

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, August 10, 1972

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

QUESTIONS

TREE PULL SCHEME

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister of Lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Considerable publicity has been given by the Government to assistance offered to the fruit industry by way of the tree pull assistance scheme. Attached to the form of application for assistance under this scheme is a declaration which must be attested before a justice of the peace or a police officer. The declaration reads as follows:

In consideration of the Minister of Lands providing assistance to me I hereby undertake and agree:

- (1) That I will repay if required the amount of all money advanced to me pursuant to this application with interest thereon in accordance with the terms fixed by the Minister of Lands;
- (2) That I will execute in his favour all such securities and undertakings as he may from time to time require over all of my assets including property for the purpose of securing him due payment of the money mentioned in subclause (1) hereof;
- (3) That I will not for the next five years plant here or anywhere else any of the type of fruit trees to be specified by agreement between the Minister of Lands and myself.

Will the Minister of Lands or the Minister of Agriculture (who also has given information in this Chamber on the question) comment on these provisions and the purpose of requiring these undertakings?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The scheme for the assistance of the fruit-growing industry was devised by conferences between the Ministers concerned. The money involved is being made available by the Commonwealth Government, and the conditions under which assistance may be given are laid down by the Commonwealth. The conditions mentioned are some of those laid down in this regard by the Commonwealth.

POLICE FORCE

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: My question relates to the salaries of the South Australian Police Force. I have received information that there is now quite a wide difference between the salaries payable to the South Australian Police Force and those paid to the forces in other States, particularly in Western Australia. I understand, from the information I have received, that a first-grade sergeant in Western Australia now receives a gross salary of \$8,209 a year, whereas an inspector in South Australia receives \$8,104, without any penalties for overtime. In other words, the situation has been reached where a sergeant receives more than an inspector. Quite often in South Australia we hear that we have the best Police Force in Australia. We should make sure that this is recognized in the salaries the police receive. Will South Australian Police Force salaries be reviewed immediately in comparison with salaries paid to police forces generally throughout Australia?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I am surprised at the honourable member's statement, because my impression was that the Police Association here had negotiated an agreement back in December of last year before the old one had expired. I may be pardoned for saying that I contact more policemen than any other honourable member does. The facts I got from all of them indicated an appreciation of their standard of living at that time, which it was pleasant for me to know. If the position that the honourable member has referred to has come about, it must be because of a recent award or determination for the Western Australian Police Force.

The Hon. M. B. Cameron: July 7.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: That is it. Let me hasten to assure the Council that the Secretary of the Police Association, Mr. Tremethick, is an able and brilliant Secretary and will not let the grass grow under his feet.

The Hon. M. B. Cameron: I am sure he won't.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: But, if there is a date of expiry fixed for the present determination, because of my experience in industrial matters, I doubt whether our Police Force can get over it. I agree with one part of the honourable member's question that, despite the criticism that now and again appears in the press and in some "rags", the standard of our Police Force is very high and equal to anything in Australia. We hope to keep it that way. I know that the Police Association will be on my doorstep as soon as it can find a way to raise its salary range to be in keeping with that in the rest of Australia.

SYNTHETIC RUGS

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I direct my question to the Minister of Agriculture and ask leave to make a short statement prior to asking it.

Leave granted

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: On Tuesday, August 8, there appeared in the *Advertiser* a photograph and a news item that a rug bearing a trade name "Onkaperenga" (similar to "Onkapinga") was selling locally; it was advertised as "100 per cent lambs wool—\$15.99".

One of the officials of the Onkapinga Woolen Company Limited said that the rugs were branded "100 per cent lambs wool" but were synthetic. Will the Minister look into this matter under the Textile Products Description Act to see whether any action can be taken in respect of this company which may be selling this product in South Australia?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I shall be happy to look into the matter.

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: My question is similar to the one just asked by the Hon. Mr. Geddes. However, I add one more point—that these materials, which are not woollen, are highly flammable. Can the Minister assure the Council that steps will be taken to ensure that the public is warned that these blankets are not safe from the viewpoint of flammability?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I believe that this matter has already been discussed, following a question about synthetic products asked by the honourable member of the Chief Secretary. I agree with the honourable member that the matter should be looked at and, indeed, I believe it is being considered by the State Ministers of Health.

