

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, September 29, 1971

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

QUESTIONS

SEAT BELTS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I refer to allegations made by the Minister of Roads and Transport about the obstruction to the passage of a certain Bill in this Chamber. The Bill in question is a private member's Bill and, under Standing Orders, it can be debated only on Wednesdays. Can the Chief Secretary say whether the Minister of Roads and Transport made any approach to Ministers in this Chamber for the Bill to be debated in Government time?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a statement before asking a question of the Minister of Lands representing the Minister of Roads and Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I notice that in the press article referred to by the Hon. Mr. DeGaris, the Minister of Roads and Transport said that five deaths had occurred last weekend and that more would occur unless this legislation was given a speedy passage. Will the Minister obtain an opinion from the Minister of Roads and Transport on how many of these people would have been saved had they been wearing seat belts?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I notice that the Minister said he would ask the Police Commissioner to provide him with information regarding accidents in which people were killed or injured and whether those people were wearing seat belts. I will refer to the Minister the question concerning how many of these lives would have been saved had the people involved been wearing seat belts, and see whether I can bring back a considered reply.

PUBLIC PARKS

The Hon. E. K. RUSSACK: Earlier this month I asked a question of the Minister of Lands concerning public parks in Tea Tree Gully. Has he a reply?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The Minister of Local Government reports that the present position of the applications by the Tea Tree Gully council for subsidies to purchase land for recreation purposes is as follows:

1. Golden Grove oval extension: Approval has been given for a subsidy of \$6,300 and the council has been advised.
2. Whittings property: The council has been advised of approval of a subsidy of \$3,238.
3. Coull's Reserve: This has been before the Public Parks Committee but further information is necessary before the matter can be finalized. This is being followed up.
4. Modbury recreation ground: This is a recent application, and reports are being obtained for submission to the Public Parks Committee.

STUDENT TEACHERS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Education, a reply to the question I asked on September 21 concerning arrears in the allowances of some student teachers which, up to that date, I understood had not been received?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My colleague states:

Cabinet approval was given on July 19, 1971, for the increases in student teachers' allowances. These were to apply retrospectively to July 1. The file was referred to the Education Department subsequently, but there were some matters requiring clarification and these were dealt with in the Teacher Education and Services Division prior to forwarding the approval to the Accountant. Action has been taken to ensure that matters of a similar nature which require urgent action by two divisions are circulated without delay. The increased allowances were paid on September 23, 1971.

POLDA-KIMBA MAIN

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Last week the Commonwealth Minister for National Development announced that a request submitted by the South Australian Government for financial assistance through the National Water Resources Committee to speed the completion of the Polda-Kimba main had been rejected. This has been received with dismay by all the people who are so vitally concerned with this project. As a result I have been requested to make out a case for an appeal to the Minister for National Development, asking that he reverse

his decision. Will the Minister ask his colleague to release to me details of the submissions made by the South Australian Government to the Commonwealth authorities in order to assist me in making out such an appeal?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague in another place and bring back a reply as soon as possible. I assure the honourable member that this matter is receiving the very prompt attention of the Minister.

SALINITY

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to a question I asked recently concerning salinity in the Murray River?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My colleague, the Minister of Works, has informed me that the report "Murray Valley Salinity Investigation", which was prepared for the River Murray Commission, concludes that, if no action is taken to counteract the effects of shallow watertables in the Riverina Plains zone or to reduce ground water flows in the Mallee zone, the total salt inflow will remain almost constant, but because average river flows will decrease with the construction of more storages, the long-term average salinity could increase by an estimated 8 per cent by 2000 A.D. This is a long-term forecast and would have no effect on the decision to proceed with the construction of Dartmouth dam, which is required now for river regulation purposes. Likewise the timing for construction of Chowilla dam will be determined on the basis of water demand rather than salinity control purposes. The report sets out a recommended plan for works and investigations of remedial measures to mitigate saline inflows and these are now being evaluated by the Engineering and Water Supply Department in so far as they apply to South Australia.

VALE PARK

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Minister of Lands a reply from the Minister of Local Government to my question of September 23 about the joining of Vale Park to the Corporation of the Town of Walkerville?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: My colleague states that the question of the financial arrangements involved in the transfer of Vale Park from the Enfield council to the Walkerville council is not easy of solution. The matter has been the subject of report and discussion over several months. My colleague has informed me that he will be discussing the

matter of the financial arrangements with His Honour Judge Johnston next Monday, October 4, 1971.

ALFORD WATER SUPPLY

The Hon. E. K. RUSSACK: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply from the Minister of Works to my recent question about the Alford water supply?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My colleague states:

The Engineering and Water Supply Department is aware of the shortcomings of the water supply systems in the hundreds of Tickers, Wokurna, Wiltunga and Mundoora. The mains serving the area are generally small, and recently there have been significant changes in pastoral pursuits, particularly with the introduction of large numbers of cattle and pigs. The result has been a gross overloading of the water supply system. In the county of Daly, in which the area under question is included, the meat cattle population in 1968 was 3,686 and in 1971 it was 13,601. The pig population grew from 23,371 to 43,386 and the sheep population of 444,553 to 617,819 in the same period.

