

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, June 20, 1973

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

QUESTIONS**CONSUMER CREDIT LEGISLATION**

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Before explaining my question I should like briefly to congratulate the Hon. Frank Kneebone on achieving the positions of Leader of the Government in this Council and Chief Secretary. I also congratulate the Hon. Mr. Banfield on his elevation to the Ministry. I hope to have more to say about that in the Address in Reply debate. My question concerns the implementation of the consumer credit legislation which was passed by this Council last year. As the Council will appreciate, some 60 amendments to that legislation were introduced here, but there was a general feeling among honourable members that the legislation was hurried and that many matters concerning the new approach to consumer credit in this State could not be thoroughly researched because of the Government's desire to press on with this type of legislation. I am reasonably certain that, before this legislation can become fully effective, it will be necessary for regulations to be tabled in relation to it. However, I notice that there are no such regulations on the Notice Paper for consideration. First, can the Chief Secretary, as Leader of the Government in this Council, say whether the legislation passed in the last Parliament is completely satisfactory? Secondly, will regulations be tabled in relation to it? Thirdly, will it be necessary to reconsider the legislation, with amendments being made, if thought desirable?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: First, let me thank the Leader of the Opposition for his kind reference to my appointment as Chief Secretary. I shall refer the Leader's questions to the Attorney-General, who will supply a reply as soon as possible.

MINISTRY

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: First, I should like to endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the Hon. Mr. Kneebone, who has now assumed the position of Leader of the Government in this Council. Secondly, I should like to acknowledge the services of the Hon. Mr. Shard, who has served this Parliament very well over a long period. Will the Chief Secretary inform the Government of our appreciation of his own work, the work of the Hon. Mr. Shard, and of our congratulations to the Hon. Mr. Banfield?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I thank the Hon. Mr. Story for his kind references to me and my colleagues and I assure him that I shall pass them on to the Government.

SOUTH-EASTERN DRAINAGE

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Some time ago legislation was passed through this Chamber that introduced a new system of drainage rating for the south-eastern section of the State, and some appeals have been heard. Can the Minister of Lands supply details of the number of people who have appealed and the number of those who have received notification of the success or failure of their appeal?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I find that the following statistics are all that I have today: (a) there are 1,808 ratepayers; (b) the number of appeals received was 1,480; and (c) 518 appeals have been heard. On the basis of the determination received from the South-Eastern Drainage Appeal Board to date, it is estimated that, as a result of the appeals, the rate of revenue will be reduced by 40 per cent.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: What revenue does the Government now estimate it will receive from drainage rates in view of the Minister's statement that rate revenue might be reduced by 40 per cent? Will this amount warrant a continuation of the rating scheme in so far as there is a set amount under the Act that can be levied on the ratepayers in the dollar valuation? Also, will the Minister submit to Cabinet a proposal to discontinue the raising of revenue from this source, which may prove to be uneconomic?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The honourable member has put together three or four questions for me to answer. I do not propose at this moment to answer them straight out but I would indicate to him that the figures I gave him indicated that only a few appeals had been heard. As to the effect upon the revenue expected to be collected as a result of this matter, it is difficult to give an answer, but I will bring back for the honourable member an answer to his other questions when the appeals are complete.

PLANNING

The Hon. H. K. KEMP: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H. K. KEMP: Recently, I think that all honourable members of the Southern District and probably other honourable members have been presented with a tremendous tome called the Outer Metropolitan Area Development Plan, which publication carries the planning for the whole of the area from Gawler south to the Fleurieu Peninsula and into the lakes area. The consolidated plan is, I understand, the result of the withdrawal of several individual plans involving some of the smaller council areas. The plan affects a great number of people and, no matter how carefully it is studied, it is almost impossible for an individual to understand the full implications in the tome as it has been presented to us. The Act, as it stands, stipulates that this provisional plan must be displayed for only a short time in the individual metropolitan areas concerned. Can the Minister say how this large draft is to be displayed? Will it be placed in council offices in the areas concerned and merely left there for a short time so that people may study it and appeal against it, or will there be some other method of presentation? This question involves about 250,000 people and many millions of dollars worth of land. I make my plea to the Minister that he should give really close thought to how this draft is to be displayed and some reconsideration of the method by which it can be looked at individually.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: First, I thank the Leader and the Hon. Mr. Story for their kind remarks about my being made a Minister. I trust this will in no

way inhibit them when they are debating any matter with me. Secondly, I shall be quite happy to refer the question of the Hon. Mr. Kemp to my colleague in another place and bring back a report as soon as possible.

HOUSEBREAKINGS

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER: My question is addressed to the Chief Secretary. In the current financial year how many housebreakings have been reported from the eastern suburbs of Adelaide; secondly, with regard to these housebreakings, how many arrests have been made and how many convictions recorded?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will contact the Police Department and get a report for the honourable member.

