

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Wednesday, October 14, 1970

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

**STATE BANK REPORT**

The **PRESIDENT** laid on the table the annual report of the State Bank for the year ended June 30, 1970, together with profit and loss account and balance sheets.

**PUBLIC RELIEF**

The **PRESIDENT**: The Hon. Mr. Kemp.  
The Hon. F. J. **POTTER** (Central No. 2) moved:

That a Select Committee be appointed—

- (1) to inquire into and report upon the distress of old age pensioners with no income other than pension payments, the circumstances under which it arises and the means by which it can be ameliorated;
- (2) to inquire into and report upon the effectiveness of the assistance available to deserted wives, widows and widowers with dependent children, and the means by which the cause of present distress can be relieved.

The **PRESIDENT**: Is the honourable member moving this motion at the request of the Hon. Mr. Kemp, whom I called upon but who did not rise to his feet? Standing Order No. 115 states:

In the absence of a member who has given notice of a motion, the same may not, except by leave of the Council and at the request of such member, be moved by another member.

The Hon. F. J. **POTTER**: I am, at the request of the Hon. Mr. Kemp, moving this motion.

The **PRESIDENT**: Then the honourable member must ask leave of the Council to do so.

Leave granted.

The Hon. F. J. **POTTER**: Thank you, Mr. President, for drawing my attention to the Standing Order. This was a motion that the Hon. Mr. Kemp had originally intended to move, but he asked me to take the matter over; I am very happy to do so.

The Hon. A. J. **Shard**: Did he write the speech for you?

The Hon. F. J. **POTTER**: No; as a matter of fact, he did not.

The Hon. A. J. **Shard**: I wanted to be clear in my mind.

The Hon. F. J. **POTTER**: I have no written speech prepared. I am happy to move the motion because I think this is a matter that

is receiving some attention in the community and is one of great importance. The motion is divided into two sections, because I think they are both important and should be kept separate. The first one is that the proposed Select Committee should:

Inquire into and report upon the distress of old age pensioners with no income other than pension payments, the circumstances under which it arises and the means by which it can be ameliorated.

I say, first of all, that I do not think it would be the proper function of this committee to make any inquiry into the question of the adequacy of the old age pension. After all, this Parliament does not fix that pension and circumstances are such that we cannot fix it. However, it has been brought to our attention recently, particularly by a statement of the Rev. Mr. Vogt of the Adelaide Central Methodist Mission, that there is an area of great need in this community involving age pensioners who receive no income but the pension and that there is also a problem of the sick aged in our community.

The Hon. A. J. **Shard**: They do not necessarily have to be sick, either.

The Hon. F. J. **POTTER**: That is so. As the Hon. Mr. Dawkins said yesterday, the Rev. Mr. Vogt claimed that the problem had reached crisis dimensions and, from my observations, I agree that this is so. At present many age pensioners, who receive nothing more than the pension and who are sick (or perhaps in indifferent health), are living in their homes. We know that many pensioners wish to remain in their homes, although they do not have friends or relatives to help them and, as a result, they are in a very difficult situation. Undoubtedly, there does not exist adequate nursing home accommodation for these people and, indeed, the nursing homes that do exist will soon have to find large increases in salaries for their nurses as a result of the latest court award.

Recently, my attention was drawn to the fact that many nursing homes catering for age pensioners may have to close, and I have seen a notice from one institution stating that it expects to close towards the end of the year because of the increases in its expenses. These elderly people who cannot pay more than their pension to any home that will care for and accommodate them constitute an area of need in our community. The Rev. Mr. Vogt suggested that there should be some things the Government could do immediately to ease the situation of this section of the community, and I was pleased to hear the Minister say

yesterday that the Government intended to press on rapidly with re-opening the Northfield Hospital, particularly the old Morris Hospital wards, to accommodate sick aged people.

However, that move will provide limited assistance only, and we should consider further the need for domiciliary care for elderly pensioners in our community, in order to ascertain what further assistance the State can provide, because although the Commonwealth Government has agreed to provide additional financial help for domiciliary services, little has been done so far. I think we need to inquire into what facilities are available and what services can be expanded to help these people. The second part of the motion is as follows:

To inquire into and report upon the effectiveness of the assistance available to deserted wives, widows and widowers with dependent children, and the means by which the cause of present distress can be relieved.

I do not think it is necessary for me to provide this Council with great detail about the circumstances of such distress. If honourable members care to look through the recent publications that are available in the Parliamentary Library they will see that there has been article after article and book after book written about the circumstances of poverty in Australia. The important thing is to inquire into this matter from our State's viewpoint.

There is a tendency to think that, because the Commonwealth Government is paying pensions for widows, deserted wives, invalids and other dependent people in the community, it is purely a Commonwealth responsibility. However, there are important aspects of State responsibility: the State can provide valuable supplementary assistance to people who require it. It is a pity that sometimes some of this assistance is not well publicized and that very many people do not, in fact, obtain the extra assistance that is available from State sources. I emphasize that one of the important fields where the State could assist is in respect of deserted wives.

No matter what we may say about the fact that the Commonwealth Government now provides a pension for deserted wives after the first six months of desertion, these pensions in themselves need to be supplemented by maintenance from the deserting husbands. We have here a field into which some inquiry should be made, because the procedure the State has set up for the collection of maintenance from deserting husbands is still somewhat cumbersome.

We have heard suggestions recently that perhaps the State should provide the supplementary assistance for deserted wives and then, using its own methods, collect refunds from the deserting husbands. Indeed, it seems to me that some such system would perhaps be more effective than the one we have at present; our present system involves much procedure before one can obtain maintenance from the deserting husband, and very often that is not obtainable anyway. One or two suggestions have been made that perhaps a more effective method of dealing with the deserting husband problem and collection of maintenance would be for new methods to be adopted by the courts so that husbands could be put on bonds that would be breached in the event of non-payment of maintenance or so that weekend gaol sentences could be imposed in extreme circumstances of complete refusal by the husband to pay the maintenance fixed by the court.

I think it is important to realize that there is an aspect of State responsibility to these people. Indeed, if any honourable member looks into the history of social services in Australia he will see that originally social services began with the States. Since Federation, of course, the Commonwealth Government has entered more and more into the field and, indeed, it is now practically the main source of funds for all social service work, whether that work be done directly by the Commonwealth or by the States. However, in fact the States pioneered the social services field which the Commonwealth Government has now come to accept largely as its responsibility, and I believe there is still an area in which the States can contribute some pioneering work towards the further alleviation of the distress of people who have a completely limited income.

I know that, with the introduction of expanded means tests and that kind of thing, people who have some other source of income do not have to face up to some of the worries and anxieties with which other people who are completely dependent on the pension are confronted. However, these people need our assistance, and I suggest that one of the most effective ways in which this can be done is for a Select Committee of this Council to be set up to inquire into actually what are the areas of need for this limited class of people.

I think the attention that has been drawn recently to the plight of the sick aged people is sufficient reason for this committee to be

set up and for it to start its investigations. I do not suggest that it should be a complete investigation into all aspects of poverty in this State, although that in itself would not be a bad idea because there are pockets of poverty which are as yet undiscovered and largely unknown except to a few journalists who have taken up this matter and made some real investigations into it. I suggest that the appropriate thing to do is to set up this committee, which can look into the problem and come down with some recommendation as to how the State Government can assist further. I know that the answer the Minister might very well give to my suggestion is, "Well, we can do a lot more if we only get the money."

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: We would certainly like more money.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: I think the Minister said yesterday that it would need not only some extra money but massive doses of money in order to meet this problem, and with that perhaps I can agree. However, I think we must inquire into what the State can do and what it should do, and then perhaps some kind of move can be made to find the money for that work. This is a motion which I am sure will have the sympathy of honourable members. I do not know that everybody will feel it is a matter about which we can do very much without the massive increases in finance the Minister spoke of yesterday, but I think there is a good deal of blurring between the facilities made available by the Commonwealth Government and those made available by the States. Indeed, I think the question of the complete overhaul of our social services legislation is somewhat complicated by what one might describe as a deep-seated controversy between the States and the Commonwealth on this and other financial matters. Nevertheless, an opportunity should be taken by this Council to inquire into the matter because, as has been pointed out, it is urgent and the problem is one that could be described as being of a crisis nature. I have much pleasure in moving the motion.

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

#### RENMARK BY-LAW: BUILDING ALIGNMENT

Order of the Day, Private Business, No. 1:

The Hon. F. J. Potter to move:

That by-law No. 41 of the Corporation of the Town of Renmark in respect of building

alignment in residential zones, made on November 11, 1969, and laid on the table of this Council on April 28, 1970, be disallowed.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2) moved:

That this Order of the Day be discharged.  
Order of the Day discharged.

#### PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT REGULATIONS

Order of the Day, Private Business, No. 4:

The Hon. F. J. Potter to move:

That the regulations under the Planning and Development Act, 1966-1969, made on June 18, 1970, and laid on the table of this Council on July 14, 1970, be disallowed.

The Hon. H. K. KEMP (Southern): In the absence of the Hon. Mr. Potter, I move that the—

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary): I rise on a point of order. I do not like doing this, but I do not like leave of the Council being taken willy-nilly. This is the second time it has happened this afternoon. I respectfully suggest that, if the proceedings are going to be different from what is set out on the Notice Paper, at least we should be given the courtesy of the honourable member concerned seeking permission before going ahead with his speech.

The PRESIDENT: The position is covered by Standing Order 156, which states:

In the absence of the member in charge thereof an Order of the Day may be moved or postponed by any other member, but may not be discharged except on motion after notice.

I think the honourable member is in order.  
The Hon. Mr. Kemp.

The Hon. H. K. KEMP: I move:

That the regulations under the Planning and Development Act, 1966-1969, made on June 18, 1970, and laid on the table of this Council on July 14, 1970, be disallowed.

