than radiata pine. The capital enhancement from a given acre of radiata pine would be higher than almost any other commodity except, perhaps, an acre of flowers or vegetables; but, on a broad-acre basis, forestry is very lucrative. I know the obstacles involved. The main objections people have to forests being established are probably two-fold: first, the great fear of fire; and, secondly, the Government does not pay rates in the areas where its forests are established, although there is some give-back in the Highways Fund and sometimes direct grants to various districts.

I know that there are problems associated with the purchase of land in the South-East and in the Adelaide Hills, but I do not know what the solution is to assist those councils where the Woods and Forests Department buys land. I am sure that, if something is not done in those areas, many of the smaller councils will have to amalgamate or disappear, and this would be a very unsatisfactory situation. They cannot keep going at the present rate of the department's acquisition of land, as they lose rates on that land while it is leased to a person

for a number of years until it is actually planted. From then on, there is no further payment of rates. This is a problem not only to the local council but also to the ratepayers in those areas who must bear the additional burden of taxation. I know that the Minister will have this matter before him, because it is a **hardy annual**.

Loans to producers, \$1,400,000, is a means of financing the State's co-operatives in their capital expenditures on plant, equipment and building extensions. Since I have been a member of the Council I have seen this figure increase from about \$250,000 to \$1,400,000, but the latter figure is not nearly the total amount of funds employed in this work, because there is always the revenue coming back over a long period. No doubt over the next few years that \$1,400,000 will increase considerably as a result of assistance that will be necessary for development, particularly in the wine industry. A number of co-operatives could be financed under this system.

There are certain difficulties in the industry, and this must cause concern to the Government and to the State Bank, which is the Government's agent, because in many of the areas, particularly on the Murray River where large sums have been spent, only a reduction in the planting of a particular commodity is needed to result in full use of equipment not being made. This matter must be watched carefully. In the years when 25,000 tons of dried fruit was packed in this State there was sufficient equipment to do the packing. Now that we are packing 7,000 to 8,000 tons of dried fruit there must be much waste space, and this must create a heavy load on those responsible for repayments to the State Bank.

Similarly in the canning industry, any further reduction in peach planting in the State could have a tremendous effect on the large co-operative at Berri. The Government must ensure that the plantings and the services are made known so that people will have a clear view of the actual plantings of these various commodities. The plantings can drop away very quickly and, as a result, we could find that \$100,000, \$200,000 or \$400,000 on loan could simply not be serviced, and there is little value in the building and equipment. It is the through-put of fruit that we must worry about.

The other point I should like to raise, because it is a matter that is of interest to me, is not mentioned in the Loan Estimates. This is the question of the Chemistry Department, which plays a terrific part in various

ways. Its activities range over a large spectrum: anything from taking swabs from race-horses to finding out how much D.D.T. there is in a willy wagtail, checking up on fish, agronomy, blood samples from suspected alcoholics, right through to pathology. The department is run by a very excellent officer who has a good team of people working under him. If he were not a very loyal public servant and if the people who work with him were not very loyal, we would have lost them many years ago.

When I was a member of the Public Works Committee, it received a reference dealing with a new building, including a new mortuary, for the department. This was to be worked in conjunction with pathological research. I should think that is now five years ago. In all the time since, there have been various plans drawn and suggestions put forward, but the poor old Chemistry Department is still behind a stone wall in Kintore Avenue, and we would not know it existed unless we happened to stumble in—and I say “stumble in” advisedly because some of the oldest buildings in Adelaide are within the Chemistry Department. It has been shored up for some time. Dust drops on to the most magnificent instruments they have there; nothing has been spared in providing the necessary instruments, including some very fine balances which would be affected by a feather dropping on to them.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: Not to mention the water.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I am aware of this and am glad the Minister is, too. I do not blame any Government for not being able to do anything about it; it is just sheer bungling in planning that those people have not a decent home for their instruments in which they can get on with their work. We hear of some grandiose schemes; there are among us certain empire builders who want to erect a tremendous concept in Victoria Square, while other people want to build concepts in another place, but the poor old Chemistry Department does not happen to be tagged on to those groups, and so it sits where it is. I plead with the Minister and the Government to see whether those people cannot be given better conditions. I know the Chemistry Department is only one of a number of departments that do not enjoy congenial working conditions, but it is one of the worst.

I see that \$1,500,000 is allocated for police and courthouse buildings. The Playford Government had agreed to build a courthouse at

Waikerie before it went out of office. With the change of Government, the then Attorney-General, with that customary altruistic trait in his nature, decided it was improper for policemen and courts to be in the same building. Consequently, all the courthouses on the drawing boards at that time were written off, so at Waikerie, which is a fairly important town and a big centre, the project was not proceeded with. The court has been meeting in a room measuring 12ft. by 12ft., with a small verandah to it, practically since the inception of Waikerie. The town has been in the hands of a town planner: it has a very nice civic centre. However, it has been waiting for five years at least for a courthouse. It would have had its courthouse long ago with a police station attached but, because of the action of the then Attorney-General in respect of separate courthouses and police stations, it got neither. It is high time that Waikerie and many other places had proper court facilities. I do not subscribe to the theory that people who have committed a wrong should be punished before they are even found guilty; they should be given the opportunity of going to law in a dignified manner. If it rains, people have to stand out in the rain. It is a shocking place.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: It was a shocking Attorney-General!