WAR SERVICE SETTLERS

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a brief statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: As I understand the Minister of Lands is leaving us for some time, I take this opportunity of wishing him well on his trip abroad. Some time ago I led a deputation to the Minister on the matter of rentals for single-unit war service settlers in the A.M.P. scheme in the South-East. Can the Minister say whether any progress has been made with the matters put before him by the settlers?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The matter is still under consideration. I cannot give

the Leader an answer this afternoon but I am sure my colleague, the Hon. Mr. Casey, who will be acting for me while I am away, will give him an answer as soon as possible. I thank the Leader for his good wishes to me on my trip abroad.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSOLIDATION BILLS

A message was received from the House of Assembly requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Consolidation Bills. The three persons representing the House of Assembly on such a committee would be the Hons. D. A. Dunstan and L. J. King and Mr. R. R. Millhouse.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary) moved:

That the Assembly's request be agreed to and that the members of the Legislative Council to be members of the Joint Committee be the Chief Secretary, the Hon. R. C. DeGaris and the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill, of whom two shall form the quorum of Council members necessary to be present at all sittings of the committee.

Motion carried.

LIQUID FUEL (RATIONING) ACT
AMENDMENT BILL

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

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This short Bill is intended to ensure that the restrictions imposed by the principal Act, the Liquid Fuel (Rationing) Act, 1972, are removed in an orderly and systematic manner. Ideally, this removal should be effected in such a way that, as soon as it is practically possible, the general public will be given access to fuel supplies without prejudice to the needs of essential industry. To consider the Bill in some detail, clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 removes distillate from the definition of "liquid fuel" so as to formalize the removal of restrictions on the supply of distillate. However, I would draw honourable members' attention to the second paragraph in this definition, which gives the Government power to restore distillate to the definition should circumstances render this necessary.

Clause 3 amends section 14 of the principal Act, and it is intended to make it quite clear that a person who buys fuel from a person authorized under section 9 of the Act does not

commit an offence. Clause 4 amends section 19 of the principal Act, and again is intended to make it clear that directions given under Part IV can be removed when the need for them is no longer apparent and, in any case, that those directions will cease to have effect on the expiry of the Act. Clause 5 repeals and re-enacts section 23 of the principal Act, which provided for the cessation of operation of Parts III and IV of the principal Act. Although, on the face of it, the provisions of new section 23 seems a little complicated they are intended to give the Government as much flexibility as possible in lifting the restrictions.

Proposed section 23 (1) gives power for the Governor, by proclamation, to lift the suspensions in relation to all liquid fuel or liquid fuel of a particular class or kind, either in relation to the whole State or to a particular area of the State. Thus, as soon as it is apparent that supplies may reasonably be expected to be available to the general public in part of the State, it will be possible to lift the restrictions in relation to that part of the State. However, it appears prudent to the Government that the right to reimpose these restrictions should be preserved in case, by reason of large-scale buying, it becomes apparent that essential industry in that part of the State will be embarrassed over fuel supplies. It is clear that, on the lifting of the restrictions, the retailers of petrol will have a responsibility to ensure that available supplies are distributed fairly and equitably. It is thought that, if this power to reimpose the restrictions is granted to the Government, it may be that restrictions can be lifted a little earlier than they could be if the Government did not have this power.

Proposed section 23 (2) and (3) merely spells out the legal effect of the imposition or removal of a suspension. In brief, it is proposed that the effects that will flow from the imposition or removal will be analogous to the effects that would flow if the principal Act were amended by another Act to achieve that end. Clause 6 is a consequential amendment and ensures that upon the day of expiry set out in section 29 the amending Bill proposed by this measure will disappear from the Statute Book. I appreciate that honourable members agreed to meet today to consider this legislation, which is in the interests of the State and which I regret the necessity of introducing. I instructed that a copy of the Bill and a copy of the second reading explanation be given to all honourable members before the Council met today. I hope the Bill will have a speedy passage.

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The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I see no reason to delay the passage of this Bill and I thank the Chief Secretary for making available to honourable members a copy of it and a copy of the second reading explanation before the Council met today. The Bill allows the restrictions applied by the Bill debated last week to be removed in an orderly fashion and for the Government to select various areas where restrictions can be lifted. The Bill also empowers the Government, until August 31, to reimpose restrictions if the need should arise.