This move is not taken lightly but is in response to the tremendous dissatisfaction that has been built up under the administration of these regulations since they have been in force. The need for these regulations has been widely promoted in a series of meetings addressed by Engineering and Water Supply Department officers and others concerned.

The regulations have been sold under the claim that it is essential and urgent that they be implemented because of the contamination that is reaching the Mount Bold reservoir and the other reservoirs in the Adelaide Hills. The reason for the contamination is very well known. It is not because of any change in agricultural practice in the Adelaide Hills or

change in the primary-producing community, because the number of people actually engaged in agriculture in the Adelaide Hills is today considerably lower than it has ever been before.

Every gully through the Adelaide Hills has parts that have been abandoned or taken over, possibly, in some cases by people who are resident there and find their employment in the metropolitan area. The truth is that the contamination reaching the reservoirs arises solely from the closely subdivided parts of the Adelaide Hills and the township areas. These water supplies through the whole area are now all, thanks to the requirements of the Health Act, equipped with septic tanks. It is high rainfall country and, when the ground becomes saturated in the autumn, there is only one destination for the seepage from the domestic tanks—the streams that lead into the reservoirs.

Placing a blanket of a 20-acre minimum on the farmlands is in no way getting to the core of this problem, which lies within the heavily subdivided areas at Bridgewater, Stirling and Mount Lofty, which are discharging a tremendous amount of effluent into the streams that drain into the reservoirs. The problem arises in part also from the larger township areas in the Adelaide Hills. To put this type of blanket restriction on the subdivision of farming land is most unjust and undesirable. In many cases, obvious grave injustices arise.

There is one instance in the Onkaparinga Valley, where a family running an orchard-cum-farm has been prevented from putting one more house on the property because of this 20-acre minimum subdivision requirement. In this case, the farm is held jointly by a father and son, and the son wants to get married. He wishes to take off a small block of land on which to build a house to accommodate his family to come. This request was blankly refused, because he could not take off one acre: 20 acres at least had to be taken from this property, which is jointly owned, and that would have reduced the remaining area to a sub-economic area. So this man cannot put a house on that land because he cannot get the finance to develop it.

There are several instances of this nature. Another instance occurred near Woodside. In this case a dairy that had been approved by the milk inspectors and the health inspectors had been built with the concurrence of the local council. In every way it conformed to the requirements laid down; but now it is

suddenly faced with the need to install a sump to drain away the water or else milking will be stopped in that dairy, either forthwith or at short notice.

The truth is that the landholders in this area are now not only faced with the council rates inspector, the building inspector and the health inspector but also have, regulating their doings, an Engineering and Water Supply Department inspector who, instead of, as in the case of the local government men, being educated and highly qualified for the duties they discharge, is completely inexperienced and unqualified. In trying to work with the local government men, it transpires that he is unreasonably corrective.

Two or three instances have been brought to my attention of a property having a restriction placed on it. The property has been visited by the council people in conjunction with this man and a reasonably equitable solution has been worked out. Then we find that a few days later this whole negotiation is completely disregarded and the original unreasonable stipulation is insisted upon. In actual fact, I do not think the Town Planner should come into this matter of maintaining the purity of Adelaide's water, except indirectly. As it is, the whole responsibility for this task of keeping Adelaide's water supply pure is being placed on the shoulders of the Town Planner, and undoubtedly it will make his job, already difficult, much more difficult and will cause in his name quarrels that should not involve him.

Looking further down these regulations, we see a stipulation that no subdivision shall be permitted within a certain distance of the banks of the Murray River. This again completely neglects the source of the trouble. It is not a correct regulation.

The trouble arises in the Murray River (a trouble that must be met head-on very soon) because of the lining of the banks of the river at close hand by a continuous row of shacks, in many cases with primitive sanitary arrangements. We are told that these will not be interfered with but, every time there is a high river, the sanitary arrangements of all these shacks are flushed out into the body of the stream.

I hope that some means of communicating between the river height and the pumps at Mannum will be evolved so that the pumps can be shut off at appropriate times, but the need here is not 300ft. from the river or its

tributaries: it is that there be a restriction at high flood level. This high flood level may be miles back from the normal stream of the Murray and the nearest anabranch.

These regulations must be withdrawn and rewritten. I do not think there is anybody in this community who does not appreciate the need to keep Adelaide's water supply pure; but, when the Engineer-in-Chief talks, on the one hand, of the need for no subdivision of less than 20 acres and, on the other hand, of increasing the size of some of the villages in the Adelaide Hills, he is not being consistent.

I refer here to Hahndorf, which was referred to in the press on Saturday last. It has about 800 people and is to be permitted to grow to 3,500, which would indeed greatly contaminate Adelaide's water unless something salutary was done without delay. I believe there are many more restrictions needed that can possibly be imposed by these regulations, which in fact are completely misdirected when it comes to the real source of the problem.

We are told that some of the trouble with Mount Bold arises from the phosphate needed for pastures in that area. This means that the people who are framing these regulations are appallingly ignorant of the true facts of the circulation of nutrient elements in the natural soil. At the Waite Research Institute there are pastures that have been annually dressed heavily with superphosphate ever since 1928. There have been no movements of phosphate in that pasture beyond 1½ in. from the surface in those many years. The means that should be used to clear up this problem is the pasturage use by irrigation of waters released from septic tanks, etc. This will undoubtedly remove the nitrogen and phosphate that is causing trouble in the reservoirs. No means other than natural means are known by which sewage effluent can be cleared of nitrogen and phosphate.

Manifestly, grave injustices are being done in the name of keeping Adelaide's water supply clear. In one instance, a person had been establishing a broiler unit in a poultry industry, but permission to do this has now been withdrawn, although many years ago it was put before all the authorities in order to obtain a clearance to go ahead with this long-range plan. He has now been stopped with his unit about one-third developed. The truth is that this is one enterprise that is least likely to contaminate water from the Adelaide Hills.

A broiler unit such as this could be placed alongside the water supply, because there is no effluent from this industry. The houses are

close, and they are carefully cleaned and disinfected every time a batch of birds is renewed. The material taken from them is carted right away: this must be done, because it is the only way that the industry can be kept free from disease. The only effluent likely to reach the river from such a unit is the run-off from the large areas involved. Once again, this is a case of manifest injustice done ignorantly.

In the case of the Murray River, I do not think there is any doubt that there will be great infringements on the limit of freedom of individuals in cleaning up the position that obtains on every 40ft. of the level alongside the river edge. Here, shack licences are being permitted and have been granted. Why has this position arisen? It has not come about from the action of private individuals, because there has been little shack building on private land on the Murray River. Most licences have been granted by the Lands Department, which draws the rentals involved.

I am sure that we will have to place great restrictions on the number of people who can be permitted to dwell in the Adelaide Hills. It seems that the official plans are to allow huge numbers of people to live there, sufficiently to increase the population of Hahndorf from its present number to 3,500. If this is so, I am afraid we will have poor water in Adelaide. It cannot be otherwise as things and nature are.

I believe that we need urgent action with respect to Adelaide's water supply. However, it must be well-guided action, and, as it will be action that will be hard on many people, it must be technically correct and not, as suggested by this regulation, action based on technicalities that are the complete reverse of what is actually the case.

In this case I understand that there will not be any regulations drawn by the Engineering and Water Supply Department that clearly lay down the needs to keep Adelaide's water supply pure. It is intended to work behind this regulation completely, and we will have the terrible circumstances where one department is working entirely through another with all the difficulties that are involved when it comes to negotiation, which must inevitably and frequently arise. When a man can sit in his office in the E.W.S. Department and simply say, "No", when a thing is referred to him by the Director of Planning, I think there is grave need to consider the powers being conferred by this regulation.

I reserve the right to speak later in this debate, because I am sure other matters will have to come forward if there is need to convince members of the difficulties that have already arisen and are occurring in connection with this regulation. I do not think there should be any need for that, because there is no question in the mind of those involved that there is need for regulations. Our criticism from the Adelaide Hills is that this does not go far enough and is not clear and exact enough, and certainly it cannot meet the requirement (which is urgent) that no more contamination than is absolutely necessary should be allowed.

I understand that it will be years before deep drainage of the extensive area of the Adelaide Hills can be put in hand, and this is where the trouble is arising. Why should we impose regulations that are being so unjustly applied when the basic fault that lies in the hands of the E.W.S. Department is not being corrected?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 23. Page 1572.)

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES (Northern): It is an interesting exercise to consider this Bill, introduced to increase from \$200,000 to \$400,000 the sum that the Government can spend on certain public works without reference to the Public Works Committee. I believe that the committee does not go far enough in its investigation of State expenditure. I am thinking particularly of the Highways Department, which spends large sums of money. Perhaps it spends it as wisely as possible. However, whether it spends that money to the best of its ability is a question that this Parliament and the public are never able to understand fully. A report in today's *Advertiser* says that more than 1,000 parcels of land, costing more than \$8,500,000, were acquired by the Highways Department in the last financial year. One presumes this land is for the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study plan and other roadworks, but it is very difficult for a member of Parliament to get these facts. Possibly, when the Public Works Committee was originally formed the expenditure of the Highways Department was not nearly as great as it is today. For a long time I have thought

that this department should be under scrutiny by the committee.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: We should be able to get the roads programme every year so that we can see what the money is to be spent on.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: It is not so very hard to see this, if honourable members so desire. It is not the roadworks programme that worries me so much: it is cases where a road is constructed with bends and then speed limit signs are erected because the road has been poorly designed. Day by day the road toll is increasing alarmingly, partly because of driver laziness and carelessness and partly because of poor designing of roads.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Do you think that the car manufacturers have anything to do with it?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I do not wish to bring the car manufacturers into this debate. Why should the Railways Department not come under the scrutiny of the Public Works Committee? Is it sacrosanct in this world of finance? Will the standardization of the railway line from Adelaide to Port Pirie never be achieved, because of political wrangling? Whose plan for standardizing the line is better—that of the experts engaged by the Commonwealth Government or that of the South Australian Railways Commissioner? How can we adjudicate?