The Hon. C. R. STORY: That is the point I am making. The only thing is that the honourable member's Party has now made him Premier.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: It is the first time the Hon. Mr. Banfield has agreed with the Hon. Mr. Story for a long while.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Well, we are an independent House and we can agree on some things.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The other matter I wanted to talk about was the Marine and Harbors Department, and particularly fishing havens and foreshore improvements, for which \$804,735 has been put on Loan Account and the estimated expenditure is \$225,000. For the Franklin Harbour jetty extensions \$48,000 is proposed, for a new fishing jetty at Wallaroo \$50,000 is proposed, for the Robe parking area \$25,000 is proposed, and for minor works and services the sum is \$102,000. As regards the amount allowed for these minor works and services, when they come before the Minister the fishermen's demands on this small amount of money are just impossible. I do not really know why we still keep this line "Fishing havens and

foreshore improvements": it would be much better, in my opinion, for the amount of money voted for this line to be aggregated with the money voted for the Department of Marine and Harbors and dealt with by that department. Most people think, quite wrongly, that the Minister in charge of fisheries has huge amounts of money at his disposal. If we started at the bottom end of the South-East and worked our way up to Thevenard, we should be able to spend anything up to \$20,000,000 on projects submitted by fishermen, many of them being worthy of consideration, such as the project envisaged for Beachport on the exposed South Coast, where the people face the full blast of winter and need a fishing haven very much.

However, the money needed for these projects is far greater than the total allocation for this whole line. What are wanted in many of these places are small landing jetties, not such grandiose schemes as are often put up when plans are drawn. Some of them envisage expenditures of \$400,000 to \$500,000, and even up to \$1,000,000. In many cases that expenditure would not be warranted.

For instance, at Coffin Bay the Hurrells built their own landing stage many years ago from mallee rails and sand. That held up for a long time and they had the only jetty in Coffin Bay. It was used by everybody. For a reasonable expenditure something better was put there, but all the way along the coast the same problem occurs. If we are to spend the whole allocation on one jetty for fishermen it will be a long time before every place gets some improvement. I would rather see the money for fishing havens and foreshore improvements lumped in with the money for the Department of Marine and Harbors, and doubled, and a more realistic approach taken to that type of jetty, like those used in Tasmania, where people do not have to tie up the *Queen Mary* but have small landing spots for fishermen.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: The *Queen Mary* is a hotel now.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Then let me say "a big boat". By and large, the fishing industry is entitled to much better harbour facilities. When this industry gets sufficient work to get that department going properly and when sufficient research is done, I think we shall find a tremendous untapped source of income off our coast. It took us 130 years to find out that prawns existed in commercial numbers in the two gulfs. Perhaps we should consider shark fishing as the Japanese

have been doing, so that we could develop an industry, but this will not happen unless we spend money. The Fisheries and Fauna Conservation Department has been neglected in the amount of finance made available to it. Conditions in the department have improved, but this department is capable of bringing much more revenue to the State when proper research facilities are available. Victoria has spent much money on fishery research, and even little Tasmania has a modern marine biology research station at Hobart with excellent facilities. Our department is still situated in Gawler Place with probably one marine biologist and one research officer on the staff. With more money available this year a higher percentage of it should be used to improve the fishing industry and to do research on fauna and flora, so that this department can develop and play a more important part in the State's economy.

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT (Southern): I support the Bill. It is a truism, although trite, to say that there has been and still is a rapid population increase, which has been most marked in the young age group. This is happening in Australia and in South Australia. Our industries are developing, mineral wealth is continually expanding and new sources are being found, and it is inevitable that financial measures should grow in the same way. It has been said that we must run in order to stand still. When expenditure decreases we are going backward and failing to meet our commitments, so that we are soon in strife. Migration added to natural increase has caused a tremendous growth in our population, and this means that food industries must be expanded, the number of motor vehicles and houses must be increased, supplies of electricity and gas must be expanded, insurance and investments must increase, and hospitals, schools, shops and stores must be expanded to meet the growing needs of the community.

When we say that housing expenditure is planned for a 13 per cent increase, such a figure has to cover population increases for the same time. From 1966 to 1968 many industries showed a down trend, to the detriment of South Australia. There were many empty houses, industries slumped, hospitals were not adequate, and the number of unemployed increased, so that we were really in a depressed state. I support the Leader when he commended the former Treasurer (Sir Glen Pearson) for his mighty effort in achieving a

financial recovery between 1968 and the beginning of this year. We have to plan for a standard of living that involves quality of living, and this in turn involves the adequate use of the facilities to which I have referred.

In addition, adequate sewerage and drainage must be planned; road maintenance, proper highways and bridges, and public parks and recreation areas (which form an important part of modern living) must be considered. Also, good rail transport and docks and ports for cargo and passenger services must be constructed. A water supply is important to basic living; indeed, it is as vital as air, and healthy living requires plenty of clean and clear water. The main from Tailem Bend to Keith will be of continued importance, as will be the other mains outside the metropolitan area, and increasing facilities are necessary to cope with additional metropolitan area demands.

Medical services are making an increased demand on Government finance. Modern communities live longer than did their predecessors, because modern medical science ensures a longer life expectancy for that proportion of the population that does not get massacred in its early years by automobile science and engineering.

Many of our hospital facilities are used to care for people who have become victims of such forms of advancement. The standards of many of our hospitals are equal to any in the world and our facilities cannot be bettered anywhere, but this situation has been reached at a price. General hospital facilities have to serve a wide range of needs. Today, specialized mental health facilities are recognized as important components of our medical services. The care of today's aged people is a comparatively small problem compared with what it will be in not too many years to come. People are living longer, and our present youngish population will place a heavy responsibility on the children of today when they grow up and have to care for the older people.

We must get the wheels in motion to provide adequately for today's aged people, because it is to them that we owe so much that we have inherited. What do we need for aged people? Not just basic medicine, but sociology in its broadest sense. The longer people can remain in their own homes and be active in the community the better for all concerned. We must provide nursing at home when required; but to limit that need as far as possible we must provide meals, laundry, chiropody, hairdressing (we do not hear much

about that, but how welcome it would be to a person confined to the home), library facilities, and a voluntary group of sitters who would make it possible for the active partner to get out without leaving the sick one at home alone.

It should be remembered that an increasing number of our citizens come from overseas and they have left behind family connections and close relations. Once their children grow up and scatter to do their life's work the original couple are left alone with no-one to whom to turn. Society must help to cope with them and help them to cope themselves. In this State we have organizations such as the Good Neighbour Council, the Red Cross and Meals on Wheels that have set and are setting patterns for such service.