I wish to make a few comments on the legislation as a whole. One matter that was overlooked when the original measure was introduced was an increase in the penalty for stealing petrol from a motor vehicle during the currency of the restrictions. We should bear this in mind.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: I believe that would be an offence under the Police Offences Act.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: A section in the present Act deals with profiteering, which, for the purposes of this legislation, should include the stealing of petrol from motor vehicles. The other matter to which I direct the Chief Secretary's attention is that much petrol is coming into certain parts of South Australia from other States. I am aware of all the facts, and I believe this to be the case in the South-East. One aspect that has not been referred to is whether petrol could be brought from other States by rail. It has been announced that a tanker will not arrive here until early in September.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: That is so—September 9.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I thank the Chief Secretary for that information. I do not know what action the Government has taken to investigate the possibility of bringing petrol to South Australia by rail, which appears to me to be one way in which large quantities of petrol could be brought here, thereby alleviating this extremely serious position, particularly in the metropolitan area where the public's supply of petrol for private use is getting extremely low. I do not know whether the Government has examined this aspect; I make this suggestion in a constructive manner in an attempt to overcome some of the difficulties facing us. I support the Bill.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD (Chief Secretary): I think I should reply to the points raised by the Leader. In relation to his suggestion that

the penalty for stealing petrol be increased, I am sure that if those involved knew that the penalty for profiteering under the Police Offences Act is five years imprisonment they would not commit such offences. Regarding the Leader's suggestion about bringing fuel to South Australia by rail, Western Australia would be the only State that could supply South Australia with petrol, and it would take a week to turn around a train carrying fuel. It would not be worth our while trying to obtain petrol from other States because we have been told that they cannot supply South Australia. The train tankers would carry 6,000gall.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: The road tankers carry 6,000gall.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: The train would also carry about 6,000gall., if petrol was available. However, none is available in New South Wales or Victoria. Another problem is that very few tankers are on the trans-Australian line to deal with the position. I assure the Council that the Government has had discussions and meetings on this matter every day of the week, and that no-one wants to see the restrictions lifted more quickly than it does. No-one should think that the Government wants to impose these restrictions. Indeed, immediately they can be lifted, they will be lifted. Honourable members can draw their own conclusions from the fact that the Government has lifted restrictions on Kangaroo Island and in the South-East. I ask honourable members to consider that aspect, which illustrates the Government's sincerity in wanting to get out of this nasty situation as soon as possible.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 passed.

Clause 4—"Validation of the Proclamation."

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Following the Chief Secretary's statement regarding the obtaining of bulk fuel from other States, I understand from the press that ship tankers will shortly be calling at Port Lincoln and Port Pirie, replenishing to some extent the bulk supplies of fuel in those centres. Many people in country areas are getting into a difficult position with fuel. The clause before the Committee deals with section 19 of the principal Act. Can the Chief Secretary give an assurance that, as far as is practicable, no major bulk supplies of petrol will be moved from country areas, such as Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, or possibly the South-East, into the metropolitan area unless the

position becomes extremely grave? I ask this question in all sincerity because of the difficulties country people are experiencing and because we know the ships will be coming in the foreseeable future.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I was told that this question may be asked. My understanding of the situation is that the Act makes no provision whatever for transferring petrol from one place to another. The provisions of the Act apply to the holding of petrol at the one spot, but to the best of my knowledge the Act gives no authority to move petrol from point A to point B.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: It seems that a number of people are suffering grave financial difficulty as a result of the impost applied by this Parliament at the instigation of the Government. It would appear to me that there is a tremendous amount of petrol in storage throughout the country, and that some people are paying steep rates of interest (more than 7 per cent in some cases) because, although their tanks are full, they are not permitted, under the Act, to dispose of the petrol. In other cases, of course, people are not permitted to buy petrol. It seems that there is something wrong and that the Government has not done its sums very well in not allowing the petrol to be released. There appears to be far more petrol on hand than is necessary for essential purposes. Will the Government have a closer look at the quantity of petrol in storage throughout the State? We have been told that Kangaroo Island and the South-East are now exempt, but I wonder why various other parts of the State have not been exempted. People owning service stations on Kangaroo Island and in the South-East can sell petrol, but throughout the Riverland, where I understand there is just as much petrol available, as well as in many areas in the metropolitan area, petrol sales are not permitted. Why is not something being done to help these people?