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Cabinet—

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Cabinet will say that we will spend a certain sum of money on the railway line and Parliament will have to acquiesce, and there will not be any redress at all. Why should the Public Works Committee not inquire into this matter?

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You would have something to say about it, wouldn't you?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I would hope so, and the honourable member would have something to say about it, because he is a member of the committee. In the last 12 months the Public Works Committee has had to investigate projects costing between \$200,000 and \$7,000,000, involving a pretty broad range of cost, siting, and structural feasibility. This Bill increases the minimum cost of a project that the Public Works Committee must investigate from \$200,000 to \$400,000. During this debate I have gleaned the fact that the Education Department is the department that will be most affected by the Bill. The type of building that will be particularly affected is the Samcon construction type of school,

which apparently falls into the cost bracket between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The argument advanced in the second reading explanation is that delay and inefficiency occur when the department has to give evidence to the committee because, when the committee asks awkward questions, the departmental representatives then have to go back to their departments and find out the answers. Should a Minister sign a blank cheque for a project costing more than \$200,000 without being aware of population trends in a particular area or the siting of a school? I believe that the Education Department sited a school in the bed of a creek in a certain area. Until the Public Works Committee went there, no-one had a clue about it.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The project would have gone through if it had cost only \$175,000.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Would it be wise to put a school costing \$175,000 or \$200,000 in the bed of a creek? I do not think the figure should be \$400,000: rather, it should be smaller, and the committee's role should be greater.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Slave driver!

The Hon. A. J. Shard: How much smaller should the figure be?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I am trying to show that it is not only the cost of a building that should be investigated by the committee: it should investigate whether the State can afford the project and, having decided that question, it should investigate all other facets of the project, including whether it is justified.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: What do you think should be the minimum amount?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In his report in 1966 the Auditor-General said—

The Hon. A. J. Shard: I am not interested in what he said: I want to know what you think.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The Auditor-General said:

There should be some authority, possibly attached to the Treasury, competent to review projects such as public buildings, schools, etc., to ensure that these provide the necessary requirements at lowest possible cost. In the case of works to be submitted to the Public Works Standing Committee, a review before submission could save a considerable amount of the committee's time.

In 1969 the Auditor-General said:

Insufficient attention is being given to economy consistent with necessity in the standard sought by departments and in the planning and design, particularly where projects do not come within the scrutiny of the Public Works Committee.

Because representatives of both Parties and both Houses are on the committee, there could not be a fairer way of providing an investigating body. How do we go about it if the committee wants to inquire into the economics of Samcon construction schools, compared with some other type of construction, and the department says it will erect a Samcon construction school anyway? It is not easy to initiate further thinking, because we have an accepted design put out by the department. It would appear that there is no opportunity for improvement in efficiency of construction and design. I am not referring particularly to Samcon construction schools, nor am I criticizing such schools.

The Public Works Committee is limited in its field of review, which could and should be wider. In this State there should be a far greater degree of efficiency in our Public Service. This committee could well be given the teeth to look into the efficiency of the Public Service.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: When you say "the Public Service", are you referring to the whole of the Public Service?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In 1965 or 1966, Sir Arthur Rymill asked whether an efficiency expert would be appointed to investigate ways and means of improving the efficiency of the Public Service, but to my knowledge that has not been done. I believe it should be done, for I consider that a greater degree of efficiency could be introduced into many facets of our Public Service in a very broad sense. I do not have any one particular department in mind.

The Hon. M. B. Dawkins: Do you want an ombudsman in the Public Service?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: No, I do not. When the Hon. Mr. DeGaris was speaking in this debate the Hon. Mr. Banfield, by interjection, said that the members of the Public Works Committee were not paid enough. Recently members of the committee, for a day that started at Parliament House at 8.15 a.m. and ended at the same place at 6.45 p.m., were paid the magnificent sum of \$2.50. Although the committee considered this to be one-quarter of a day, I call it 10½ hours work. The committee had spent that day investigating the problems of harbour installations at Port Lincoln and also school improvements in that town. That is the type of allowance that is paid to these gentlemen who, for 12 months ended on August 31 this year, carried out investigations of public works costing, in total, about \$42,000,000.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: If you lower the limit, they will be doing more.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Company directors would get more than that, wouldn't they?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The question is whether or not we should increase the minimum limit from \$200,000 to \$400,000. I started listening to the debate some weeks ago with an open mind, and in fact I was prepared to think that, with the increase in the cost of living and the devaluation of the dollar, \$400,000 was possibly a realistic figure. However, the more I have gone into it the more I consider that we should retain the present jurisdiction of the one watchdog of public spending that we have in this Parliament.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: It is not the only one.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Perhaps the Minister would explain to me what others there are.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Don't you give any credit to the Industries Development Committee?

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I consider that for the time being the Public Works Committee should continue to inquire into projects costing between \$200,000 and \$400,000. The Minister, by interjection, seemed to be suggesting that I was not giving credit to other committees of this Parliament. I can tell him that that is not implied or intended. I do not support the Bill.

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

#### BRANCH FROM SANDERGROVE TO MILANG RAILWAY (DISCONTINUANCE) BILL

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

#### PASTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CITY OF WOODVILLE WEST LAKES LOAN) BILL

Second reading.

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

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

Its purpose is to authorize the Corporation of the City of Woodville to borrow money for the purposes of discharging and performing its obligations in connection with the West Lakes Development Act and its related indenture, subject to a borrowing limit to be fixed by the Minister. As honourable members are aware, under the West Lakes Development

Act and its related indenture the city of Woodville is required to contribute towards road, drainage and other works involved in the development. According to present estimates the cost of those works could amount to nearly \$1,000,000 and the city of Woodville would have to finance these works by borrowing. However, if the council should borrow under its powers under the Local Government Act, the borrowings would be subject to ratepayer consent and, if this consent is not obtained in respect of any loan required for that purpose, the West Lakes development programme would be seriously disrupted.

The development of West Lakes is the subject of a special Act entitled the West Lakes Development Act, and it is reasonable that ratepayer consent should not be required for any borrowings for the purposes of implementing that Act. It is also essential that any such borrowing should be additional to the council's ordinary powers to borrow under the Local Government Act. These matters are given effect to in the Bill which has been sought by the city of Woodville and which the Government considers essential if the developmental programme of the West Lakes development scheme, as envisaged in the West Lakes Development Act, is to be implemented.

Although this Bill would give the city of Woodville power to raise specific loans, it would still be governed by the borrowing limits set by the Australian Loan Council. I should explain that the Bill does not fix the total amount to be borrowed, because estimates that have been received are only tentative at this stage. I shall now deal with the clauses of the Bill. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 defines "the corporation" as the Corporation of the City of Woodville. Clause 3 confers on the corporation power with the Governor's consent to borrow money, not exceeding an aggregate amount fixed by the Minister, for the purposes of discharging and performing the corporation's obligations in connection with the West Lakes Development Act and the indenture referred to therein.

Clause 4 provides, *inter alia*, that moneys borrowed under the Bill are to be raised by the issue of debentures by the corporation on terms and conditions agreed between the corporation and the lender and approved by the Minister, while the debentures are to have a currency not exceeding in the aggregate 60 years. Clause 5 provides for the repayment of the moneys borrowed under the Bill and, where necessary, for the establishment of a sinking



fund to provide for such repayment. Clause 6 provides for the investment of the sinking fund and for the appointment of a receiver if the sinking fund required to be kept is not properly maintained. Clause 7 provides for the payment of the debentures out of the general rates and revenue of the corporation or out of a special rate which the corporation is authorized to levy and collect. The special rate may be levied and collected without the consent of ratepayers.

Clause 8 invokes the provisions of the Local Government Act in its application to any rate declared or to be declared under the Bill. Clause 9 invokes the provisions of Part XXI of the Local Government Act in the event of a default being made in the payment of principal or interest under any debenture. Clause 10 provides, in effect, that the money borrowed in pursuance of the Bill is not to be taken into account in calculating the amount of the corporation's borrowings under the Local Government Act and also provides that the money may be borrowed without the consent of the ratepayers. Clause 11 provides that the provisions of the Bill are to be construed as additional to the provisions of Part XXI of the Local Government Act in its application to the corporation. This Bill has been considered and approved by a Select Committee in another place.

The Hon. C. M. HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 13. Page 1661.)

The Hon. E. K. RUSSACK (Midland): Since coming into this Council I have felt at ease and accepted. I am most grateful to honourable members and to the staff, and I say a sincere "Thank you" for the manner in which I have been treated and for the kind words of welcome that have been spoken. While I am grateful and proud of the honour and privilege to represent the citizens of the Midland District, I regret the circumstances surrounding my entry into this Chamber. I refer to the untimely death of the late Hon. Colin D. Rowe, and desire to make some reference to the outstanding and distinguished service he rendered over many years to the people of the Midland District and to the State of South Australia as a highly respected member of this Parliament and for many years as a very able Minister of the Crown.

Colin Davies Rowe was born at Maitland on April 12, 1911. He attended the Sandilands Primary School, the Kadina Memorial High School and King's College, prior to entering the University of Adelaide, where he graduated in law. As a solicitor he was admitted to the bar in 1934, and commenced a law practice in the Ardrossan-Maitland area in 1942. Ever willing to assist in community affairs, he served as Chairman of the Maitland Hospital Board, a member of the Northern Community Hospital Board, and Secretary of the Ardrossan Hospital Board. He was President of the Asthma Foundation of South Australia.