Because of large expenditures involved, the upgrading of the supply system to the area as a whole must be carried out over a number of years. Approval has been given for the relaying of five miles of trunk main west from Barunga reservoir at a total estimated cost of \$160,000. This work cannot be completed during this financial year, but the old main which is to be replaced will be boosted to its maximum safe capacity during the summer months to alleviate the position.

Replacement of certain small mains should also give the Alford township and the area north of Alford some immediate relief this year. Included is the renewal of 3,800ft. of 3in. cast iron main with 6in. asbestos main along the northern boundary of section 49, hundred of Wokurna. Work on this main is scheduled to commence on October 18, 1971. Following the completion of the above main, two sections of 5in. cast iron main feeding the town of Alford are to be relaid, involving a length of 2,700ft. of 6in. asbestos main.

In addition to the above mains, a contract cement lining *in situ* gang has within its programme portion of a 10in. cast iron main near Paskeville. This main supplies a southern feed to the Alford area, augmenting the northern feed from Barunga. The estimated cost of the above additional works is \$25,650, and it is anticipated that they will be completed by mid-November and thus improve the distribution for the coming summer.

ELECTRICITY CABLES

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister of Lands, representing the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The Electricity Trust of South Australia's annual report, which was submitted to Parliament yesterday, mentions favourably some subdividers of land who have undergrounded electricity cables. Also, the press has commented upon that part of the report. I refer to a question I asked in this Chamber on October 13, 1970, which was as follows:

As a positive measure to enhance the urban environment and to reduce the number of stobie poles to be erected in metropolitan Adelaide, the previous Government earlier this year agreed to give the Director of Planning and the particular local council involved the right to insist that street electricity supply be undergrounded by and at the expense of subdividers of land prior to final approvals for subdivisions being given. The regulations were being drawn up to give effect to this decision. Is the Government proceeding with this matter? If so, when can we expect the regulations to be tabled?

The reply, given on October 27 last year, was as follows:

The Government is investigating the undergrounding of electricity in some subdivisions. Several schemes have been investigated, but no real progress has been made to date. The matter is being actively considered and, if it is decided to go ahead with regulations, the Council will be informed.

The Council has not so far been informed. Will the Government give more earnest consideration to this matter and will it proceed so that in newly developed areas the community will be assured that more and more undergrounding will take place?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague, as it is a matter of policy, and I am sure he will discuss it in Cabinet so that I can bring back a reply.

TIMBER SALES

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Can the Minister of Forests say what is the trend in sales of timber products from the State sawmills at Mount Gambier, Mount Burr and Nangwarry? Is there a downward trend and, if so, what is the reason for it?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will bring back a reply for the honourable member as soon as possible.

STATE BANK REPORT

The PRESIDENT laid on the table the annual report of the State Bank for the year ended June 30, 1971, together with profit and loss account and balance sheets.

FISHERIES REGULATIONS

Order of the Day, Private Business, No. 1: The Hon. C. R. Story to move:

That the regulations under the Fisheries Act, 1917-1969, relating to the Preservation of Abalone Resources, made on July 15, 1971, and laid on the table of this Council on July 20, 1971, be disallowed.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland) moved: That this Order of the Day be now discharged.

Order of the Day discharged.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Adjourned debate on the motion of the Hon. R. C. DeGaris:

(For wording of motion, see page 860.)

(Continued from September 22. Page 1560.)

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I rise to speak briefly to this motion. I do so with some difficulty because I believe we have in front of us in these regulations probably one of the worst examples of bureaucracy we could possibly have on our Statute Book. At the same time, I believe that having a system of licensing of builders or of protection for the home builder is admirable. These regulations are an example of what can be achieved through legislation that has wide regulation-making powers. These powers in the original Act were seriously questioned in this Council during the passage of that legislation. However, I do not think any honourable member envisaged such a restrictive and bureaucratic set of regulations. I believe that the object of protecting home builders could be achieved more easily, and possibly at less cost to the home buyer, by the promulgation of a set of regulations dealing directly with the quality of workmanship.

These regulations pry into every personal detail of an applicant's business and, in some instances, his private life. This is obnoxious to most fair-minded people, and I urge the Government seriously to consider withdrawing the regulations or preparing other regulations that will relate more directly to the quality of workmanship, disregarding entirely this searching, personal scrutiny of everyone who will be engaged in the building trade, be they employers or employees.

I will not commit myself at this stage regarding how I will vote, because inquiries are being made regarding the manner in which these regulations are being administered in the field, certain aspects of which appear on the surface to give cause for alarm.