I suppose I am an essential service; I do not know. I had to get here today and I came by public transport. So did many other people. I believe I should have the right to see my constituents who live in the country, and I think I am entitled to a share of the petrol which is simply being held in tanks and not being used. The people who are being penalized are paying 7 per cent or 8 per cent interest on the money tied up.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I appreciate the point the honourable member has taken. The reason petrol is available in the South-East, as

I understand it, is that supplies come from Portland, just over the Victorian border.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: It is up to the oil companies.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: I could say a great deal about some things, but I do not want to mention them. Economics comes into this. Let us be quite frank about it. When economics is concerned in big companies we know who wins. Perhaps we could leave it at that. We know that there are some difficult cases, but I think there is a misconception here. People who have a permit can get petrol from any garage, with the condition that only selected garages will have their tanks refilled. I have kept away from garages and service stations, but I understand that has not been the situation in some instances. However, I assure the honourable member that all these things were fully discussed before the committee this morning. We have only one representative on the committee. He understands the Cabinet point of view as well as that of the honourable member. Everything possible is being done to alleviate the position as quickly as possible.

Clause passed.

Clause 5—"Repeal of section 23 of principal Act and enactment of section in its place."

The Hon. L. R. HART: This clause deals with the lifting of restrictions on the sale of petrol. In effect it deals only with restrictions as applied under the Liquid Fuel (Rationing) Act passed last week. If the restrictions as applied in this Act are lifted, we understand some other form of restriction will be applied. We have not been given very much information as to what form it will take. The second reading explanation says:

Although on the face of it the provisions of new section 23 seem a little complicated they are intended to give the Government as much flexibility as possible in lifting the restrictions. One has no complaint against that ideal, but in *The News* this afternoon is a front page article headed "Petrol rations next week", which goes on to say that South Australian motorists will have petrol early next week. The article says:

The Premier (Mr. Dunstan) said today it would be sold on a ration system imposed by the oil companies.

Can the Minister indicate what type of rationing system the oil companies intend to impose? I am given to understand that the restrictions existing in Broken Hill permit motorists to buy only \$2 worth of petrol at one time, but it is

possible to drive from one petrol station to another, buying \$2 worth of petrol from each one. I hope that situation will not eventuate here. Can the Minister assure us that, if this form of petrol rationing is introduced, there will be some restriction on motorists being able to get petrol from every service station in their locality?

The Hon. A. J. SHARD: There will be no legal form of rationing of petrol. It will be done by an appeal from the Government to the oil companies and to the public not to overpurchase or overstock petrol. I have the greatest respect for the people of South Australia. I remember when we were in trouble with our water supplies, and we asked the public not to use more than a given amount in any one week. The appeal was honoured and it was to the credit of the public that I think in only one week, during a heat-wave period, was the quota exceeded. The petrol rationing will be done on a voluntary basis. The oil companies will be asked to ration their service stations, which, in turn, will be asked to ration petrol to their customers. That is the appeal that will be made, and that is the very reason why the Government wants the right, if petrol is oversold, to be able to reimpose restrictions on everyone. I hope that, once the restrictions have been lifted, there will be no need to reimpose them. There will be no legal form of rationing: it will be voluntary, and we hope the public and the service station proprietors will co-operate in seeing that the amount of petrol held in reserve does not become dangerously low.

Clause passed.

Clause 6 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

FRUIT FLY (COMPENSATION) BILL

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

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is the second Bill of this kind to be brought before the Council this year. It is in the usual form for a measure of this nature, and concerns the most recent outbreak of fruit fly, which occurred in the Hazelwood Park district. It provides for the payment of compensation to all persons who suffered loss owing to the eradication measures taken by departmental officers. Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 makes the appropriate provision for the payment of compensation, and clause 4 provides

for the lodging of claims by August 31, 1972. No estimate can be made at this time of the number of claims likely to be made but it is not expected to vary significantly from the number of claims that would be expected following an outbreak in an area of this kind. I thank honourable members for co-operating in this matter. It is in the interests of those people who have claims so that they can lodge them by the time stipulated—August 31.