He was originally elected as member for Midland District on November 1, 1948. He served as Attorney-General from 1955 to 1965 and, in addition, was Minister of Works and Marine from May 15 to June 25, 1958. Being South Australia's first Minister of Labour and Industry and Minister of Employment, he carried out this portfolio efficiently from 1960 to 1965. He was a member of the Industries Development Committee from 1965 to 1968, and Chairman from 1968 to March, 1970. Being vitally involved in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, he served on the Australian Council of that organization, represented the South Australian Branch at the Area Conference in Perth in 1961, and all Australian States at the Canadian Conference in 1966.

Mr. Rowe was a Christian gentleman of very high principles who acted according to the dictates of his conscience; a fine family man, and a faithful worker for his church and its auxiliaries. He possessed a very alert and keen mind, and displayed a keen sense of humour. On numerous occasions in many ways he helped me personally, but this was by no means a singular case, because someone once said, "Colin Rowe had five minutes to spare for everyone."

"Life is not measured by the time we live." In his comparatively short life Mr. Rowe unselfishly accomplished much. His life was measured by the service he gave and the achievements he attained in many spheres, and also by his considerable contribution to the progress of South Australia. We are conscious of the gap that is left in public life where the late Colin Rowe moved so effectively, and express sympathy to his wife and family, where a more intimate loss has been sustained.

At present, the measure before this Council concerns the income, expenditure and the appropriation of funds within the administration

of this State. The area covered by the Midland District, because of its diversity of productive interests, contributes in no small way to the revenue of this State. Midland embraces eight Assembly districts, four being Tea Tree Gully, Elizabeth, Playford and Salisbury. During the past 15 years, these districts have developed rapidly, passing through a transitional stage from rural areas to an outer metropolitan environment, and involving important secondary industries and tertiary interests, including retail trading complexes of the most modern design.

Although those who reside in these localities have enjoyed their pleasant surroundings for only a few years, one senses a strong evidence of civic pride, and their contribution of worthwhile citizenship to this State will develop rapidly. The remaining four electorates, Kavel, Light, Gouger and Goyder, are essentially involved in primary production. However, early in the history of this State, copper mining in the Kapunda, and more particularly the Moonta and Wallaroo Mines vicinity, provided much-needed revenue to the Treasury of South Australia. The Moonta Mining Company was the first mining company in Australia to distribute £1,000,000 in dividends to its shareholders. In addition, two of its major shareholders, Sir Walter Watson Hughes and Sir Thomas Elder, gave £20,000 each towards the establishment of the University of Adelaide.

The unfortunate closure of the mines occurred in 1923, at which time country areas now within the bounds of Midland, with the aid of artificial fertilizers, mechanical methods of farming and scientific techniques, were becoming and now are prolific producers in mixed farming, while the Barossa Valley has become the vineyard of the State. From the orchards of Lenswood and Gumeracha to the wheat and barley fields of Yorke Peninsula, the lot of the primary producer is by no means void of real problems. In our so-called affluent society the task of primary industry is becoming more and more complex and in many instances the cost-price squeeze has reached crisis dimensions.

The gross value of rural production in South Australia is more than \$500,000,000 a year and the net value is about 40 per cent of the total production. It is imperative that the Government examine in detail all charges and taxes it applies in the country, exercising restraint with a view to giving relief. I refer to land taxes, water rates, succession duties

and the financing of local government activities. In the Financial Statement the Treasurer said:

There is every justification for seeking a significant increase in the present impact of succession duties, and the Government has already indicated it is a matter of firm policy that an amending Bill will be brought to Parliament during the current session. That Bill will at the same time propose more liberal rebates for successions to rural land within the immediate family, as well as more rebates for small successions.

As substantial sums are raised from succession duties on rural estates, this abstract statement is general and difficult to understand. It will be interesting to see its impact when presented in detail.

Records indicate that, on an average, a farming property is subject to succession every 15 years. This process being repeated, it eventually has to be forfeited to meet the costs. At a particular time, a survey was made of estates coming up for succession duties, and it was found that 97 per cent of the estates were of a value of \$40,000 or less. Amongst these smaller estates I suggest that a decent home, a motor car and a reasonable insurance policy would make up the value of such an estate. To increase revenue from succession duties it will be necessary to gain higher taxation from either this group of 97 per cent or the group comprising the 3 per cent of higher estates.

In this Chamber on August 12, 1970, the Hon. Mr. Kemp successfully moved for a Select Committee to be appointed to inquire into the effect of capital taxation. I commend him for this and look with keen anticipation to the committee's findings. An increase of 14 per cent, or \$1,503,000, in expenditure by the Police Department has been planned for this year. About 150 cadets will be transferred to the force as probationary constables, while provision has been included in the estimates for recruitment of additional trainees up to 450. In South Australia we have a Police Force of exceptional efficiency and high standing, administered by a Commissioner of outstanding ability. Yesterday, the Hon. Mr. DeGaris referred to the Police Department and stressed the high regard in which the Commissioner is held throughout the Commonwealth. We are fortunate in South Australia in having a force that strives to live up to its motto, "The safety of the public is the highest law."

I notice a reduction of some \$90,000 in the allocation for publicity and tourism. However, this reduction is associated mainly with the Adelaide Festival of Arts which will not be held this

year, and a reduction in grants for swimming pools. There is an increase in the appropriation for publicity, local tourist associations and development of tourist resorts. Most areas are becoming more tourist conscious. Some centres being deprived of former means of income have turned successfully to tourism. The Barossa Valley, of course, is a most attractive show place in the State. The beautiful city of Elizabeth and the surrounding area attract many tourists. With the expansion of the National Trust and the formation of new branches, many historic museums are being established.

Holiday houses are being erected at many beaches, particularly on Yorke Peninsula, and Wardang Island has recently been turned into a tourist resort. The Cornish mining area of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina has been featured over the past 12 weeks by the Northern Yorke Peninsula Expo, organized by the Northern Yorke Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. I noted in a recent edition of the *Advertiser* that the Government was considering an additional interest in tourism in the Cornish mining areas. Many thousands of tourists were attracted to the district during the past 12 weeks. Country agricultural shows continue to attract greater numbers of tourists. Every centre or hamlet has its own history and is capable of tourist attraction, and encouragement and financial assistance by the Government to this industry must be continued and, indeed, escalated.

The expenditure allocated to the Minister of Roads and Transport and Minister of Local Government has been increased over the previous year by approximately \$3,500,000. During the 1970-71 period it is estimated that \$42,600,000 will be available for road purposes, of which \$850,000 will be repayments by councils. A good percentage of this money will be administered by councils and the road-work supervised by them. Local government is a most important function and is a field in which I am proud to have been involved. South Australia was the first State in Australia to establish local government. On August 19, 1840, Colonel Gawler and his Executive Council passed the Colonial Municipal Act enabling the Corporation of Adelaide to be formed on October 31, 1840. In 1852 the Corporation of the City of Adelaide was reconstituted and from that time local government in South Australia has gone from strength to strength.

It is with surprise and deep concern to me that, in his policy speech, the Premier indicated

proposed drastic changes in the structure of local government. He said:

Local government is not merely the concern of people who pay rates. It has to provide facilities to people of all ages and classes throughout the State. To ensure these people's democratic rights, the Labor Government will immediately provide for adult suffrage and compulsory voting for local government.

For many, many years thousands of councillors have given collectively untold hours of voluntary time to local government and the service and development of their communities. They have relieved central government of many responsibilities and effectively assisted in the wise expenditure of money in the construction of roads and the development of recreational areas, etc. Local government is a form of government that is concerned primarily with the development and maintenance of property within an area, the establishment and maintenance of facilities to enhance the amenities of an area, and the improvement of the environment within an area. These are things of a permanent and not of a transient nature that are provided by the owners and occupiers of the area for the benefit of such owners and occupiers.

I firmly believe the present proven system of local government and the co-operation that has existed between the State Government and local government in administrative and money matters should remain. With the introduction of measures as suggested by the Government, the situation could be reached where non-ratepayers could determine the amount of rates the ratepayers would pay and how the money would be spent. It could also introduce Party politics into local government, and this would be most undesirable. Many other adverse situations would result from such alterations in local government procedure, and I indicate that I will strongly oppose such measures, being confident that I will be acting in accord with the views of most of the people of the District of Midland.

Within the framework of Midland I see a diversity of interests and in many respects a different way of life; therefore, it is most important that a deep and mutual understanding be fostered between city and country, enabling all unitedly to contribute to the well-being of our State—spiritually, physically, and materially. Where there is progress change is inevitable, but there is no reason why new methods and modes of living should not be girded up by proven basic principles of our society. In a so-called permissive society too often laws are changed to suit the behaviour

of the people, whereas it would be more desirable to encourage people to conform to the requirements of a good law. I support the second reading.

The Hon. L. R. HART (Midland): First, together with other honourable members, I welcome to this Chamber the Hon. Mr. Russack, who has been elected a member for the Midland District. I am sure he has already impressed honourable members by the fine contribution he made today in his maiden speech, when speaking to this Bill. No doubt, he gave an indication of the type of debating we shall hear from him in the future. He will undertake great research into matters in which he is interested and I am sure he will adequately represent the district for which he is at present elected to this Council. The Hon. Mr. Russack is a man of considerable experience. For eight years he was in the Army, which qualifies him to mix with men of all types and appreciate the views of people that may be different from his own; so this Chamber has another great acquisition, an honourable member whose standard of debating is very high. We look forward to a long and successful career for him in this Chamber.

In dealing with this Bill, there are three items I wish to discuss. The first is the interesting item in the Estimates of Expenditure where \$150,000 is allocated to the performing arts. Previously, a sum of \$97,000 was allocated to several different bodies. The increase is over 64 per cent, which is not a bad increase. We appreciate that the performing arts need encouragement in a tangible way but it would be interesting to look at the bodies that previously had money appropriated to them. They are: Adelaide Eisteddfod Society—\$8,000; Adelaide Highland Games (in which you, Mr. President, are no doubt interested)—\$2,000; Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust—\$40,000; Nuriootpa School Band Competition—\$900; South Australian Band Association—\$6,200; and South Australian Symphony Orchestra—\$40,000. I wonder whether these bodies will also qualify for a similar share under the heading "Performing Arts".