The matter of cost to the home buyer has been referred to by other speakers, but I believe a real factor is the cost of repairs to, and particularly painting of, houses. Under the regulations, a person who must be registered to do painting and house renovations must have had many years' experience. From quotations I have received for comparatively minor work in this respect, I know that the cost of employing people can be prohibitive, and this applies particularly to those in the lower income group.

Under the Act, there is a limit to the amount of work that a homeowner himself can do if he intends to sell his house within a certain period. If he sells the house within that period, he commits a breach of the Act and is, therefore, liable to heavy penalty.

In calculating the worth of any painting that is done, not only the cost of materials but also the hours worked at the ruling tradesmen's rates must be considered. It does not take very long for a homeowner, doing a simple painting job, to exceed the statutory amount. With those remarks, I reserve the right not to say how I will vote until the completion of the debate.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE secured the adjournment of the debate.

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT BILL (SEAT BELTS)

Adjourned debate on second reading.
(Continued from September 22. Page 1565.)

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I support the Bill, although I am not very enthusiastic about it. I have listened with great interest to some excellent speeches in this debate, but after hearing them I am even further confused. The Hon. Mr. Springett gave us very good reasons why we should force people to wear seat belts, whereas the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill made out a very strong case why we should not force them to do so. Various other honourable members have spoken in the debate, I think with a tremendous amount of conviction.

This is a subject on which I think it is up to the individual, particularly the individual member of Parliament, to make his own decision. I was responsible for the passage of the legislation through this Chamber when we first made it compulsory to fit seat belts in vehicles. The architect of that legislation is the architect of this Bill. I refer to Mr. Millhouse. The debate taking place on the present Bill is very similar to the debate that occurred on the other occasion.

In my opinion, we have not really been given good enough statistics on the pros and cons of wearing seat belts. I refer to statistics from a coroner's point of view. We have been given many figures, and I have no doubt that the people quoting them believe them to be true. However, to say the least, they are conflicting. Each side has been able to put forward different sets of figures.

The Hon. V. G. Springett: From different sources.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Yes, indeed. Obviously, when a person wants to win an argument he always puts forward the best side. I am violently opposed in principle to compulsion. However, I have to accept the responsibility of deciding where we can leave a subject like this when the carnage on the roads at present is as dreadful as it is. If it is at all possible to help in this matter, can we allow ourselves not to take every precaution that is available to us through scientific knowledge? The thing that disturbs me is that I have not had it proved to my satisfaction that we would be so much better off if we compelled people to wear seat belts.

I know that several honourable members intend to move amendments in an endeavour to improve the legislation, and perhaps this will help remove the objection of some people to whom compulsion is absolutely abhorrent. Several years ago we passed legislation to make the fitting of seat belts compulsory, and since then vehicles manufactured after, I think, 1965 or 1967 have had to have seat belts fitted in them, and those belts have had to comply with the requirements of the Standards Association. This means that certain vehicles on the road today do not have seat belts that comply with those requirements. For instance, the owner of a car could have installed belts voluntarily or a dealer could have fitted a cheaper type of seat belt. As I have said, it was not obligatory to fit seat belts to many vehicles manufactured prior to the legislation passed some years ago.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: I think it was some time in June, 1964. There is some confusion about it.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I thought it was 1967, although I must admit I have not done my homework on that point.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: I have a statement to make on that matter when I reply to the debate.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I think we should have some escape clause for vehicles that are

fitted with seat belts that do not conform to the standard, because they escape at present under the existing laws. I think we should not impose penalties on people who are not really breaking the law but appear to be doing so and probably will be using a seat belt which is not a suitable type at all. We must look carefully at this matter. I am prepared to support the measure to get it into Committee and to hear the arguments put forward on the amendments. Perhaps we will even hear some suggestions from the Government. As the Hon. Mr. DeGaris pointed out earlier, this is a private member's Bill, although at least one Minister seems to embrace the measure.

The Hon. C. M. Hill: He is doing his best to kill it.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: If he wants the legislation passed, the best thing he can do is try and contain himself for just one or two days longer, because the surest way to kill legislation at any time is to flush it out into open conflict. This is what the Minister seems to be trying to do. This Council has not delayed the measure unnecessarily at all. This is a very serious and important matter, and I think that to inflict compulsion on people without giving the matter due thought shows an absolute lack of responsibility on the part of the Minister. I support the second reading.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I also support the second reading, with some reservations. I do this to enable the Bill to get into Committee so that amendments can be discussed. Perhaps the Government could have given some thought to redrafting this Bill. In its present form it is not satisfactory; the whole of the legislation referring to seat belts needs to be further examined and brought up to date.

Like other members, I am against unnecessary compulsion in any form. In this instance, however, arguments can be advanced to justify the compulsory wearing of seat belts in certain circumstances. The words "civil liberties" have been used in this debate, but other factors outside the person concerned must be considered, and Parliament has a responsibility to the community as well as in relation to the spending of public revenue. I do not question that the wearing of seat belts saves lives. I believe the evidence in this regard is overwhelming, and I do not need convincing on that point. True, there are occasions when seat belts can kill, but on balance the advantages are on the side of wearing of seat belts.