BOLIVAR EFFLUENT

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: In the first place, very briefly, I should like to associate myself with the remarks of the Leader and the Deputy Leader concerning the Hon. Mr. Kneebone, the Hon. Mr. Banfield, and the Hon. Mr. Shard. My question relates to the very difficult situation obtaining at present in the Adelaide Plains water basin. With some recognition of the recent confirmation of the fact that limited amounts of recycled water are being fed into the Adelaide system, which is slightly different from being fed into a vegetable-growing system, and especially in view of the apparently imminent imposition of greater restrictions on water quotas in the Adelaide Plains, has the Minister anything further to report regarding soil tests being conducted in the area by the Agriculture Department? Having regard to the awkward and serious position of the vegetable industry, will the Minister urge upon the Government the real and urgent necessity for recycled water to be made available at the earliest possible moment for the growing of approved types of vegetable in what is a very large supply area for these products for the city of Adelaide?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Let me hasten to assure the honourable member that the trials carried out by the Agriculture Department are long-term operations and have been going on only since late 1971. It was expected then that it would take possibly three years to complete these tests. I indicated last year that an interim report would be coming down from the department so that we could see exactly what the situation is at the moment. I shall quote from the minute I received from the officer in charge, which will give the Hon. Mr. Dawkins and other honourable members some idea of what has been accomplished. First, it has been found that the use of Bolivar effluent water results in a rapid increase in soil salinity and that this build-up is expected to reach an equilibrium value which will be sensitive to management. Highly skilled irrigation practice, good drainage, and amendments will be necessary to maintain this equilibrium. This equilibrium value can be withstood by salt-tolerant crops. A preliminary soil survey has delineated in general terms the most suitable areas for irrigation with effluent. The summary is as follows:

Lucerne: Effluent water could be used for growing lucerne on well drained soils.

Potatoes and onions: Effluent water could be used for growing potatoes and onions on well drained soils.

Glasshouse tomatoes: The prospects look good but further investigation of the soil salinity situation is required.

Almonds: It is doubtful whether effluent is satisfactory for the long-term irrigation of almonds. Sodium and chloride levels in the leaves were high at the end of the second season.

Vines: It seems that high levels of sodium and chloride in the leaves resulted from irrigation with effluent. Boron toxicity may also cause problems.

A continuing service of research and extension in the area will be necessary because of the delicate equilibrium required and the need for monitoring changes in soil salinity. Reports will be coming forward from time to time from the department. The department does not claim to be an expert on health matters (that is a matter for the Public Health Department) but it seems to me that the tests that have been carried out over these past 18 months have proved quite conclusively in some areas that the effluent can be used.

CHRISTIES BEACH HOSPITAL

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: Can the Minister of Health tell me the position regarding arrangements for hospital services and facilities in the Christies Beach area?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I cannot inform the honourable member of that. As honourable members know, when the Flinders Medical Centre is finished we shall be looking at the position at Christies Beach. We did have representations the other day from someone who wants to establish a private hospital at Noarlunga, but nothing positive has come of it.

RAILWAYS DEPARTMENT

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to directing a question to the Minister representing the Minister of Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Early this month there was an announcement by the Minister of Transport concerning the South Australian Railways. In the press on June 1, the following statement appeared:

Mr. Virgo's announcement follows last night's release of a 400-page report containing nearly 200 recommended ways of upgrading and modernizing the present South Australian Railways operations.

He went on to say:

I have had the report for a fortnight, and so has the Commissioner.

Elsewhere in the press on that day we read:

Mr. Virgo described the report prepared by the special three-man committee as one of the best he had seen.

In the press on the following day it was stated that the Minister had discussed the report at a press conference called for that purpose. I ask the Minister whether a copy of that report could be made available to me and, indeed, to other honourable members for perusal and study in the interest of the public at large, and, particularly, so that people vitally interested in the South Australian Railways can study the question in depth.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I will refer the question to my colleague in another place.

FIREARMS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: In the *Advertiser* of February 1, 1973, an advertisement appeared advertising semi-automatic rifles plus ammunition. I realize that in Australia we perhaps do not have the problem with firearms that people in other parts of the world have. Nevertheless, it disturbs me that any person can walk into a shop under our present law, as I understand it, and purchase a weapon, provided it is then registered. Is there any requirement that people must receive a permit before

the purchase of a weapon? If there is not, will the Government consider introducing such a requirement?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I believe this question is one for me. I will investigate it and bring back an answer.

STATE TAXES DEPARTMENT

The Hon. F. J. POTTER: Will the Chief Secretary ascertain what is the latest position concerning the proposed new accommodation for the Stamp and Succession Duties Department? I believe I asked a question about this matter some 18 months ago and was informed that the department was supposed to move to new premises. However, it is still where it was originally and I believe the accommodation is most inadequate.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will get the required information for the honourable member.