I mention this matter because I want to turn to another matter contained in the Estimates of Expenditure—an appropriation for the Emergency Fire Services of South Australia. I make the analogy between the performing arts and the Emergency Fire Services because in both fields many of the people involved work in a voluntary capacity. I could

not hazard a guess about how many people give their services voluntarily in promoting the performing arts, but in the field of the E.F.S. the figure would run into several thousands of volunteers who not only give generously of their time and energy but also are on call 24 hours a day for seven days a week. These people in many cases do not own an acre of land or any real estate but, whenever a fire threatens, they rush to the proverbial pump (in this case, the fire engine) with no thought of self-gain. In addition, they put in many hours of training, the better to prepare themselves as efficient fire fighters.

In South Australia there are 417 registered E.F.S. brigades. Attached to these would be, on an average I would think, about 20 men. For this service the South Australian Government appropriates less than \$50,000, one-third of the money allocated to the performing arts. The South Australian E.F.S. has a paid staff of eight persons (six male and two female) under the direction of Mr. F. L. Kerr. I pay a tribute to Mr. Fred Kerr for the efficient way in which he organizes the E.F.S. in South Australia. All those who know Mr. Kerr will, I am sure, agree that I am expressing their sentiments when I say he gives many hours in excess of his call to duty. The South Australian E.F.S. today is a monument to his efficiency. As valuable as this service continues to be, we must surely come to the conclusion when we measure it against the services provided by other State Governments that South Australia is getting its country fire-fighting services on the cheap. There is considerable difficulty in holding staff in South Australia in the face of competition from other bodies and private enterprise, and more particularly against the attraction of positions in other States.

Looking at the situation in the other States, we find that Victoria is carved up into 24 different regions, which are under the control of 21 regional officers, whose salary range is between \$6,000 and \$8,500. Victoria has a Chief Officer of the Victorian Country Fire Authority, whose salary is \$11,500, and a Chairman of the Victorian Country Fire Authority, whose salary is \$10,500. In South Australia, we have a Director who does both those jobs for the magnificent salary of \$6,500! The Deputy Chief Officer in Victoria receives \$9,765, the Senior Assistant Chief Officer, \$9,240, and the Assistant Chief Officer, \$9,193.

All of these officers receive considerably more than the Director of our service. The Secretary of the Victorian Country Fire

Authority receives \$10,000, whereas the Secretary of the E.F.S. in South Australia (who is in the top bracket of his particular category) receives \$3,700. He receives less than the Secretary of the Bushfire Research Committee in South Australia who is in the salary range of \$4,600 to \$4,800.

In addition, the Secretary in Victoria has assistant staff, and his Assistant Secretary of Finance receives \$9,000 and the Assistant Secretary of Staff receives \$8,500. I do not have the most up-to-date figures from Victoria because those that I do have are for 1968, but the allocation for the Country Fire Authority in that year was \$3,800,000, compared with the South Australian allocation to its authority of less than \$50,000. Victoria had a headquarters staff of 116 in 1968, whereas our staff was eight persons. The Regional Officer in Victoria receives more than the Director in South Australia, and there are 21 regional officers. Tasmania, another State with a fire authority, is divided into five regions each with a regional officer who, as a subordinate officer, still receives more than does the Director in South Australia.

A junior officer in South Australia recently left the service to take up a position as Assistant Regional Officer in Tasmania with a starting salary of \$5,000 a year. It seems that improvements are made to our service only after a disastrous fire. We well remember Black Sunday when the viceregal residence at Marble Hill, in addition to other areas, was burnt out. Before this fire our services were rather second rate. Are we to await a further serious fire with possible loss of life before we receive the services commensurate with our needs and to which we are entitled? The same situation applied in Victoria until it had the calamitous fire in the Dandenong Ranges that caused considerable loss of life.

Indeed, the same could be said of Tasmania, when the disastrous fire that encroached on the outskirts of Hobart several years ago caused damage costing millions of dollars and brought ruin to many families, with a considerable loss of life. This fire made Tasmanians realize that they had a fire hazard, particularly when conditions were right for bush fires, and that it could happen even in Tasmania. Unless those in responsible positions recognize the need and heed the pleas from those familiar with the situation in that South Australia needs a larger and better staff and more training, then we leave ourselves wide open to another Black Sunday occurring.

I now turn to the question of education. It costs the Education Department several million dollars a year for subsidies on equipment for primary, secondary, area, and other schools under the control of the department. Also, sporting equipment purchased for the use of children at those schools would cost many thousands of dollars a year, on which the Education Department pays a subsidy. Usually, it is purchased from sports stores, which over the years have provided in many cases coaching services to the children at the schools and in some instances have marked out courts. These stores have been willing to accept excess goods that have been returned. I believe that the Government's present policy is that tenders shall be called for the supply of sporting goods for all schools in South Australia. As this practice will mean that the quantity of goods tendered for will be considerable, the organization in the best position to tender for this supply would be the Public Stores Department.

It would tender for the goods for all schools in the State and would make a deal through the manufacturers. For an order of this magnitude the goods could be purchased very favourably. This is a move to relieve the department of paying a subsidy on sporting goods provided to schools, and this policy may also be applied to goods other than sporting equipment. We will have a situation where schools that need sporting goods will be required to fill in a requisition form, and the goods will eventually be delivered direct from the Public Stores Department. Obviously, the requisition forms will have to be completed some time before the goods are needed, and should a school order less than it requires or should a school have some damage done to equipment that needs replacement, what will the situation be?

Will the school have to complete another requisition form, which will go to two or three departments, and then in due course the damaged goods will be replaced or further goods supplied? At present, if a school is short of sporting equipment it merely telephones the nearest sports store and the goods are delivered within a matter of minutes: certainly, within an hour or so. As I have said, many of these sports goods stores provide coaching facilities free of charge to the schools. This practice that the Government intends to pursue means that many of the sports stores (particularly those in country areas) will virtually be forced out of business. Some of them do 50 per cent of their trade with the

various schools in their locality and this move will have a serious effect on the employment situation in these stores.

In many cases there will have to be considerable retrenchment by the proprietors of these stores if this Bill is passed. I accept that the Government must do all in its power to reduce costs wherever possible but, in doing so, it must recognize the needs of storekeepers, who in many cases are not operating in a large way. The Government should be careful not to do anything to the detriment of small storekeepers, particularly those in the country. I hope that the Government's plan to relieve itself of paying certain subsidies is not at the expense of small sports stores.

Because I now intend to deal with hospitals, it is unfortunate that the Chief Secretary is not in the Chamber at present. I realize that the Minister of Lands is in the Chamber but he is not in his seat. The main difference between the Lyell McEwin Hospital and the Modbury Hospital is that the former is a going concern. The Lyell McEwin Hospital is fortunate in that it has a competent administrator, Mr. J. W. Joel: the success of any hospital depends largely on how it is administered.

The Hospitals Act of South Australia is divided into a number of Parts and sections. Under Part II, section 5 (1), provision is made for the Governor to declare any place or places deemed suitable and provided for the purposes of a hospital or institution for the cure of diseased or for the relief of diseased persons to be a public hospital. At present in South Australia the following six Government public hospitals are covered by this section of the Hospitals Act: Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Barmera, and Wallaroo. In addition, special legislation was passed in 1968 by this Parliament for the Whyalla Hospital to be vested in the Crown, and it is now a Government public hospital of equal status with the other hospitals I have named.

Part III of the Act prescribes the status of the Royal Adelaide Hospital, which is a Government public hospital under the Act with special responsibilities for medical teaching. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, also with medical teaching responsibilities, was proclaimed under section 5 of the Hospitals Act. Part IV of the Hospitals Act covers the 50 country Government subsidized hospitals that are incorporated under the Hospitals Act by virtue of the powers provided under section 44 and accepted as public hospitals by the Com-

monwealth Government. These are not directly administered by the Hospitals Department.

In addition to the hospitals already mentioned, the Adelaide Children's Hospital and the Queen Victoria Hospital are accepted as public hospitals for the purposes of the Commonwealth National Health Service Act. These are, in fact, separate incorporated bodies not under the jurisdiction of the Hospitals Department and are classified by the department as metropolitan subsidized hospitals with medical teaching responsibilities. The Lyell McEwin Hospital is incorporated under the Local Government Act as a joint undertaking established between three local government bodies with their financial responsibility for maintenance contributions related to the hospital rating formula as applied to the metropolitan councils by the Hospitals Department. Capital expenditure is met wholly by the State Government.

The Lyell McEwin Hospital is also classified by the Hospitals Department as a metropolitan subsidized hospital but is not accepted as a public hospital by the Commonwealth Government. As the Lyell McEwin Hospital is not classified as a public hospital under the terms of the Commonwealth National Health Service Act, it is unable to receive the \$5 a day benefit for treating pensioners: it receives only \$2 a day for these cases. I believe that protracted negotiations have taken place between the Hospitals Department, the Commonwealth Health Department and the hospital itself in order to have this situation remedied, but unfortunately it has not been possible to do so up to the present.

In considering public pressure for the Lyell McEwin Hospital to be a Government public hospital, it is important that there should be a clear understanding of what services are in fact provided by the country Government public hospitals, as distinct from the two Government teaching hospitals (namely, the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital). In the country Government public hospitals, of which there are now seven, patients are admitted under the care of their general practitioner from the area in which they live. There is no salaried consultant staff appointed to these hospitals or specialist facilities available for pensioners and indigents. If a pensioner or an indigent patient requires specialist service, it is necessary to transfer him to one of the Government teaching hospitals in the metropolitan area.