In the area of public responsibility, however, large sums of money are tied up in providing services for treating the injured. Hospitals in the metropolitan area have large casualty sections that must be manned 24 hours a day. The St. John Ambulance Brigade is on call, and various other services are supplied by the taxpayers at public expense to help those who will not wear belts for one reason or another.

A large range of exemptions and other safeguards must be written into the Bill to protect persons—for instance, in the case of insurance claims. I do not believe that evidence that a person was not wearing a seat belt should be used in any legal proceedings to establish negligence or contributory negligence by that person; a person should not be penalized in this way if he or she was not wearing a belt at the time of being injured.

I can think of many situations in which a person may temporarily unfasten a seat belt whilst a passenger in a motor car. A mother with young children in the back of a car may have to attend to the children, and for that purpose may have to unfasten the seat belt in order to turn around. This is a normal every-day occurrence.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: She would not be driving.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: No, she would be a passenger in the car. The Bill applies to all passengers in vehicles where seat belts are provided. It seems ludicrous that a person in a vehicle driving a mob of sheep along a road at a very slow speed should have to wear a seat belt. The legislation enforcing the compulsory wearing of crash helmets by motor cyclists mentions a speed (from memory, 20 miles an hour) below which the driver is not required to wear a helmet. The wording of clause 3 of this Bill leaves much to be desired. It inserts new section 162ab, subsection (1) of which is as follows:

After a day to be fixed by proclamation for the purposes of this section, a person shall not be seated in a motor vehicle that is in forward motion in a seat for which a seat belt is provided in pursuance of the provisions of this Act unless he is wearing the seat belt and it is properly adjusted and securely fastened.

What is the meaning of the words "properly adjusted", and how can it be proved whether or not a belt is properly adjusted? It could be "securely fastened" to the best of a person's knowledge.

Several objections have been raised. One is that, in many types of car, the driver cannot reach the hand brake while wearing a seat

belt and movement is unduly restricted. Of course, there is a choice of seat belts. It is not necessary to wear a lap-sash belt: the lap belt complies with the law and gives protection to people in vehicles involved in a side-on collision, the type of collision that happens frequently in heavy traffic when a car is hit, it spins around, the doors fly open and the passengers spill out on to the road. The lap belt perhaps does not afford as much protection as does the lap-sash belt in this instance, but it does afford some protection. One of the points in favour of the wearing of seat belts is that they tend to keep the person within the car.

Finally, we see in this Bill a point that has been objected to earlier today and in other legislation in that the main operative part of the Bill is left to regulation. As we know, regulations cannot be amended in Parliament, although they can be disallowed. The Bill should be withdrawn by the member who introduced it, in consultation with the Government, and these things should be spelled out in detail. It would be completely wrong to force a person to wear a seat belt in a soft-topped vehicle, such as a Land Rover or a sports car, where that person is secured to the seat and there is no protection if the vehicle should roll over. Many persons in this situation have been saved by throwing themselves on the floor on the passenger side of the vehicle. In such circumstances, perhaps, belts would be dangerous, but these things should be spelled out in the Bill rather than in the regulations. As has been said, a section such as this could be administered by people who were quite fanatical about these things and Parliament would not have the power to amend.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Don't you think the Bill follows rather blindly the legislation of other States and that it is our job to review it?

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: I do. I support the principle, and I will support the second reading to enable the Bill to get into Committee so that these matters can be discussed in detail.

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

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT ABOLITION BILL

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

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ABOLITION BILL

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL

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

AGED CITIZENS CLUBS (SUBSIDIES) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to increase the maximum amount by which the Government may subsidize the cost of erecting a senior citizens club or centre. As the principal Act now stands, the Government may contribute, on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the particular council, an amount which does not exceed \$6,000 in respect of any one club or centre. The limit of \$6,000 is as provided in the original Act of 1963. The Commonwealth Government now provides a subsidy for an "approved" club of up to one-third of the total cost. Despite this aid, the burden falling on local government bodies is onerous, as the cost of clubs and centres now ranges between \$35,000 and \$120,000. Taking the lowest amount as an example, after Commonwealth and State subsidies are deducted, the sum the council must find would be about \$17,300.

The Government proposes to ease the burden falling on councils by raising the maximum Government subsidy from \$6,000 to \$10,000. At the present moment about four or five clubs or centres are built each year, which means that the additional cost to the Government would not be likely to exceed \$20,000 a year. I shall now deal with the clauses of the Bill. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends section 3 of the principal Act by substituting a reference to \$10,000 for the present reference to \$6,000.

The Hon. E. K. RUSSACK secured the adjournment of the debate.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 28. Page 1692.)