In building new hospitals and extending old hospitals, I hope the Government can assure us that it has within the same framework a pattern to provide the necessary nursing, domestic and other vital staff. Too often the picture is one of new wards and extension of facilities that are useless and empty indefinitely because of lack of staff. Even the Royal Adelaide Hospital has had this experience, in addition to other institutions. The need for nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, chiropodists, dental workers, right through to doctors, is just as pressing as the need for buildings. No-one dies through being treated in a shabby building (although we do not like shabby buildings) but many have died through lack of trained staff.

Much is said about school buildings. We want good structures, but do we really need buildings of the quality that some folk advocate? Are we in danger of getting into the habit of demanding Rolls Royce standards when a less luxurious standard would do just as well? And does this not apply to much of our planning in other fields, too? We must remember that Australia, a developing country, has limited resources. Trained and skilled staff and good equipment are surely as effective in less exotic buildings. I am not suggesting that we should not build well. (I certainly agree with what the previous speaker said about the buildings of the Chemistry Department.) However, I sometimes wonder whether we have our priorities right and whether some of our decisions are not influenced by a desire to impress those whose influence bears on us and whether they are for the greatest good of the maximum number of people.

I am glad that so large a proportion of our money will be spent on educational facilities

as a whole. The future imposes on us the need to secure sufficient people trained to lead not only in education but in industry, commerce and public life. This means, by and large, that we must have a sufficient number of tertiary university places. Adelaide University holds a respected place in the academic world even if its image, like that of similar institutions, has been tarnished in the eyes of the general public recently by the behaviour of some of its members. Flinders University has got off the ground, and its members at all levels have the responsibility of ennobling their *Alma Mater* in the eyes of the public.

With the growth of this State and the general raising of standards to keep up with the rest of the world, it surely cannot be long before consideration is given to the planning of a third university. Several years must elapse between planning and realization. This decade will surely see the need for more university places than can be supplied by our two existing universities. Not a little of the provision made in the Loan Estimates consists of building upon the solid foundations laid by the previous Government. Good housekeeping is the basis of sound economy; that was proved by the previous Government. In association with the provision of increased assistance from the Commonwealth Government, it will take mismanagement and neglect of the overall needs of the State to set this State back to the condition that existed in 1968. I support the Bill.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS secured the adjournment of the debate.

PUBLIC FINANCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1133.)

The Hon. Sir NORMAN JUDE (Southern): I have, with some considerable difficulty, tried to digest the very technical form in which the provisions of this Bill are expressed. I do not wonder why the press has avoided this complicated but very important subject. The latest Commonwealth-State Financial Agreement at last eases the load, particularly in respect of the interest burden carried by the State. I can only hope that this is but a first step in this direction. The new provisions for "excess authority", as it is called, bring about a somewhat reasonable position, the old formula having proved embarrassing from time to time.

Clause 9, the most essential clause, authorizes the Treasurer to pay into the Loan Fund Account the newly-arranged capital grants, which this year are \$27,400,000. (I do not know what is happening about the grants-in-aid we have just received.) The grants from the Commonwealth that are paid into the Loan Fund Account will be immediately available for use on capital works that are pending, unless they are earmarked, by arrangement with the Commonwealth, for a specific purpose. That is a very desirable safeguard. Both the Under Treasurer and the Auditor-General have recommended the basic provisions of the Bill, including the increase in excess expenditure from Consolidated Revenue. That amount used to be \$1,200,000, but it will now be 1 per cent of the total appropriation. New sections 27 and 27a can fairly be described as technical. I would certainly be outpointed, at least technically, if I quarrelled with them.

I congratulate the Hon. Mr. Potter on his speech of yesterday; he to some extent failed to descend (or perhaps I should say rise) to the impenetrable and murky depths of legalistic jargon. Those honourable members who are members of the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation will not welcome any regulations that are made under this Bill if they are in similar phraseology. This Bill is an interesting one and a very important one. The Premier virtually told the House about it and added a few remarks to it. The Leader of the House repeated what the Premier said in part, and the Hon. Mr. Potter supported the Bill yesterday. I intend to do the same without giving any further trouble. I support the second reading.

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

POTATO MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1134.)

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): The Bill now before us to amend the Potato Marketing Act was described by the Minister as a short Bill. In keeping with the Bill, the second reading explanation was also rather brief. I have been critical in the past of the brevity of second reading explanations given to this Council. I believe that if those explanations were more explicit we would have a far speedier passage of legislation through this Chamber.

I am sure that the Minister would have more information available to him than what he

presented to members in this explanation. No doubt there are a number of shortcomings in the Act. In fact, the Hon. Mr. Story pointed out one in relation to section 25. I notice by the amendment the Minister has on file that he is amending section 16 of the principal Act. I trust that the amendment the Minister has brought forward will rectify the problem that was raised by the Hon. Mr. Story. I believe that the Potato Board itself is looking at the possibility of bringing down further amendments to the Act in order to bring it up to date.

The Potato Board is known as an industry board. It consists of nine members, two nominated by the Government (one of whom is the Chairman and the other is a representative of the retailers), two are merchants, and the other five are grower representatives. Therefore, the grower representatives have the majority on the board.

Control over potato marketing in South Australia has operated now for more than 30 years. The first controls were introduced during the Second World War period under National Security Regulations, and these remained in operation until 1948. When the National Security Regulations ceased to apply, the potato growing interests were rather fearful of the effect of gluts and shortages of potatoes on the stability of prices, and they requested the then Government to introduce legislation on a State basis.

When one reads the debates that took place at that time one notes that there were a number of criticisms that Parliament was asked to pass legislation in skeleton form and to leave the real power and authority to be enforced by regulations and by administrative orders of the board.

The Bill that we have before us authorizes the Treasurer to guarantee certain sums of money to enable the Potato Board to take over the functions previously carried out by the distribution centre. The extent to which the board will require finance will depend largely on the quantities of potatoes it will be handling and the promptness with which the merchants pay for the potatoes they purchase through the board. One may say that this has always been the situation, and that is correct to a degree. The distribution centre no doubt had access to overdraft finance, if required, but this body was owned by the merchants, the exact holdings being of 9,991 shares held by the Wholesale Fruit Merchants of Adelaide

Limited and the remaining nine shares held by the directors of that company.