The only hospitals where complete specialist service is available for pensioners and indigents are the Royal Adelaide Hospital, the Queen

Elizabeth Hospital, the Adelaide Children's Hospital, and the Queen Victoria Hospital. At present four pensioners are admitted at any one time to the Lyell McEwin Hospital, provided that the general practitioner is able to give the necessary treatment and that he is reimbursed under the Commonwealth Pensioner Medical Service Scheme. The Lyell McEwin Hospital is unable to provide a specialist service for these pensioners, and this is parallel to the service that is available in the country Government hospitals.

A fundamental financial difference between the country Government hospitals and the Lyell McEwin Hospital is that the current public ward fee is \$10 a day, whereas the ward fee charged by the Lyell McEwin Hospital is \$13 a day. Remission of part or whole of this fee is made in appropriate cases. If the hospital reduced its ward fee to \$10 a day at present, this would necessitate additional subsidy at the rate of \$3 a day for every patient. In a whole year this would amount to \$126,000 at present.

The Lyell McEwin Hospital has salaried medical staff to provide a 24-hour casualty service, which does not obtain in the country Government hospitals. Patients are charged the normal casualty fee of \$2 on their first attendance, but if they are indigents, this fee is waived completely. When the casualty service started in June, 1968, 150 patients presented themselves in the first month, and this figure has now risen to over 1,000 attendances each month. The cases seen are a mixture of trauma and medical emergencies. One of the special merits of the day-time service is that the patient is seen by the full-time casualty surgeon, who is of consultant status, and not by a junior resident medical officer as normally happens in a casualty department. What is urgently needed is specialist service support for the casualty department so that indigents and pensioners may receive specialist treatment at the Lyell McEwin Hospital without having to be transferred to one of the Government teaching hospitals.

I believe that the medical facilities now available at the Lyell McEwin Hospital are unique in South Australia in that we have general practitioner participation in the hospital supported by locally resident consultants in nearly every specialty, and this enables the community to receive a very good hospital service. Specialists in Elizabeth have banded together and erected a building known as Esmec House. As this is immediately opposite

the hospital, it facilitates the attendance of the specialists at the hospital in times of emergency. I believe that the Minister appreciates the need for a salaried specialist service at the Lyell McEwin Hospital, also the need for an expanded casualty section, especially the engagement of another radiologist.

Elizabeth and the surrounding areas are expanding at a fast rate, and on the basis of 2.5 beds for each 1,000 of population there will be a need for 375 beds by 1975. At present the accommodation is 160 beds, and there are plans afoot to extend this to 185 beds. In addition, Elizabeth, although it has a comparatively young population at present, will within a fairly short space of time have many older people in its community. This will highlight the need for a very substantial increase in the number of beds allocated for pensioner treatment. I hope that the Government will recognize these needs.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): In rising to make a few comments on the Bill before us, I first join with other honourable members who have spoken in extending a welcome to the Hon. Mr. Russack, who made his maiden speech this afternoon and impressed us all both with his manner of delivery and with his address to us. As my friend the Hon. Mr. Hart has said, Mr. Russack is a person who has enjoyed considerable prominence in his own district for some considerable time. He served for many years in the Army and rose from the ranks to become a commissioned officer. Also, he has served in local government for many years and happens to be the Mayor of his home town at the present time. In common with other members, I agree that in having Mr. Russack in this Chamber we have secured a gentleman who will be a considerable asset to it.

Mr. President, in considering the document before us I cannot help but notice that it is somewhat obscure and vague, in contrast to the previous documents we have been used to receiving from the Hon. Sir Glen Pearson and, at an earlier stage, from the Hon. Sir Thomas Playford. Those documents set out the intentions of the Government of the day in no uncertain terms, whereas I do not believe that this present document does.

The Government has not said very much—in fact, it has said practically nothing—about its intentions with regard to taxation, in contrast to the gentlemen to whom I have just referred. I believe that the present Government is in a fortunate position financially. It

was in a fortunate position in 1965 when it came to office, because at that time the Treasury was in a healthy state, and it was unfortunate, to say the least, that there was a considerable run-down in the finances of the State during the following three years.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: There was a run-down in water then.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: As the Government comes back into the Treasury benches at the present time it has, I believe, inherited another fortunate position in that it has come to office with a surplus of nearly \$3,000,000.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: We have plenty of water now, and that makes a big difference.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I will come to that matter presently. I am also pleased to know that the Government is in the fortunate position of being able to expect improvements in Commonwealth Government grants. I can only hope that the present Government makes good and wise use of the finances that are to be provided as a result of the recent conferences between the State Premiers and the Prime Minister.

The Hon. Sir Thomas Playford quite frequently said that this must be a low-cost State, and I believe that no truer word has been said in this regard. We cannot afford to have our costs rise to the level of those in the Eastern States when we are so dependent upon the markets in those States. I thought during the regime of the previous Labor Government that there was a dangerous tendency to increase costs, and I trust that the present Government will endeavour to avoid that tendency. I am sure that we cannot afford to put our costs in industry as high as those in the Eastern States because we are, as I have said, extremely dependent on the markets there, especially in Sydney and Melbourne.

I suggest to the Government that the cost structure of this State will have to be watched continually. I know that we would all like to increase social service benefits (the Premier in the other place indicated this) and that we would all like to increase wages if we could afford it; but if the end result is to be something that will be of detriment to the people and the State as a whole there is nothing to be gained by doing those things. Therefore, I believe the Government will have to watch this situation very carefully. We do not want to get into a position in which we have a run-down over a period of nearly \$20,000,000, as we had on a previous occasion.

I now want to say a word or two about tourism. I understand that the Government has given a grant to tourism that is slightly less than that of last year. Some of the reasons for that were explained by the Hon. Mr. Russack this afternoon. Tourism is a very important industry (for the want of a better word), and this State must develop it. In the Midland District particularly, the areas of Yorke Peninsula and also of the Barossa Valley are of very great value to us as tourist attractions. These areas and, indeed, other areas in this and in other districts must be developed in this way to the full. I certainly would not say that they should be exploited, but they should be used to the best advantage of the State as a whole. I underline to the Minister the importance of tourism and the fact that it will be continually growing in importance in this State. Regarding the increase in harbour fees, the Premier said:

It is proposed to increase harbour charges later in the year. The details are yet to be worked out with the expectation of additional revenues of \$300,000 to \$400,000 this year.

That may be all very well, but I know that the Marine and Harbours Department is a paying department and that its profit, I understand, was about \$3,000,000 last year. I also know that some of these suggested charges will be passed on to the primary producer, who is in a very difficult position indeed (and I do not think the Government really needs any further persuasion on this point). Additional charges are something that he should not have to pay if he is to continue in business. If the great majority of our primary producers are to be in a viable position we should not be increasing their costs, such as the suggested increase in harbour charges, which the Premier said would be increased later in the year. I record my protest at this. I am opposed to these increases because they will be a further burden on people who are already over-burdened with problems.

The increase in the Mines Department allocation is not, according to my reckoning, proportionate to the overall average increase in the Budget of about 12 per cent, for it is only about 7 per cent. I stress to the Government the importance of our Mines Department. We are lagging slightly in the development of mining in this State. However, some of the other States are fortunate enough to be making very great progress overall as a result of the minerals they have. I believe that any slackening in the search for minerals in this State and in the activity of the Mines



Department is a step in the wrong direction. Unfortunately, this happened in 1965 when there was a slowing down in the Mines Department's activities. I stress to the Government the importance of mineral exploration and development to this State, as indeed to other States in the Commonwealth.

Regarding education, I have noted that the Government has made quite an appreciable increase in the allocation, and I commend it for doing so. However, I have noticed the rather more conservative attitude of the Minister of Education this year compared with his attitude last year when he wanted the millenium to come tomorrow: he felt that miracles should happen overnight. Even though the Government has made an increased allocation to the Education Department, it has not done anything like as much (and of course it has not been able to do anything like as much) as the present Minister of Education wanted to do when he was rather irresponsible as a member of the Opposition.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: I don't think the word "conservative" that you used was very appropriate.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I do not think he would be very happy about the word "conservative", either, but he has certainly become more realistic in his objectives. Last year the then Government took the wise step of keeping something in reserve for a rainy day or for an award increase, which seems to happen with monotonous regularity. The Government was criticized strongly for so doing. In his policy speech before the last election, the present Treasurer said that the Liberal and Country Party Government had refused to spend all the money available.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: You mean the Liberal and Country League.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: The league is an organization, and in this Council, for the edification of the Minister, seeing he once had a ticket in it, we are members of the Liberal and Country Party.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: That's different from what the Country Party says.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: We happen to be members of the Liberal and Country Party in this Council. In his policy speech before the last election, the present Treasurer said that the then Government had refused to spend all the money available, preferring to budget for an effective surplus of Loan moneys when education spending was desperately needed. He said that the Labor Party pledged to spend all available moneys in this

area. The then Treasurer (Sir Glen Pearson) was severely criticized by the present Minister of Education and by members of the then Opposition because when we were in office we kept a relatively small amount of money in reserve.

When I look at this Budget I find that the Government has suddenly realized that there is some virtue in prudence and has put to one side about \$4,150,000 of Loan Fund balances in order to provide for contingencies. In other words, the Treasurer today is doing exactly what he attacked the last Government for doing. This, to me, represents a complete turn-around in policy and, at the same time, is an admission that the previous Government's practice was indeed a wise one.

Regarding succession duties, I note that, as reported in the press, the member for Mawson has said that he hopes succession duties will be increased. No doubt, he will find quite a number of people in his Party who will agree with him. I, in common with most other people on my side of politics, believe that succession duties should be eased. I remind honourable members of the previous Government's platform as enunciated prior to the last election. The comments made by the then Premier, Mr. Hall, were as follows:

As a parallel move we will also double the concession existing today for State succession duties as applied to primary producing property. The present range is a concession of 30 per cent downwards according to the value of the property. This will become 60 per cent downwards on a similar escalating arrangement.