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday, shortly before I was granted leave to conclude my remarks later, I was pointing out the escalation in the level of Government expenditure and the consequent increase in the levels of taxation and charges on the people of South Australia. I drew attention to the relationship between the Loan Estimates and the Budget and to the effect

on the Budget of the Commonwealth Government's offer to assume responsibility for much of the State's public debt and to make available direct grants for capital works without any interest payments or repayments of principal. I also drew attention to the effect on the Budget of the assumption by the State of the role of levying pay-roll tax and the increase in the rate of that tax from 2½ per cent to 3½ per cent. Yet the Government, with this magnificent improvement in connection with its Budget, is still proposing higher charges, higher taxes and higher duties, and budgeting for a deficit of \$7,500,000.

I concluded my remarks yesterday by recommending that the Government should urgently consider reducing the level of capital taxation in this State, because of the improved financial position and because of the effect of that type of taxation upon the people who are called upon to pay it but have little or no ability to do so.

In examining the increase in expenditure of each Government department, one sees that there is an increase in total expenditure of about \$75,000,000, which represents an increase of almost 17 per cent over last year's total expenditure. My first point is that I believe that this percentage expansion is more than the economy can stand. When we consider an expansion nearing 20 per cent of the expenditure of a State Government, we can see that this type of expansion far outstrips the expansion of expenditure in the private sector, and that should concern every honourable member.

Let me turn my attention now to the actual increase in expenditure in each department and compare it with the overall expansion of about 17 per cent. First, actual payments last year under special Acts amounted to \$88,000,000; proposed expenditure in this financial year is \$100,000,000—an increase of 13.6 per cent. Under "Premier and Minister of Development and Mines", actual payments last year amounted to \$5,000,000; proposed expenditure this year is \$6,200,000—an increase of 24 per cent. We observe that that is well above the average increased expenditure in the State Budget. Under "Chief Secretary and Minister of Health", actual payments last year amounted to \$62,000,000, and proposed expenditure for this year is \$72,000,000—an increase of 16 per cent. Under "Attorney-General", actual payments last year were \$3,800,000; proposed expenditure for this year is \$4,000,000—an increase of 5 per cent. Under "Treasurer", actual payments last

year amounted to \$28,300,000 and proposed expenditure for this year is \$34,000,000—an increase of 21.5 per cent. Under "Minister of Lands, Minister of Repatriation and Minister of Irrigation", actual payments last year were \$4,500,000, and this year they are proposed to be \$5,900,000—an increase of 31 per cent.

Under "Minister of Works", actual payments last year were \$28,200,000 and proposed expenditure this year is \$30,500,000—an increase of 8 per cent. Under "Minister of Education", actual payments last year were \$99,500,000, and proposed payments this year are \$123,000,000—an increase of 23 per cent. If we take into consideration the transfer of \$1,580,000 from the Agriculture Department to the Education Department in respect of agricultural education, we see that the actual increase in expenditure in this department is 21.5 per cent. Under "Minister of Labour and Industry", actual payments last year were \$800,000, and proposed expenditure for this year is \$941,000—an increase of 17 per cent. Under "Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Forests", actual payments last year amounted to \$7,300,000, and proposed expenditure for this year is \$6,000,000—a decrease of 18 per cent. If we take into account the \$1,580,000 transferred to the Education Department, we find an increase in the expenditure of the Agriculture Department, of 4 per cent.

Under "Minister of Environment and Conservation", actual payments last year were \$222,000, and proposed expenditure for this year is \$328,000—an increase of 58 per cent. Under "Minister of Marine", actual payments last year were \$4,300,000, and proposed payments for this year amount to \$4,700,000—an increase of 9.3 per cent. Under "Minister of Roads and Transport and Minister of Local Government", actual payments last year amounted to \$47,000,000 and proposed expenditure for this year is \$53,000,000—an increase of 13 per cent. Under "Minister of Social Welfare and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs", actual payments last year were \$6,600,000, and proposed expenditure for this year is \$7,900,000—an increase of 20 per cent. As I have pointed out, the average increase in the total money to be expended this year compared with actual payments last year is 16.8 per cent.

From those figures one can see the areas of Government priority in expenditure. I leave it to honourable members to do any further research they may wish to do. The interesting figure, of course, is the actual decrease in

expenditure in the Agriculture Department. One would expect that in any normal increase of about 17 per cent in a Budget the Agriculture Department in particular would warrant more than a nominal 4 per cent increase (as it is if we take into account the \$1,580,000 involved in the transfer of some of its lines to the Education Department).

The Hon. C. R. Story: The Minister is not really happy about it.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Perhaps the Minister will have some logical explanation. I intend later in this speech to embark on a totally different tack, which may also be of interest to the Minister. If we examine more closely the actual break-up of the money within the departments, we get some rather interesting figures. For example, under "Premier and Minister of Mines", the actual lines under "Premier" move from \$608,000 to \$1,166,000—an increase of almost 100 per cent in the actual Premier's Department; it is nothing to do with the Mines Department. Then under the Mines Department, which is also included in this combined department's activities, we see there is an increase from \$2,253,000 to \$2,404,000—an increase of about 7 per cent. So that expected real expenditure in the Mines Department will be less than it was last year, for every honourable member here would agree that there has been an escalation in costs of probably more than 7 per cent in the last 12 months. There is decreased effective expenditure in the Mines Department, whereas in the Premier's Department the increase is almost 100 per cent.