DUPLICATING INK

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Last year I received a reply to a question I asked of the Minister concerning duplicating ink used in schools. I implied in that question that there were a considerable number of complaints concerning the quality of ink supplied by the State Supply Department to schools. The Minister said he was calling for a further report in view of the complaints that had been received both by the department and by honourable members. Can the Minister indicate the results of the further report and say whether anything has been done to ensure that the ink will be of a higher standard?

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

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary) moved:

That two members of the Council be appointed, by ballot, to the Council of the University of Adelaide as provided by the University of Adelaide Act, 1971.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, the Hons. B. A. Chatterton and F. J. Potter were declared elected.

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary) moved:

That the Council do now proceed to elect by ballot two members to be members of the Council of the Flinders University of South Australia.

Motion carried.

A ballot having been held, the Hons. C. W. Creedon and V. G. Springett were declared elected.

SUPPLY BILL (NO. 1)

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

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for the appropriation of \$110,000,000 so that the Public Service of the State may be carried on in the early part of the next financial year. As honourable members know, the annual Appropriation Bill does not normally receive assent until the latter part of October and, as the financial year begins on July 1, some special provision for appropriation is required to cover the first four months of

the new year. That special provision takes the form of Supply Bills, normally two such Bills each year, and without this Bill now before honourable members no Parliamentary authority would be available for normal revenue expenditure from July 1, 1973.

In each of the last two years the first Bill has been for \$60,000,000. In the normal course, with rising cost and wage levels and with a corresponding increase in the monthly flow of expenditures, the Government would have introduced a Bill for about \$70,000,000 to \$75,000,000 to cover requirements during July and August, 1973, to be followed by a second Bill in August to cover requirements in September and October.

However, this year the circumstances may be different. The Government proposes to introduce legislation that it considers to be vital and, should it not be accepted by Parliament, the Government would seek a dissolution of both Houses. It is essential that the day-to-day activities of Government be carried on, and essential, of course, for appropriation to be available to allow that. Accordingly, it appears to be prudent to introduce a first Supply Bill, which would give appropriation for about three months, to cover a period in which Parliament may not be sitting. This Bill is for \$110,000,000. It will still be necessary for a second Supply Bill to be submitted to cover the full period of the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

A short Bill for \$110,000,000 without any details of the purposes for which it is available does not mean that the Government or individual departments have a free hand to spend, as they are limited by the provisions of clause 3. In the early months of 1973-74, until the new Appropriation Bill becomes law, the Government must use the sums made available by Supply Bills within the limits of the individual lines as set out in the original Estimates and the Supplementary Estimates approved by Parliament for 1972-73. In accordance with normal procedures, honourable members will have a full opportunity to debate the detailed 1973-74 expenditure proposals when the Budget is presented.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): This Bill, which has just come before us, seeks the appropriation of \$110,000,000 to carry Supply through to possibly the end of August or September. As pointed out in the Chief Secretary's second reading explanation, this is more than one would have expected in a normal Supply Bill. Last year the first Supply Bill was for \$60,000,000, and this year the sum has almost doubled. The Chief Secretary's second reading explanation gives a somewhat odd explanation for this matter, as follows:

The Government proposes to introduce legislation that it considers to be vital and, should it not be accepted by Parliament, the Government would seek a dissolution of both Houses.

This is given as the reason why the Supply sought amounts to \$110,000,000. I do not object to the Bill, although I see little reason why the sum has been increased from \$60,000,000 to \$110,000,000 in such circumstances. If one studies this provision somewhat rationally, one will see that last year \$60,000,000 carried the Public Service through until the end of August or the beginning of September. Therefore, the sum required seems, in the circumstances, somewhat excessive. As has been pointed out, the Appropriation Bill is usually passed by October. If \$110,000,000 is necessary to maintain Supply until the end of August, one can see that the total Appropriation will be between \$60,000,000 and \$700,000,000. I just make those points in passing. I have no desire to hold up the passage of the Bill; it is normal in all aspects except that the amount asked for is almost double that which is usually sought.

The Hon. C. R. Story: And a very silly threat was put in.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

The House of Assembly notified its appointment of sessional committees.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE

The House of Assembly intimated its appointment of four members to the Joint House Committee.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary): In accordance with section 4 of the Joint House Committee Act, 1941, I move:

That the members of the Legislative Council on the Joint House Committee be the President and the Hons. Jessie Cooper, C. W. Creedon, and V. G. Springett.

Motion carried.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

A message was received from the House of Assembly requesting the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the appointment of a Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE (Chief Secretary): In accordance with Joint Standing Orders Nos. 19 to 31, I move:

That the members of the Legislative Council on the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation be the Hons. C. W. Creedon, C. R. Story, and A. M. Whyte.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): Pursuant to Joint Standing Order No. 21 I call for a ballot.

A ballot having been held, the Hons. C. W. Creedon, C. R. Story, and A. M. Whyte were declared elected.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.18 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, June 21, at 2.15 p.m.