If I remember rightly, the concession at present is 30 per cent down to 17 per cent on estates varying from \$200,000 down to \$40,000, and the suggested concession was 60 per cent down to 34 per cent on estates of similar size.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The people didn't accept that.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: No, they voted 50.58 per cent for the Labor Party.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: And 44 per cent for the Liberals. How many did the Liberals get? What was the percentage for the Liberals?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I am not concerned about percentage for the Liberals.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The people did not accept it.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: For the first time in my life, I actually heard the Hon. Mr. Banfield quote the correct figures about the previous election in a recent speech he made in this Chamber. I have heard him on several occasions talk about 53 per cent and 54 per

cent of the people voting for the Labor Party in 1968, and a month or two ago in this Chamber he said that 50.78 per cent voted for the Labor Party in that year.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You said 43 per cent.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: For once in his life, the honourable member was correct when he said 50.78.

The PRESIDENT: Order! We are not discussing the election. The honourable member must not be provocative in what he says before the Chair.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Thank you, Mr. President; I stand corrected. I was actually discussing succession duties but I should like to say something now about land tax and the situation in the Adelaide Plains, where land tax is something more than a burden: it is almost a threat to the people concerned. Let me quote a few words from a statement by Mr. R. K. Baker, the Chairman of the Munno Para District Council, who said:

This problem is one that has been a continual source of worry to the landowners in this district who are still operating as dry farmers. The extremely high rate of tax demanded limits a farmer's opportunity to maintain fencing, replace worn-out machinery, and even carry out essential maintenance on his dwelling. Land held in its original broad acre subdivision would at the present time have no more value than land in wheatgrowing areas 30 to 40 miles from the city. Without water from irrigation its earning capacity is no more than wheatgrowing property in the area of the State in the 16in. to 17in. rainfall bracket. Yet I interpose that land tax is very high and damaging in this area. Mr. Baker also said this:

The right of a landowner to subdivide his land no longer exists in this district. All proposed subdivisions are now placed before the Advisory Committee on Underground Water requiring an indication from that body as to whether the provision of water by boring to service the blocks would be permitted.

The usual reply (in fact, the almost non-varying reply) to these requests given by the committee is that it certainly cannot grant permission at the present time. Some 200 square miles of the Adelaide Plains is now covered by a proclamation bringing it under the restrictions of the Underground Waters Preservation Act. Of this area only 9,000 acres is currently being irrigated, leaving 119,000 acres for use as other than irrigated land. If the Government likes to examine the rates of land tax obtaining in this area, it will see it is an almost impossible burden for the people to carry in that situation. The

Premier said at some stage that he would consider giving some relief from land tax. I should be much happier if he would give the people of the State some definite indication of what that relief will be, because the previous Government did offer a 50 per cent reduction on rural land, which would eventually become an 80 per cent reduction, in view of the difficulties with which the farming community is at present faced.

There is only one other thing I want to mention—the provision of water, to which the Chief Secretary referred just now. On May 30 the present Government was elected because it wanted to bring about a millenium by having two dams built, both Dartmouth and Chowilla. Nearly five months has elapsed and nothing has yet been done about it. We are told there will be a conference on October 23. For the sake of the State as a whole, I sincerely trust it will be successful, but this Government would have been well advised to go ahead with the provision of the Dartmouth dam, because I do not think there is any doubt that it has been proved that it will provide extra water. The Chowilla dam is necessary, too, but the facts of the matter are that we shall get Chowilla only if we get Dartmouth first.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: We did not oppose that.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: No; you just wanted them at the same time.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: No; that is not right.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You're not telling the truth.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: The Labor Party voted for two dams at the same time.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: You are completely wrong.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: That was Mr. Stott.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: That is what you people voted for.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Conversations across the Chamber are distinctly out of order. The Hon. Mr. Dawkins.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: All I want to do at present is to underline to the Chief Secretary and his colleagues the vital importance of adequate water supplies for this State.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Quality water.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I say "water". Water is H<sub>2</sub>O—at least, it was when I went to school. All we are asking for is adequate water that is good pure water.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: You omit the word "quality".

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I ask the Government to do all it can to see that the Dartmouth dam agreement is ratified; also, if we can get Chowilla, so much the better. At this stage I support the Bill.

The Hon. C. M. HILL secured the adjournment of the debate.

#### STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION BILL

The House of Assembly intimated that it had disagreed to the Legislative Council's amendments.

Consideration in Committee.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary): I move:

That the Council do not insist on its amendments.

I shall adopt a course that is not usually taken in this Chamber on such occasions but, as I consider there is such a narrow difference between what the Government intends to do and what the Council considers should be done, I think this course should be adopted. As it is some time since we discussed this Bill I think it will be worth while if I reiterate what has been said previously, so that we need not have any conference without knowing beforehand why I have moved in this way. I intend to deal with the amendments briefly and in order.

The first amendment is to clause 12, and the proposed addition to subclause (3) is quite unnecessary, as the clause already makes adequate provision to ensure, by implication, that the commission has all the obligations that a private insurer may have under the Motor Vehicles Act. As to the second amendment, again to clause 12, it is likely that these things will cause difficulties in particular cases. Circumstances necessarily arise from time to time where a department or instrumentality may find it proper to insist on a particular insurance, and private enterprise does this in circumstances that are wholly proper, and occasionally in other circumstances where there is a financial or other interest with the nominated insurer.

State Government instrumentalities now specify particular insurance. The Superannuation Department, the State Bank and the Savings Bank do, and to suggest that these instrumentalities of the Government may not now designate their own insurance company, the State Government Insurance Commission, is to place that commission in a position that no other insurance company in South Australia is in. As to the amendment referring

to page 6, line 6, clause 12, if the amendments relating to clause 17 were to be accepted this amendment could go in, but it seems unnecessary, for the Auditor-General will, in any case, call for a full and proper reimbursement to be given by the commission and to be required by the department providing the relevant services. That is his practice now and, therefore, this amendment is unnecessary.

The same applies to the amendment in line 8 on page 6. There will not be any proposal to use teachers or members of the Police Force in this matter as agents for the Government. As to the amendment to clause 17, for rates and taxes, including the equivalent of income tax, the clause in the Bill is adequate. Whatever may be the strict law on the subject, it is certainly not intended that the commission should claim exemption from council rates, water and sewerage rates, etc., and there is no necessity to provide that the commission shall not be so exempt. It would be quite impracticable to apply subparagraph (ii) as submitted, and, in any case, the commission, being a trading concern, would not ordinarily qualify for exemptions from sales tax, etc.

So far as concerns free service from other departments, or any indirect subsidy on account of particular charges not rendered in full, this would be contrary to present practice, and in any case the Auditor-General would not condone any significant undercharge or indirect subsidy, and he has made that perfectly clear. The proposals in the amendment to clause 13 are badly drafted. They provide for a vesting in the workman but provide for no vesting in the commission of the rights of the insurer. In consequence, the Government cannot agree to the amendment as it stands. In fact, we think that the position is covered.

The amendments to clause 19, too, are unnecessary. The Auditor-General would have regard to all proper consideration and should be trusted to include in his report all matters that in his opinion should be reported to Parliament. As to the amendment to clause 20, it is intended that all advances from the Treasurer to the Commissioner are to carry interest at a rate not lower than the long-term bond rate, but there may be occasions when a lower rate of interest would be appropriate, and the Treasurer should be free to make advances at such rates of interest as are appropriate in the circumstances. There is not much difference between what, in essence, the amendments state and what the Government intends to do, but it would be unfair and unnecessary

for this place to insist on the amendments. I therefore move that we do not insist on the amendments.

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of honourable members, I point out that the following reason for disagreement was adopted by the House of Assembly:

Because the Legislative Council's amendments make the operations of the State Government Insurance Commission commercially impossible and impose conditions not applicable to any competing non-government insurance office.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: When I read the report on this matter in the press this morning I took it that the amendments from this place had received very scant consideration by the Government in another place. It appeared from the report that these amendments were simply taken under one umbrella and were not considered at any length at all. Also, I disagree with the reasons for disagreement that the other place has adopted. However, I am impressed by the rather conciliatory tone and manner in which the Chief Secretary has just made his submissions, and I am agreeably surprised by some of the undertakings that he, acting for the Government, has given to this place.

Because the Government has given such undertakings and committed itself to the points contained in the Chief Secretary's speech, it alters my view somewhat on the very hard line that I was determined to take after reading this morning's press report concerning this matter. However, I do lodge a very strong protest that all the amendments were disregarded in the other place. One cannot help looking at this question from the viewpoint that certainly some of the amendments that went from this place, if they had received full consideration in the other place, might have been accepted by the Government. I believe that the amendments, taken as a whole, considerably improve the Bill.

Time and time again it was laid down during the second reading debate and the Committee debate in this place that, in the interests of the State, the commission should be established cautiously, carefully and on a businesslike basis. Time and time again it was said that old-established insurance companies under today's business conditions were running at losses on their actual insurance operations; their profits were being obtained from investments that had been made years and years ago from reserves accumulated in those years.

Under current working conditions this area of business is most difficult. So, it was quite

proper that this place should have laid down stipulations by way of amendments to help the commission and the Government; because, if the operation goes wrong, the blame will come back on the Government. In an endeavour to help all parties concerned, these amendments were made after considerable debate in this place. However, the Government has disregarded all of them.

I give credit where credit is due: the Chief Secretary has given some undertakings that certainly make the position look better than it previously looked. An amendment that this place made concerns third party insurance. This place endeavoured to impose the same obligations on the commission as are carried by the private insurers in this field. We stipulated that an individual ought to have freedom in regard to where he placed his insurance, even though he might be dealing in some way with a Government department or a Government instrumentality.