We can also examine figures under the Chief Secretary's lines, where the Police Department's expenditure moves from \$12,400,000 to \$13,200,000—an increase of about 6 per cent. So there will be an effective decrease in actual expenditure in this Budget on law and order. Under the Treasurer's lines, we see also a large increase of about 20 per cent. Under "Treasurer—Miscellaneous" we see a line for last year "Railways—Transfer towards deficits—\$14,500,000", which is increased this year to \$19,500,000—an increase of 34.5 per cent. There is also an interesting figure in the Education Department line, where the actual increase in salaries amounts to 30 per cent in this Budget. I ask honourable members not to overlook the fact that in these lines there is this year a limited provision for pay-roll tax, which will, I understand, not be payable except by one department for about nine months of this year. If we take that into

account, we see that in many of these important departments—Lands, Agriculture and Police—there is a decrease in effective expenditure in this Budget.

I now move on to another tack, which I may have some difficulty in explaining to this Council. Nevertheless, it has concerned me for some time. I take this opportunity of trying to express to the Council what I believe is a matter of growing concern to the electors in any State or the Commonwealth.

The Hon. C. R. Story: We will try hard to follow you, if you speak slowly.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I will try to do that and, in order to get my mind around this matter, I should like the opportunity to return to it in 12 months so that I can reassess the position. However, something along these lines should be said, and it is time the public's attention was drawn to the matter. The Budget interprets the political philosophy, in a financial sense, of the Government in power, and it does so by its level of charges, the degree and nature of its taxation measures and the priorities it gives in the expenditure of its financial resources, a matter upon which I have been speaking for the last few minutes.

Unfortunately, the amount of expenditure in a Budget is usually a matter of pride for any Government. How often have we heard the proud boast of the politician at election time that expenditure on health, education, roads, and so on, has been increased by a certain amount during the last financial year or during the Government's term of office? Although the politician does this, no-one seeks to ask how wisely that money has been spent; no-one makes any value judgments of the use of the available cash resources which, after all, come out of the pockets of the tax-paying public. One must not forget that those who do not pay taxes also lose in this situation. Indeed, they lose just as quickly as do other sections of the community, where excessive taxation, high charges and inefficient expenditure go hand in hand.

There is a temptation for political Parties to promise more and more in order to attract more votes and, unfortunately, some electors are impressed with this line of electioneering. Governments have a tendency to move away from the situation of allowing free consumer choice in a competitive market which provides a degree of continuous self-government for which, even in this modern day, there

is still no effective substitute. So, Sir, as promises are made to supply more and more for less and less cost, we produce a dilemma that inescapably leads to inadequate and ineffective supply in relation to a demand increased by the absence of price or an unrealistic price.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: Wouldn't an alternative be Government by computer? Computers are governing a lot of businesses now.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I do not suppose a computer could do much worse. Although the Government is receiving additional assistance from the Commonwealth Government, and increases in revenue as a result of pay-roll tax, it is still budgeting for increased capital charges and a deficit this year. In a presidential address to the Royal Economic Society, Professor Sir Dennis Robertson said:

Twenty-five years ago it needed some spirit on the economist's part to develop the case for deficit financing as a remedy for trade depression.

Now the boot is on the other foot. Sir Dennis concluded:

It is easier flogging dead horses than taming live ones, and some of those who display great retrospective gallantry against the fallacies and obscurantism of yesterday seem to me somewhat over-hasty to make their peace with those of today.

I realize that, in taking up the question of allowing the maximum of consumer preference as the criterion for the valuation of goods and services, one disregards a number of matters that must ultimately also be considered. I refer, first, to levels of income and of pensions, individual wealth in the community, social effects of any policy, and the development of monopolies. One could give a long list of such matters. I ask whether going to the ballot box every three years is a satisfactory substitute for the daily referendum of competitive markets.

Public expenditure on services, without an economic price attached thereto, will lead to a demand swollen beyond its ability to be satisfied. This has been the pattern in other countries that have followed the principle of complete Socialism. I do not say that this Budget is a socialistic document. Nevertheless, it is true that the more power the Government assumes to supply services, irrespective of what they might be, the greater the tendency for those services to be provided, not at an economic price but at a price demanded for a certain political benefit.