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I support the second reading of this Bill. The threat of fruit fly, of course, has been with us for a long time. The South Australian Government, whether Liberal or Labor, has always supported the departmental officers in their endeavour to eradicate fruit fly, although I do not think they ever will, completely. At least, we do provide compensation and enable people to offer their opinions and give information to the Agriculture Department. It is important that those two things be done. I noticed recently in some publication I was reading that the State Government might join in a Commonwealth deal whereby the whole matter of fruit fly would be brought under Commonwealth control. I do not object violently to that, but we must remember that South Australia is the only State that has been successful in keeping fruit fly at bay; it has been kept within the metropolitan areas of this State. We are the only State where fruit fly has not invaded its commercial areas; we are the only State that has been able to supply its quota of citrus as a result of the efforts of the officers of the Agriculture Department.

Early in the piece, a previous Premier of this State said to the then Director of Agriculture (Mr. Strickland), "We will at least curb fruit fly in this State." We had several departmental officers with great experience of fruit fly in other parts of Australia. They said it would be absolutely impossible to contain fruit fly in this State. By the action of Mr. Strickland and the Premier of the day, who were probably working under the regulations under the old Vine and Fruit Protection Act, we were successful in containing fruit fly within one square mile. This has been remarkable, that at any time we can proclaim one square mile in any area where fruit fly breaks out. I am pleased that the Government is doing what every Government has done since 1948, which was when the first fruit fly was found here, but it is important that people have the confidence to go to the departmental officers and say, "I think we may have

fruit fly here", knowing they will be properly compensated.

However, even more important than that, South Australia should look closely at its own position, because the Premier, when he was in Japan endeavouring to sell South Australian citrus fruit, made it plain that our commercial areas were fruit-fly free. I am not sure that the Premier sold any of our citrus in Japan, but I should hate to see a weakening of our own legislation in this respect. I do not want to see this State become involved in a Commonwealth set-up if it is not to our advantage, because New South Wales is riddled with fruit fly. So, it would not be in the best interests of South Australia for this State to become involved in a very complicated and expensive operation.

I do not believe that Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales will ever be able to eradicate or control fruit fly. Because the area involved in this State is smaller and because our climate is more temperate, we are better able to control the pest. When the Minister of Agriculture is discussing this matter with other State Ministers I hope he is cautious in dealing with any Commonwealth scheme. Of course, if the Commonwealth Government is to provide large sums of money, perhaps we should look at the matter, but we should not become involved in a situation that is complicated by the needs of the other States. Officers of our Agriculture Department have done a very good job in controlling fruit fly. I have pleasure in supporting what the Government is doing, but I repeat that I do not want to see South Australia become involved in a Commonwealth-wide scheme if it is not in the best interests of the fruit industry of this State.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): I am not aware of any scheme that the Commonwealth Government is likely to propose. I have not been given any indication that there is likely to be a Commonwealth scheme for eradicating fruit fly, whether it be Queensland fruit fly or Mediterranean fruit fly. At the meeting of the Agricultural Council last week I mentioned to the council members that since 1948 South Australia had spent more than \$9,000,000 in eradicating fruit fly and that I was becoming perturbed, as were many other people in the State, about the attitude taken by the other States.

I asked the council whether it would agree to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization looking at the whole

problem of fruit fly in Australia to see whether it could solve it in the interests of South Australia particularly, because this is the only State that is free of fruit fly, as far as our commercial interests are concerned. Mr. Christian was not very happy about the suggestion, because he will be retiring shortly, but I am happy to say that he said he would look at it in the interests of South Australia. So, the C.S.I.R.O. will see whether fruit fly can be eradicated or controlled in some way, but this is a difficult matter, because there are so many ways into and out of the State and so many means of transport. I assure honourable members that I shall do my level best to maintain the *status quo* and that we will continue to take all necessary measures to control fruit fly.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Compensation."

The Hon. C. M. HILL: It is essential that negotiations for compensation be conducted wherever possible in a very conciliatory manner and that entry into private property be carried out most carefully. At one stage publicity was given to a case concerning Professor Manwell regarding entry to his property and compensation for the fruit removed. So that I can be

assured that the Minister takes a proper attitude in regard to these matters, can he say whether the negotiations with Professor Manwell were satisfactorily concluded?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): I shall obtain the information that the honourable member has requested.

Clause passed.

Clause 4—"Time limit for claims."

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I cannot understand this clause because a word seems to have been omitted; or, there may have been a grammatical error.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The word "or" first occurring should be "a".

The CHAIRMAN: The error will be rectified.

Clause passed.

Title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.14 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, August 15, at 2.15 p.m.