As was pointed out in the second reading debate, section 20 of the Hire-Purchase Agreements Act specifically states that a finance company cannot force its borrowers to insure with a specific company. As I recall it, that provision was written in during the term of office of the previous Government, and this place endeavoured to write the same principle into this Bill.

Honourable members here endeavoured to give the Public Trustee freedom to place insurance on behalf of his clients where the Public Trustee or the clients wished the insurance to be placed. This is a fundamental principle in the operation of all trustee companies. We endeavoured to see that the commission paid its fair fees to Government departments such as the Crown Solicitor and the Government Printer.

I did hear a moment ago the Chief Secretary say that the commission was prepared to pay rates and taxes to councils, and it would seem that on that point the Government has certainly agreed with the principle that was involved in the amendment. The use of police officers and schoolteachers as agents for the insurance commission was objected to here. It was pointed out that this practice is not permitted in New South Wales.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Was it New South Wales or Queensland?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I checked it twice an hour or so ago, and I believe it is New South Wales. The Chief Secretary has undertaken today that that is not to be the policy of the commission. So, it would appear that,

whilst our amendments have not been agreed to, in principle—

The Hon. A. J. Shard: They have not been written into the Bill but they have been agreed to in principle.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: They have been agreed to in some ways. In connection with workmen's compensation, an amendment went forward from this place that endeavoured to protect the worker. We endeavoured to segregate the results of the insurance operations so that people could see in which areas profits or losses were made; the public should have this knowledge. As I understood the remarks of the Chief Secretary, the Auditor-General will have this matter closely in mind when he brings down his annual reports in future. Whilst I believe that this Bill would have been in better form if the amendments had been agreed to, and whilst I still protest that the Government did not give sufficient consideration to our amendments when it considered the matter in the other House, I express my appreciation that many of the proposed changes have now been agreed to in principle.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: The fact that this House did not reject this Bill in the first instance, but sent it back to the other House with a number of amendments, indicated that we were prepared to accept the Government's policy, within reason, of establishing a Government insurance office. The present Government, and its predecessor of the same Party, have shown that it is determined to establish such an office. During the second reading debate when the Bill was before this Chamber recently, I expressed the opinion that I could not see how such an insurance office could operate profitably for many years at least, and I repeat that.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: You mean, it would be some years before it showed a profit?

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: Yes, a number of years at the least. I also said that I was not at all satisfied that a proper business-like feasibility study had been undertaken prior to the promoting of a Government insurance office in this State. However, as I have said, the Government is obviously determined to establish this office, so in those circumstances it behoves us as South Australians to do all we possibly can to see that it works as well as possible in the interests of the State.

In our amendments we made certain suggestions, in some ways to try to help the commission and in others to try to ensure that

the accounts of the commission would reveal everything that they should. There were several categories of amendments. Certain restrictions were suggested, and in respect of these (I think in all cases) the Government, although it has not accepted the restrictions, has given statements of intention that would coincide with the intentions of our amendments. In other cases, certain undertakings have been given. Personally, I feel that some of these amendments could have been written into the Bill.

The Chief Secretary said that State Government instrumentalities now specify particular insurance, and he instanced the Superannuation Department, the State Bank and the Savings Bank. So, legitimately, do private insurance companies. By going as far as our amendment did, this would suggest that that amendment would have restricted the commission where some private companies are not so restricted. I am satisfied with the Minister's answer in that regard, for I think it is perfectly correct. If the matter was to go to a conference and I was one of the managers, I would certainly consider that that was a reasonable stipulation.

In relation to some of the more important amendments that we made, undertakings have been given, and I am certainly not here to split hairs as to whether these matters should be written into the Bill or whether we should not accept these undertakings or statements of intention. In other cases, such as what I thought was quite an important amendment of mine, I can easily at a future date make that one work without writing it into the Bill, because at any time after the commission has drawn up annual accounts I can ask in this Chamber for details of those accounts, and so can any other honourable member. Therefore, my amendments can be fulfilled in another way than by having them written into the Bill. That applies also to other amendments suggested by this Chamber. All in all, I consider, as the Hon. Mr. Hill has said, that the Government has been conciliatory about this matter. Although it has not accepted amendments to the Bill, it has certainly accepted suggestions made by this Chamber. In those circumstances, I support the motion.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I must say that I am disappointed in the message we have received from the House of Assembly disagreeing to our amendments. I certainly disagree that the amendments make the operation of the

commission commercially impossible. In framing the amendments to this Bill, this Chamber was very careful to make sure that they were constructive amendments. They do not in any way inhibit the running of an honest commercial undertaking. I believe that what I consider is a rather high-handed message from the House of Assembly will one day be regretted.

As the Bill now stands, the commission is under the direct control of the Minister, and in the future the Minister and the Government of the day could very well regret that the amendments moved in this Chamber are not part of the Act itself. I must say that the Chief Secretary, throughout the entire debate on this matter, has been much more reasonable in his approach to these amendments than has his Party in the other House. He indicated that the Government agreed to the principle behind the amendments but that in his position it was his duty to oppose them. I find this attitude rather strange, because it indicates, in effect, that the Government proposes to run an honest commission but that it does not want anything in the Act that would prevent it from doing otherwise. I would have thought the amendments were an added protection to the Minister responsible to the taxpayer and to members of the public dealing with the commission, as well as members of other departments, to have amendments of this nature, and that such amendments would have been welcomed.

The Legislative Council has been attacked at various times for being obstructive, yet amendments which are completely constructive and which should do much to make the Bill workable and put the commission on a sound commercial basis have been rejected without any attempt to suggest further amendments to these proposals in line with what the Minister has been good enough to give an undertaking about today. However, I accept the Minister's word.

I believe that exempting members of the Police Force and schoolteachers from being obliged to act as agents is very important as a matter of principle, and although an undertaking has been given, I would have preferred to see this provision written into the Act. I, and many other honourable members, will be following the whole operation of this commission very closely to see that these undertakings are adhered to, and there will be a continuous probing to ensure that the Government is fulfilling its obligations as outlined.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: When a similar Bill was first introduced into the Council I indicated that I believed the Government had a mandate to introduce Government insurance. The present Bill represents the Government's second attempt to establish a Government insurance office. The Hon. Mr. Gilfillan has said that he is disappointed that the Council's amendments are not acceptable to the Government. Nevertheless, whether or not the Government had accepted them, I would have supported the Government in its attempt to establish an insurance office. Government insurance offices work well in other States, but whether this Government can manage an insurance office has yet to be proved. I was quite pleased to hear the Chief Secretary's undertakings, which are very closely in line with the proposals set out by the Council but which have been rejected out of hand by the Government. I support the motion.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: If one studies the message received from another place setting out the reasons why the Council's amendments have been rejected, namely, that the amendments moved by the Council make the operation of the legislation impossible, and examines the Chief Secretary's speech to the motion that the Council do not insist on its amendments, one might imagine that we were not talking about the same thing, because it seems to me that nowhere in the speech did he try to make out that the amendments to the Bill would make it impossible to implement. All he said was that they were unnecessary, although he went on to say that he agreed with the principle underlying at least some of them. Indeed, in one instance he said that an amendment had been worded ineffectively.

It seems to me extraordinary that in the circumstances outlined by the Chief Secretary (and I presume that something similar must have been said in another place), one could come to the conclusion that the Council's amendments made the operation of the Bill impossible. That is completely untrue. Everyone knows that not one of these amendments affected the operation of the Bill, and not one prevented or hindered the appointment of an insurance commission: they were all designed to cover certain very important regulatory matters. The Government says, in effect, "We will follow those ideas. Everything will be above board, but we do not want it in the Bill." In other words, the Government says, "Do not tie us down." I am prepared to take the Chief Secretary's word on this matter as outlined in his statement today, but

there seems to be this curious reluctance that Governments have (not only this particular Government) to being tied down on these important matters.

The Minister has given an undertaking, particularly on the important matter concerning the employment of agents. It seems obvious that certain Government financing authorities will require insurance through the Government office in the future, and with that I suppose I can have little complaint, seeing that other Governments follow such a policy. So I take heart at the Chief Secretary's statement this afternoon that the important matters of principle which the Council set out in the Bill in legislative form will be followed by the Government. I agree that perhaps in those circumstances our insistence on the amendments becomes less necessary. Consequently, I am prepared to support the motion.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I am completely surprised at the promises and statements made by the Chief Secretary because they can be accepted only from a man of honour that we have at present. I support the Hon. Mr. Potter's sentiments about the message from the other House stating that the amendments would make the operation of the Bill financially impossible; yet we have the Government's word that it will accept the principle in the amendments. The Government cannot have it both ways: it cannot have something financially impossible to implement, yet see that it is undertaken. Again, this is a very difficult Bill to adjudicate on. The only political amendment moved (supported by only two members) was that the Bill be not under the control of a Minister. The rest of the amendments were constructive, either from an accountancy or bookkeeping point of view or from a Public Service point

of view as far as schoolteachers and the Police Force are concerned.

We have the peculiar situation where we are told in one breath that it is impossible to implement the amendments, and in the next breath that they will be agreed to. We should think about this very carefully, as it is not something to be taken lightly. If we accept the word of the Government in 1970, how do we know under whose control the commission will be in 1980? An undertaking given by the present Government cannot bind future Governments. The method of collecting and implementing insurance or of insisting on insurance could be varied.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: There is always Parliament to come back to.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Yes, but the Chief Secretary knows the difficulty of trying to persuade Cabinet to open up the legislation again. There is the safeguard of the Auditor-General, and I hope that this will be sufficient, because the Government no doubt has a mandate for establishing an insurance office. It is no good having another financial millstone around the Government's neck.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary): I thank honourable members for the attention they have given to the amendments. It is not necessary for me to reiterate that the replies I gave were sincere. As long as I am here, the undertakings I have given will be honoured; I will undertake that on behalf of my colleagues. I express my appreciation to honourable members.

Motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.18 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, October 15, at 2.15 p.m.