There is a conflict between the conditions necessary to allow the consumer to be free to choose among competing suppliers and the public provision at no price or at a nominal price that the authority can afford at a certain time. This is a conflict that is developing between freedom of choice and freedom from charge. Having seen in the Budget the tremendous increase in Government expenditure, I am concerned about the level of taxes being imposed upon the community. If we want taxes to be reduced or people in the community to be given the freedom of choice, we must examine the whole matter of taxation levels and allow the consumer to decide what he wants from a competitive market. We have become only too well aware of the disabilities that exist in the competitive market. Indeed, they are drawn to our attention constantly. At the same time, however, little attention is paid to the price paid by consumers in the political priorities allocated by pressure of electoral calculations, the powers of various Ministers and of the Party executive, and many other irrelevant pressures. Perhaps that aspect may interest the Minister of Agriculture in relation to the interjection made by the Hon. Mr. Story not long ago.

The consumer must pay a certain price when various Ministers have the power to demand from a State Budget certain moneys for their own departments, which may not be developmental or productive departments. If one examines the Budget, one will see that the activities of certain departments, which should be increasing and expanding, are being curtailed. It comes down to a question of political priorities being placed by the Government in power on the resources available. It is time we as politicians viewed with concern these pressures and saw clearly that the decentralized preference of the consumer, irrespective of the nature of the goods or services, is the superior criterion. We should be devoting our efforts more and more to increasing the ability of the consumer to pay his way. We should leave the choice in his hands, for he is a far better judge than any of the others that I have mentioned.

I know that this does not cover all aspects of this question. As I have already indicated, I know that there are questions that must be answered. Nevertheless, the market place, however one interprets that phrase, can be more easily cleared of its imperfections than Government experiments which have provided so much evidence of extravagance over many years. More and more we see the tendency

of Governments to intrude into fields that should be left entirely to the consumer's choice. I could list many of these. We have had the recent announcement of special conditions being offered to people to build a hotel in the city of Adelaide; as I understand it, there will be no charge for the land and no tax on the land. This falls exactly into the category to which I have referred. If there is a demand in the community for this type of accommodation it will be provided, and there is absolutely no need for the Government to use the resources of the people of the State for this purpose. I do not necessarily restrict this comment to any particular Government.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Just as well.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am just saying that politicians should reassess this position and come down on the side that the consumer, irrespective of what the goods or services may be, is the one who should decide and dictate, rather than leaving it to the judgment of politicians, whose judgments are often warped.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The Government is following an earlier lead given by previous Governments. What did a previous Government give to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The honourable member should talk to some of the people in my district who are required to pay very heavy land tax, even though they are making no money at all. He should try to convince them that a new hotel in Victoria Square should not pay land tax.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Who introduced land tax in this State?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: That is a completely separate question.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Do you think they would call the new hotel "The Don"?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I think it would depend entirely on who was the successful applicant. There are many areas of consumer demand that we can examine. I point out to the Hon. Mr. Banfield that I am not in this case speaking of any particular Government. I believe that what I am saying is applicable to this Government, to the Commonwealth Government, and to previous Governments in this State. I am laying a basis, and there are other factors that must be considered before a judgment can be made. We see in this Budget the increasing

pressure of railway losses, for there is a rise from \$14,500,000 to \$19,500,000 of taxpayers' money that will be used to bolster the losses of the railways in this financial year. That is an increase of 34.5 per cent.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: That is because the railways give low cartage rates to the primary producer.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Perhaps if the Hon. Mr. Banfield contained his impetuosity he would hear my argument. A few years ago the Government of the day, faced with this problem, decided that the answer was not to allow the consumer the choice in regard to transport but to assume absolute control. This was going to be the answer to the problem of railway deficits. This is a classic example of Governments assuming that they are the best judges of what the consumer wants. The emphasis should be the other way. Whilst one must admit that the railways must be provided, the basis should be that the consumer must have the choice, and the daily referendum in the competitive market is a far more effective criterion than leaving it to the judgment of politicians, who are under all sorts of pressures from lobbyists and pressures of political and electoral considerations.

I suppose every honourable member has received a circular from the Foster Parents Association. I am pleased to see that in the Budget there is an increase from, I think, 90c a day to \$1.10 a day in some cases and from \$1.10 to \$1.20 a day in other cases. Here we have another classic example of politicians claiming that they are going to build massive establishments to house these children when we have available in the community people who want to foster these children and are prepared to do the job for about half the cost at which the Government can do it. That is a classic example of where we should be preserving the taxpayers' money, handling it carefully, and developing a situation where we are giving consumer choice; not having dictation by a Government or boastful claims being made by the politicians that they are supplying all these services at the expense of the taxpaying public.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: Do you mean that the railways should be allowed to run down and that we should not have them because the consumer does not want them?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I did not make that point at all.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: You are asking whether we should supply these services, and