Under this Bill the board itself will take over the operations of the distribution centre. Therefore, one could immediately ask what provision is made for compensation. However, on a closer examination of the situation one sees that compensation will not be involved because there is an arrangement whereby either party may give notice of termination of the arrangement.

The regulation of supply and price of potatoes has always been a matter of criticism from the growers. Section 20 of the principal Act refers to price control but mentions only maximum prices that may be fixed. The Potato Board is its own price-fixing authority. One wonders whether a minimum price, such as applies in the wine grapegrowing industry, could also apply. However, this probably would not work satisfactorily because of the importing of potatoes into South Australia from other States.

Because of the fluctuations in supply, it has been necessary at certain times to import potatoes into South Australia. On occasions the merchants themselves have imported these potatoes, whilst on other occasions they have been imported by the distribution centre. This need has been brought about by situations in which local potatoes are not available because of the inability of growers to dig them due to wet weather. One of the problems in the past has been that when the merchants have imported potatoes as the need arose through the reasons I have stated, they probably have imported in excess of the quantity that was required to get over a particular situation; the weather has then cleared up, and local growers have been in the position of digging their potatoes and having them ready to put on the market, but they have not been permitted to do so because of the excess of interstate potatoes still available for the local market.

This has led to a great deal of criticism by the local growers. Often a price has been kept up to a certain level while these interstate potatoes are on the local market, but as soon as the local potatoes are available for the market the price drops. This has been another cause for a great deal of criticism of the Potato Board and of the distribution centre.

The merchants, because of their representation on the board and their involvement in the distribution centre, have often had prior knowledge of the board's intention, particularly

regarding the need to bring in potatoes from the other States, whereas the growers' representatives on the board have informed growers that business transacted at board meetings is to remain confidential until the confirmation of the minutes at a subsequent meeting. This has led to rather strained public relations between the board and the growers.

It is regrettable that the board has not published annual reports. I believe that in the future, seeing that the board will be expanding its functions, annual reports should not only be published but also the Auditor-General should peruse the board's activities and report thereon. I said earlier that the distribution centre had access to overdraft facilities through normal sources. I believe that the same sources were prepared at one time to make the same overdraft facilities available to the board itself when it took over the distribution centre's work but, apparently, somewhere along the line pressure was applied and the board was told that this overdraft facility was not available to it. I wonder where this pressure came from.

The Bill contains the words "a loan made to the board on the security of a mortgage or charge over the board's assets", but the Minister in his second reading explanation did not explain what the board's assets were. I know that the board has a certain amount of real estate, but I assume that it also has a mortgage on it; therefore, it would not provide a very great asset. So what are the board's assets?

The Hon. M. B. Dawkins: Wouldn't potatoes be assets?

The Hon. L. R. HART: Undoubtedly potatoes would form a part of the board's assets. I take it that the board would be required to have a registered debenture over the potatoes in transit, in effect. What is the situation regarding potatoes that go through the board's distribution centre to the merchants, and the situation when a merchant goes into liquidation? I know that the merchants who operate in the fruit and vegetable market do not go into liquidation very often but appear to do very well for themselves. However, this situation could occur in the potato industry. What would be the situation if such a thing happened? Is it expected that the merchants who buy potatoes from the board (and there would be only a limited number of them) will be required to put up a bond to cover their purchases, or what are the actual provisions to give the board some protection against this eventuality?

I trust that the Minister will explain these matters when he replies in the debate. Also, no limit is suggested in the Bill as to the amount of money that is to be guaranteed. This is a rather unusual practice. No sum of money is given as the board's requirements (I assume that the requirements would be on a fluctuating basis); nor is there any suggestion on when the guarantee to the board should be discharged. Here again, this is an unusual practice in situations of this kind. The South Australian Potato Board handles about 50,000 to 60,000 tons of potatoes a year and the previous distribution centre used to get a handling charge of \$1.50 a ton, I think; so on that basis there would be a fairly high income available to the board's centre. However, against that, there would be fairly high expenses. I should be pleased to hear from the Minister how long it is expected that this guarantee will operate.

Another matter gives me some concern, namely, the possibility of the merchants bringing in potatoes from other States in competition with the board's distribution centre. It may be possible to overcome this by appointing the old distribution centre as an agent only. This has been suggested by the growers in the past, and this could be a means of overcoming the problem. I wish to commend the work of Mr. J. W. Reddin, who has been appointed Chairman in fairly recent times. He was appointed by the previous Minister of Agriculture, and this was a very wise appointment. I know Mr. Reddin to be a hard-working and dynamic personality and, when he took over this position, he took on a very difficult job, but I believe he has grasped the nettle firmly. From what I have heard, he is doing a job that is meeting with the commendation of all people associated with the industry.

I also commend the appointment of Mr. Hal Bannister as General Manager of the board. He has been closely associated with primary industries all of his adult life and I consider that this knowledge of primary industries will be of inestimable value in dealing with the board's problems. The move for the board to take over the distribution of potatoes is one that has met with grower approval. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): I, too, support the second reading. I do not wish to speak at any length, because this matter has been covered in some detail by the Hon. Mr. Story and the Hon. Mr. Hart. However, I should like to commend the board

for its decision to take over the distribution centre's activities. Over the years, those of us who have been in the Council representing country areas have from time to time come into contact with the board and with some of the board's problems.

I consider that the move that the board intends to take is a forward step. However, I must agree with the Hon. Mr. Story, who indicated that, if we give what is virtually an unlimited guarantee to any particular board, there are other boards that will be very happy to get on the band wagon. I believe it was never intended that the Government should take the responsibility for financing such marketing boards as have been set up in the State over the years.

As the Hon. Mr. Hart said, the amount intended to be guaranteed has not been disclosed, although I have heard a figure from \$300,000 to \$500,000 mentioned, and it will be a fluctuating one. These matters should be stated very specifically. I cannot understand why several days have elapsed since we were told that the Bill should be passed without delay. However, I know that some queries were raised at the time, although no amendments were actually indicated.

Although this matter is supposedly urgent, there has been this delay. I hope that the Minister will be able to explain the reason for it. This afternoon we have seen the amendment placed on the file by the Government, to which the Hon. Mr. Hart has referred, which inserts new provisions in section 16. As he said, this, while it may cover the Government to some extent on its guarantee, does not altogether cover the situation referred to by the Hon. Mr. Story regarding section 25. As he said, even though it is unlikely, it is possible, that the board could be disbanded by a poll of the growers in 1972 and the question would then arise: who is responsible for the guarantee provided for in, or thought to be covered by, new section 16a, which the Minister proposes to insert in the Bill?

I support the potato growers, many of whom are in my area. Over the years honourable members have been to various meetings initiated by the Potato Board or members of the industry, and we are interested in their welfare. The Hon. Mr. Hart had a good point when he thought there should be an annual report from the board laid on the table of Parliament, particularly if the board, as a result of this legislation, is able to set up its own marketing authority. I sincerely hope it will. With the Hon. Mr.

Hart, I believe it would be a good thing for the board to present an annual report and for the Auditor-General to inspect the board's affairs from year to year, as he does with so many governmental and semi-governmental authorities.

I endorse the comments made by the Hon. Mr. Hart about Mr. Reddin and Mr. Bannister. I have known both gentlemen for a number of years and appreciate their ability and conscientious drive. I hope this Bill will pass quickly and that the Minister of Agriculture will be able to explain some of the points raised in the debate by the Hon. Mr. Story, the Hon. Mr. Hart and myself. I support the second reading.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): Briefly, let me answer some of the points raised by honourable members. The Hon. Mr. Story wanted an assurance that the Government guarantee would be safe. When we get into Committee, honourable members will see that the amendment on their files will satisfy them in that respect. The Hon. Mr. Hart referred to the amount of the guarantee that would be asked of the Government. It will range from \$300,000 to perhaps \$350,000. This is the normal amount of money being made available through the distribution centre at present but, of course, that need not always be the case.

So far as the time factor is concerned, the board's finances will be buoyant for many months of the year and it would be only in business transactions carried out by the board that the time required for the guarantee would apply. It is estimated it would be about four years, but this will depend on many factors in the ensuing years. I am sure the board will be capable of carrying out its task. As has been admitted by the honourable member, the men now occupying the positions of Chairman and General Manager of the board are most capable. I am sure, from what the honourable member has said, that he himself is convinced there will be no need even to suggest that this loan will not be in good hands. That explains the position as far as I can.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

New clause 1a—"General powers of board."

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture) moved to insert the following new clause:

1a. Section 16 of the principal Act is amended—

- (a) by inserting immediately after paragraph (c) the following paragraph:
 - (ca) by way of security for any loan—
 - (i) give a mortgage over the real property of the board;
 - or
 - (ii) create a charge, either specifically or generally, over all or any of the assets of the board;
- and
- (b) by inserting after the present contents thereof (which are hereby designated subsection (1) thereof) the following subsection:
 - (2) Notwithstanding anything in any Act, a charge created by the board pursuant to paragraph (ca) of subsection (1) of this section shall be a first charge upon the assets so charged.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: First, can the Minister explain the words "create a charge, either specifically or generally, over all or any of the assets of the board"? Secondly, can he tell me what the assets of the board are, in the context of this amendment?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I cannot tell the honourable member specifically what the present assets of the board are, because I have never been told their monetary value. However, I could obtain the information quickly.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: If the Minister can tell me (and I will give him time to find out) whether or not the board's assets include potatoes that have been delivered to the board, that would clear up the point raised by some honourable members. In other words, can the Minister say whether the assets of the board include potatoes in transit, potatoes in store, and potatoes with washers or with merchants?

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Are they property?

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Property is covered in subparagraph (i).

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Wouldn't "all assets" include real property?

The C. R. STORY: Yes, I think so.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Does "property" mean "real estate"?

The Hon. L. R. Hart: If the asset is potatoes and the potatoes drop in price, the value of the asset drops.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: We should not let this legislation go through Parliament without understanding that we are dealing with growers' commodities. To use a horrible pun, this has been a hot potato for a long while. Some organizations have become bankrupt,

particularly those dealing with wheat and dried fruit.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I have ascertained that the assets would include book debts and personal or real property, and the specific charge could relate to any one of those items by bill of sale, whereas the general charge could be over all assets.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Including real property?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Yes.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I am more confused. Do potatoes delivered to the board form part of the assets of the board for the purpose of this guarantee if they have not been paid for?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will ask that progress be reported to enable me to get further information.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

Later:

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The amendment has been discussed at length with the Parliamentary Draftsman. The questions asked by honourable members can be resolved quite satisfactorily. The board's assets will be book debts and personal or real properties, and the specific charges would consist of bills of sale and general charges over all groups of assets. This would mean that the bank would have the first charge over the assets. This is normally the case, anyway. The potatoes will become the board's asset as soon as they are delivered to the distribution centre. This kind of transaction goes on every day between business people, between producers and merchants outside the board, and between traders and retailers. Nothing specific can be laid down regarding what eventualities will arise. To be specific and realistic, this is purely a business transaction on which the bank will keep a tab because, after all, the bank will not lend more money than is required by the board. We must face the fact that this is a business organization running the show and, if for some unforeseen reason it goes bankrupt, there is nothing we can do about it. It is specifically stated in the Bill that in that case the bank has first call on the assets of the business. However, I see nothing wrong with the wording of the amendment, which covers the situation admirably.

This is what honourable members asked should be done—that there should be some protection for the bank when advancing this loan. This amendment does that specifically.