you are also saying that the general public must pay for them even if the consumer does not want to use them.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I was badgered with interjections by the Hon. Mr. Banfield for something that I said. I referred to the situation of a Government faced with this problem of a growing deficit on the railways. The Government's answer at that time was that it would squash all competition and force people to use its service. I say that this is definitely the wrong approach. However, that is the approach that politicians are taking more and more. They are afraid to allow consumer choice. We see this developing in this Budget.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: We accept that the Parliament knew better on the question you raised, and we have changed our policy as a result.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am glad to hear from the Minister that the Government has changed its policy. I realize that we must have railways, but how much attention do we give as a provider of a transport service to the efficiency of that service? How much thought do we give to the question of finding some other means of providing services just as effective but at a lower cost to the tax-paying public? I can remember a tremendous outcry when a certain rail service was closed, and a bus service was provided. Have we looked at this matter correctly and analysed the market and tried to meet the demand in the cheapest possible way, or is there some other consideration, a political consideration, a union consideration, call it what you like? That is where I believe we, as politicians, have not been firm enough in getting back to the essential question of allowing consumer choice, in allowing the market place to dictate exactly what goes on. The Government, irrespective of colour and irrespective of where it is, is assuming too much responsibility in this area.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: Like the European Common Market, for instance.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am quite willing, if the Minister will stay for another hour, to give a learned dissertation on the European Common Market as well, but my remarks are not limited to any Government, although I think every member here would admit that one political philosophy leads more quickly along this road than any other. The philosophy of the Government should be to make sure that the competitive market place operates at maximum efficiency and people

have the means of making a choice. This should be the aim of any Government and the aim of every politician. Any other aim produces the economic ills we see in the Budget before us and on which I have been speaking—the rapid rises in Government expenditure, in taxation, in charges for services, the increase of taxation in areas that cannot afford or have not the ability to meet that burden, and the use of capital resources for revenue expenditure by a Government that has not the same criteria available to it in allocating priorities. I support the Bill.

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

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 28. Page 1693.)

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON (Southern): I support the Bill. It is quite obviously designed to make more streamlined the operation of the Medical Board, and the Chief Secretary indicated in the second reading explanation that another major purpose of the measure was to provide for the continuation of the Foreign Practitioners Assessment Committee. It is vital that people with specialized knowledge coming into this country are absorbed into our society to provide not only the greatest possible advantage to themselves, but also to us. At frequent intervals we see problems arising through the lack of medical practitioners in country areas. The small community of Kimba, on Eyre Peninsula, has gone to the extent of offering a large guaranteed income in order to obtain the services of a medical practitioner. I am quite certain that, the greater the number of these people we can obtain from other countries, the better for our community.

The amendments also give a greater time factor so as to ensure that a practitioner is not automatically struck off the register for non-payment of dues. This is often a matter that may escape the attention of a practitioner, and whereas in the past the board has had numerous occasions on which it has had to strike people off the register and later reinstate them, now the practitioner has the opportunity of paying the fee without going through the process of being struck off the roll. Also, the provision for the payment of restoration fees gives the board power to put the person back into his normal place on the roll.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Can he pay his fees by instalments if he is broke?

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: He would have to be very broke, I think.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: It is \$6. That is very low for a union fee.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I think it is \$5. The Bill also gives the board power to provide provisional certificates in the case of persons doing either their year as a resident medical officer or reapplying for registration after it has lapsed. Quite clearly this is a good provision; otherwise the board would have problems with people acting in an official capacity without having their names on the roll, and also a person who has been away from medical practice for a period of time in this day and age must go through some sort of reappraisal of his knowledge.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: That even applies to politicians, doesn't it?

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Yes, I believe it does. In this day and age of specialization and the enlargement of knowledge in the medical field, it is necessary for practitioners to keep up to date. Even those in constant practice have problems in keeping up with day-to-day changes.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Some of them don't, by the results.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I would not have that same knowledge of medical practitioners in this State. I must say I have great faith in them.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Faith is not always enough.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I believe in South Australia we do an excellent job in the training of medical practitioners and I would not pass any reflection on them. The Hon. Mr. Banfield will be able to speak at a later date and he can then reflect on them if he wishes.

The change of the expression "infamous conduct" is a good move. The word "infamous" inevitably conjures up the thought of some terrible deed. It is not a modern expression and its replacement is certainly in line with my thinking. The word "serious" does not conjure up the same thought, yet it gives a clear indication that misconduct has occurred. The word "serious" is sufficient.

A further provision of the Bill specifies that the period of residence of three months can be spent in another State or in South Australia. This is clearly a sensible move. Because a person landed in New South Wales when he first entered the country, it does not mean necessarily that he wishes to stay there or to practise there. This is a sound move that should have been in the legislation some time ago.

Looking at the Bill as a whole, I believe a number of sensible moves have been made, and one will quite clearly give the board some greater power and also make its job much easier—

The Hon. A. J. Shard: Not so much greater power as much more flexibility.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Flexibility and clearer powers. I was not trying to indicate—

The Hon. A. J. Shard: I thought you may have used the wrong word. It is to give clearer powers and more flexibility.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: That is correct. I commend the Chief Secretary for introducing the Bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.50 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, September 30, at 2.15 p.m.