If we have no confidence in the calibre of the members of the board and the people administering this Act and looking after the interests of the producers, we can have no confidence in anything at all. We must resign ourselves to that fact.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: The honourable member is a kindly Minister. I will repeat one or two things to try to get a clearer picture of the situation. First, the Minister says the potatoes become the property of the board. Secondly, I raised this matter because, while the Minister is one of the custodians of the board's purse strings, he must get this right, as the board has a great obligation to the growers: it must be in possession of all the facts of these matters. It is significant that the State Bank has demanded a Government guarantee for the functioning of this board. Why it has demanded a Government guarantee I do not know, because it is a normal banking procedure, as far as I can see.

However, as it requires this Government guarantee, we must ensure that two groups of people are protected—first, the taxpayers of the State, who are putting up the guarantee, and, secondly, the potato growers. I am not at all happy about section 25 of the present Act. That is why I said in the second reading debate that I thought this Act should not be put in jeopardy during the period of the guarantee. The Minister has said that we shall be taking away the growers' rights if we do anything to stop a poll being held every three years, but the growers, through their board, are assuming a tremendous responsibility. Surely they should be prepared to stand aside and back up their board during the period of this guarantee. As the Bill is at present drafted, if the growers decide to cease all operations of the Potato Marketing Act, the whole thing will stay in operation until another Act can be brought down to wind up the organization.

Surely, there should be some amendment whereby the Minister can take action under the Companies Act to do a normal winding up of this organization, if necessary. After all, we can have a situation where Parliament rises on a Thursday, a poll is taken on the following Tuesday and Parliament may not meet again for another three, four, or five months, leaving the whole thing in suspense. There are some important aspects in this type of legislation. Whilst we are sometimes accused of obstruction, we must ensure that the legislation is not airy-fairy. I want to know where it can be

shown that the potatoes are part of the assets of the board.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: In the first place, that information has been given me by the Chairman of the board, who specifically stated that the potatoes do become the property of the board on the day of delivery. I cannot be any more specific than that. As regards section 25, I told him personally I did not think it would be doing the producers a favour if we restricted what they had under the present Act—if we took away from them their option of having a poll.

I claim that the producers have this right and I intend to see that it is protected. There is a majority of producers on the board and I doubt very much in the circumstances whether a poll would be held whilst Parliament was not sitting; it would not be in their interests for that to happen. The producers should be able to please themselves; I do not want to take away from them their right. As regards holding a poll on a day soon after Parliament has risen, when it may not sit again for three or four months, I think that is a matter to be resolved if and when it occurs. I do not foresee any difficulty on that score.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I am still concerned about this amendment. In his reply, the Minister has taken the view that any grower who has potatoes in the hands of the board at a particular time is only taking a normal business risk that other people take in the usual course of their business affairs. There is a significant difference here, however, in that in the normal course of business a person usually takes care to see that the person who is likely to become his creditor is financially sound; but in this case the grower is under a statutory obligation to deliver his goods to the board. There is a safeguard proposed here for those growers who are unfortunate enough, if anything goes wrong, to have their crops in the board's hands at that time, but there is no protection for a percentage of the growers involved at that time in selling their crops.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Is it the intention of the board to request the Minister for a redraft of this Act, to clear out some of the dead wood in it? It must be remembered that it is a hang-over from the National Security Regulations. It was drafted on the instructions of the then supervisor of the potato industry. Many provisions of the Act do not apply today. Does the Government intend to bring down a redraft of this Act dealing with some of the points raised today, over which,

I must say, there has been much discontent for many years? In fact, if this Act had been in good order, there would not have been half the trouble with the Potato Board that we had in the last 2½ to three years. In the process of redrafting, the points raised by honourable members ought to be taken into consideration.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The Government does intend to streamline this legislation in the not too distant future. At that stage honourable members will be able to see that their points are considered.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Minister chided the Council for not having confidence in the board (at any rate, I took his statement that way). However, every honourable member has complete confidence in the board. If we relied completely on the board we would not need an Act at all. However, the Act is necessary because we put in it instructions for the board. Honourable members are only seeking complete information on exactly what this amendment does. Can the Minister say, first, what will happen if a charge is created over any real property of the board? Secondly, what is the position of the grower if a charge is created over potatoes in the board's hands?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I had no intention of chiding this Council in regard to the status of the board members. All I said was that these men are very much respected by honourable members and, for that reason alone, they would not do anything contrary to the Act under which they work. I think the Leader's questions have been answered two or three times already. I said that the assets, like those of a company, consist of book debts, personal property and real property. Specific charges can be dealt with through a bill of sale or general charges can be made over groups of assets. I was asked whether, since the Government was guaranteeing the loan, there should be a provision protecting the Government. That is specifically what the amendment does. It is only natural that it would have the first call.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Over a mortgage?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Yes, in the event of something happening.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Did I understand the Minister to say that the grower would have a prior claim for the price of his potatoes?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: No.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: On my reading of the legislation, if the board mortgages its property, the whole of the mortgage

or charge will have priority for payment over the previous owner of the potatoes. Is that correct?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I take it that the honourable member is concerned that, if the grower has his potatoes delivered to the board and there is a mortgage, the State Government should receive the first payment and the grower should take second place.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: The State Bank.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The State Bank—I beg the honourable member's pardon. That is as I read it.

New clause inserted.

Clause 2 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1135.)

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES (Northern): It is interesting to study the form of politics. In last week's *Sunday Mail* it was reported that the Premier said of the Legislative Council that the only time it paid attention was when some property of its members was threatened. This Bill is presenting a facet of the Treasury, namely, the administration of the Wild Dogs Act, that shows that the fund is \$39,200 in the red. It is important that the Treasury and the Government should take notice of the corollary of the Premier's remarks, and where we should look for points of criticism. The point the Government must appreciate (and one that we appreciate as a House) is that so long as good government and good legislation continue the State will progress in a fair and equitable way.

The problem of wild dogs in South Australia and Australia has been part of the history of the country, and it is interesting, when reading early *Hansards*, to note that the Act first began in 1889 when the rate struck on land in the State then occupied was 6d. a square mile in order to get rid of the wild dog. At that time the fox was included in the definition of a wild dog.

Between 1889 and 1900 many squatters in the Northern parts of the State erected their own dog-proof fence at their own cost under their own initiative. The Beltana Pastoral Company spent £21,844 to erect a fence on its runs, which at times totalled 15,000 square miles running 33,000 head of sheep. In 1900, the Act was repealed in relation to the Northern areas of the State and applied only in the South-East and to those lands south of the

Murray River. It seemed that pastoralists in the North considered that they could control wild dogs better than any Government inspector could, although their holdings were extremely large. Closer agricultural settlement was increasing south of the Murray River and in the South-East where the wild dog and fox would have caused greater hardship to many early settlers.

In 1900 the fund was £300 in credit: the amount paid for dogs killed was £34,427, and £34,778 had been collected by levy at 6d. a square mile. In 1905, the Act was repealed for a similar reason that has necessitated today's legislation being introduced. The arrears were £1,986, and claims had been received for dogs killed amounting to £1,795. More dogs were being killed than there was money available to pay for them, and pastoralists were not paying their arrears of rates. In *Hansard* of 1912 it was reported that pastoralists in the Northern areas of the State objected to having anything to do with the Wild Dog Act. Further agitation resulted in a Bill being introduced on a pound for pound basis to the value of £2,100, with a charge of 3d. a square mile within the vermin fence and 6d. a square mile on any other land. I suggest that the 1912 Act was the forerunner of the present Act in which the Government contributes on a dollar for dollar basis to the contribution of the grazier. In 1912, the Hon. J. P. Wilson, when addressing the House after having done much research, referred to the Beltana Pastoral Company as follows:

Up to July 31, 1912, it has resulted in the destruction of 8,584 dogs, the scalps of which have been actually produced to the overseers and managers of this company's runs. Though this number is large it does not show the total destruction, by any means, because in such a large area of country thousands of dogs poisoned may easily be missed in the rough country and scrub. For the three years mentioned the company has had 1,250 traps constantly in use; 7,350oz. of strychnine have been made into baits and distributed, the animals cut up for this purpose being 7,290 sheep, four cattle, 19 donkeys, six horses, four mules, and eight camels, besides liver, etc., of ration sheep, and much wild game.

One can imagine that there must have been quite a large industry involved in combating wild dogs in those days. This company said it was far better to do its own work within its own fenced boundaries. The Hon. Mr. Wilson went on to read a letter from Mr. T. Brown, owner of the Nullarbor Station, West Coast. The following is an extract from that letter:

My experience of 25 years—and it is the experience of many others—leads me to strongly object to the unsatisfactory method of payment by result, as men will only continue at work so long as dogs are numerous, but as soon as the numbers diminish and scalps become at all difficult to obtain the job is thrown up and the dogs are left to breed up again.

Anyone studying the history of primary industry in Australia will realize that those words are most prophetic. Anyone who has followed the history of the rabbit population of Australia knows that the trapper traps only the cream of the rabbits.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That is all he can afford to do.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Yes, but we can never get rid of the curse to the countryside in those circumstances. I wonder whether all the doggers do today is to take the cream, or whether there are other forces at work. Before June, 1969, when the Government of the day approved the increase in payments for scalps to \$6, the average number of dogs that the State paid for annually was about 4,000, or 333 a month. After June, 1969, the scalps came in at the rate of 19,490 a year, or 1,625 a month—a tremendous increase. The authorities have admitted that dogs were on the increase at that time, but it is hard to credit that they increased to the extent that it appeared they did. The majority of the dogs came from the Hermannsburg area in the Far North-West, where the season was not too bad. At the same time, I believe that pups were born, scalped and brought in straight away. It has been said that the industry was regarded as suitable for Aborigines living in the Far North-West, outside the dog fences.

I wonder whether we could take a broader look at the problem of the kangaroo and at the same time see whether the control of wild dogs could become more profitable. The dog fence is a boon to the rest of the grazing areas of the State but, if in one area an extra 15,000 scalps can come in, there must be very many dogs up there that can be picked up. Will droughts control the wild dogs, or will they be quietly bred on the side? The price of a pup's scalp is \$1 but the price of the scalp of a grown dog is \$4. I am worried that it may become profitable to fatten the scalp!

Pastoralists at present have to pay a levy of 15c a square mile, but this Bill increases the maximum levy to 25c. Bearing in mind the problems of the wool industry, I wonder whether it will be possible for grazing organizations to

be informed in advance if there is to be an increase in the levy in future. It would be most unwise to make the costs of landholders any greater than is necessary. I hope the Government will consider this matter sympathetically at some time next year. I endorse the proposals in the Bill. Both the present Government and the previous Government consulted the Stockowners Association at great length before this Bill was introduced. In 1912 the Stockowners Association was asked for its advice prior to the introduction of a Bill. Mr. Pascoe, who was a member of the Legislative Council in 1931, said in this Chamber:

Mr. President, what the stockowners have asked for I agree to; therefore, the amendments are perfectly all right.

The honourable member said that he realized the value of the Stockowners Association. I support the Bill.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Minister of Lands): I thank all honourable members who have spoken on this Bill. Although they were half-hearted in their support, they realized that because of the condition of the fund something had to be done. I just wonder what sort of criticism honourable members might have made had the fund been in the red as a result of some action of the Labor Government. In fact, the fund is in its present state as a result of action that was taken before my Party's Government came into office.

I spoke to the Hon. Mr. Whyte yesterday after he had finished his speech on this Bill and pointed out to him that he had misunderstood the intention of the Bill in one respect. I think the honourable member then realized that he had been under a misapprehension. He said at the time that the subsidy would be limited to \$50,000, but that is not true. Clause 3 strikes out section 8 (2) of the principal Act, thus removing any limitation on the amount. The \$50,000 the honourable member mentioned refers to a loan that can be made to the fund by the Government.

Both the Hon. Mr. Whyte and the Hon. Mr. Geddes referred to the need to increase the bounty from \$4 to \$6 as soon as practicable. They also said that the same rate should apply to pups. The Hon. Mr. Whyte said it had been suggested that people would let pups grow until they were large enough to qualify for the bounty, and the Hon. Mr. Geddes said that scalps could be fattened. When this State started paying a bounty of \$6 it was paying more in bounty than were the other States. I do not wish to criticize the officers of the

department or whoever else was responsible for accepting scalps, because obviously one cannot tell from looking at a scalp where it comes from, but I would not like to hazard a guess as to how many of these scalps might have come from other States. That is the problem that we face if we increase the bounty beyond that applying in States bordering South Australia, particularly in the Far North where the wild dogs are most prevalent.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: New South Wales pays a bounty of \$6.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The scalps I spoke of could have come from Queensland. It has also been said that people who see that a female wild dog is about to whelp make sure they get the pups and let the female go so that she will produce more scalps. Therefore, it is difficult to know what to do in these circumstances. I do not know whether it is worse to allow the pups to grow or to let the mother loose to produce more pups; it is a difficult decision to make. However, I assure honourable members that when the time comes for a review we will look closely at the situation. As honourable members have said, the main objective is to bring this fund back to a solvent state. When we have it back into solvency and on a sound basis once again, we can review the situation.

This Bill increases the maximum rate to 25c a square mile. I think I said yesterday by interjection that the rate had already been fixed for this financial year at 15c a square mile. When the matter comes up again for review, we will look further into this question. I will keep in mind the remarks of both the Hon. Mr. Whyte and the Hon. Mr. Geddes and also the comments made by the Hon. Mr. Whyte in the Address in Reply debate.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1 passed.

Clause 2—"Imposition of rates."

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The Minister in closing the debate referred to the problem of scalps being brought in from other States. I take it from what he said that there is still a discrepancy in the price being paid by other State Governments for scalps.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: As I understand it, yes.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: During my research in this matter I discovered that a letter sent by the former Minister of Agriculture to the Stockowners Association on August 8,

1969, referred to a resolution passed at the Dingo Control Conference held in Adelaide last year. That resolution stated:

The State delegates to the Dingo Control Conference held in Adelaide on May 29 and 30, 1969 (Mr. A. R. Tomlinson, Western Australia, dissenting) recommends that each delegate take back to his appropriate authority for their earnest consideration a request for increasing the bonus rate for wild dog scalps to a sum of \$6.

As New South Wales is already paying \$6 in respect of that section of the State that borders South Australia, I assumed that Queensland would follow suit. Can the Minister say what Queensland is doing?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Although Queensland agreed to the resolution, I understand that it has not followed suit.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (3 and 4) and title passed.

Bill reported without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (VALUATION)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1128.)

The Hon F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): I support the second reading. Honourable members will recall that when the principal Act for the establishment of the Land and Valuation Court was before the Council last year certain honourable members expressed doubt whether this jurisdiction should be limited to one judge or be shared between the judges of the court or at least a limited number of them. The reasons why this should be so are well known. It is not always possible for a judge to be in good health every day of the year. He may be involved in other duties or it may be that the sheer volume of the work he is given in this jurisdiction would be such that delays would occur if he were the only judge. On examination, it appears that it would be prudent in the first instance to have the jurisdiction conferred on one other judge, and I understand that at a later stage a further judge may be appointed.

The theory was that by having one judge he would become an expert in this field. This Bill does not necessarily cut down on that idea because, after all, this jurisdiction is not one in which a great deal of legalistic work is involved. Indeed, the tendency, as one can see from the rules of court that have been prepared, is to keep the work of this court as simple as possible in all circumstances. The

idea of conferring this jurisdiction on one or two other judges of the court is worth while. The Bill also proposes that the right of appeal from an exercise of a jurisdiction by the Master of the Supreme Court shall exist. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through Committee without amendment. Committee's report adopted.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 1. Page 1128.)

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): This is not the first occasion since I have been a member of this Council that a Bill has been introduced to amend the Housing Improvement Act. This small Bill can be debated better in the Committee stage than in the second reading stage, because it has several unrelated aspects. I must admit that when I first looked at the Bill I had difficulty in understanding what clause 2 did. That clause provides:

Section 18 of the principal Act is amended by redesignating the last subsection thereof as subsection (4).

When I turned to the principal Act I found that subsection (4) was already there and I had to go right back to the original amending Act of 1946 to find that it said:

Section 18 of the principal Act is amended by adding at the end thereof the following subsection:

(3)

So, while the amending Act of 1946 made a mistake, the Government Printer, with due initiative, issued the reprint in 1958 with the correctly numbered subsection. I give full marks to the Government Printer and also to the Parliamentary Draftsman for taking the appropriate action in this matter. However, to a person in this Chamber trying to follow an Act through it is somewhat difficult.

Under the Act, a body can be appointed by the Governor to administer the Act and this

body can fix the maximum rental for a house or part of a house if the house is declared to be substandard. According to the second reading explanation, some unscrupulous landlords charge the maximum rental fixed for a property and then charge separately an amount for furniture. The amendments in this Bill are designed to overcome this. I have no real complaint about this provision. However, my experience has shown me (no doubt other honourable members have also had similar experience) that while there are in the community unscrupulous landlords there are also such people as unscrupulous tenants. The capacity to act unscrupulously is not confined to any one section of the community, landlord or tenant. By the same token, I think we can say that most landlords and most tenants cannot be classified in this way. I fully appreciate that there are unscrupulous landlords, but I think the Chief Secretary would agree with me that there are such things as unscrupulous tenants as well.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: That applies to every section of the community.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Absolutely. However, there seems to be an emphasis in this matter on unscrupulous landlords. Clause 5 amends section 61, which deals with the ejectment of a tenant from a substandard house. The amendment modifies the law by investing the court with a discretion as to whether a contravention by the tenant of a term of his tenancy should or should not justify ejectment. I do not have much argument with this. However, there are one or two matters relating to the amendment of section 61 on which I should like information from the Chief Secretary in Committee. At this stage, I am prepared to support the second reading.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.35 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, September 3, at 2.15 p.m.