

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

Wednesday, August 15, 1973

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

**QUESTIONS****SOUTHERN DISTRICT BY-ELECTION**

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to directing a question to you, Sir.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Following the question asked of you yesterday by the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill concerning the press report of a question in another place affecting members of this Council, you made available to this Council your reply to the inquiry of the Deputy Premier. Today it has been drawn to my attention that reports of your reply appearing through the media have in many cases been quite misleading. Has this matter been drawn to your attention and has any action been taken to have your reply correctly reported?

The PRESIDENT: I did hear about these reports. I did not hear them directly myself, not the earlier reports, but at approximately 6 o'clock last evening I received a telephone call from a person who asked whether I was in trouble in the Legislative Council. I asked why, and the caller said he had just heard a report over station 5DN which said that I had called on the Auditor-General to make an investigation in relation to the misuse of Government funds. (I made a pencilled note at the time in case the matter arose again.) I had not heard this report. This person said, too, that it was also reported that I had said the expenses of members of the Council should not bear comparison with expenses provided for members of the Senate. Neither of these statements, of course, could be associated in any way with the letter I conveyed yesterday to the Minister. I took the opportunity then, rather hurriedly, to find out what had happened. I rang station 5DN. I do not know to whom I spoke, but I asked for the news editor. I said that I had received a telephone report that this comment had gone over the air in the news. He reread what had been said and, although I could not take all that down (I am not a shorthand writer) it conformed to what was in black type in the late edition of the *News*, which I obtained from the Library this morning.

I advised him of the true gist of what I had said in reply to the question yesterday and that I was rather surprised, as they had facilities for reporters in this Chamber to hear everything that was said and even *Hansard* to consult if that was necessary. The report that had been broadcast was amended. I was particularly interested to hear the later report at half-past six when I was hoping it would be corrected in the news at that time. After some lapse of time, an amended but not a corrected report came over. That having been done, I then wondered just what was happening over the other stations, so I telephoned other commercial stations. All this was done in a hurry; I was relaxing in the garden and came into the house with my hands all dirty and realized that there was not much time to go until half-past six.

As I understood it, another station claimed that it had not put over a report. I asked whether the report had come over the station in question and then got the answer that a report from the A.B.C. had been heard. I asked whether the person I was talking to would recite that report to me, and that was done. I said, "Well, if you are thinking of

putting anything over the air, I cannot dispute that report although it is not the complete statement I gave".

Then I telephoned the national station, A.B.C., which read the report that had gone over, at which I was not surprised: it was a factual report and confirmed the opinion I have had of the A.B.C. reporter, Mr. Rhys Clark, who had conscientiously and accurately reported what I had said. There the matter remained and it was as far as I took it. I saw this in black type in the late edition of yesterday's *News*:

The Legislative Council President (The Hon. Sir Lyell McEwin) will ask the Auditor-General, Mr. Byrne, to carry out a complete and immediate investigation into allegations that members of the Council had misused Government funds.

I leave it to honourable members themselves to form their own impressions of such a statement coming from a radio station that is supposed to be broadcasting accurate information to the public.

**GLADSTONE PRISON**

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a short statement before directing a question to the Chief Secretary.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: The District Council of Gladstone is concerned about a press report stating that the Criminal Law and Penal Methods Reform Committee has recommended that the Gladstone gaol be closed. What action does the Government intend to take about that section of the report relating to the Gladstone gaol? Also, could copies of this report be sent to the local government authorities so that they, too, could study it? I understand that the Gladstone council does not have a copy of the report.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Those sections of the report affecting my department and relating to the Prisons Department have been sent to my officers in the department, and they are carrying out investigations at the moment. Subsequent to their consideration of the matters raised in the report, the Government will look at the question. Because some of the recommendations in the report would be costly to implement, priorities will have to be set in connection with those recommendations that the Government adopts. Copies of the report are available but, because of the small number of councils concerned with the matters raised in the report, it is not intended to send copies to all councils. However, reports will be made available to those councils affected by the recommendations. Such councils should contact the department, which will ensure that they receive copies.

**KANGAROO ISLAND**

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my recent question about airport facilities on Kangaroo Island?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The Commonwealth Minister for Civil Aviation reports:

The Kingscote runway has not been neglected. Effective drainage works were done to stop the aerodrome being flooded by the Cygnet River and, more recently, the main runway has been substantially reconstructed. The national works programme will be reviewed during the next few months and you may rest assured that the requirements of Kingscote will be kept in mind. I should, however, point out that the priorities of this project could be increased if the aerodrome were transferred to local ownership. This matter was discussed with representatives of the Kingscote District Council. If the council were to accept transfer to local ownership, the project could then be judged within the less restrictive framework of Commonwealth commitments to provide local ownership grants. Every effort

would then be made to have the runway sealed at Commonwealth expense during 1973-74, prior to the transfer of the aerodrome under the local ownership scheme.

#### NATIONAL SONG

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Recently in the Address in Reply debate I said that the *Song of Australia* was still our best national song. I think I omitted to mention that there is an excellent arrangement of that song for choir and orchestra by the late Professor Harold Davies. The song was written and composed in South Australia and was launched in Gawler in 1859. A Gallup poll recently sought opinions about *Advance Australia Fair* and *Waltzing Matilda* but, in conformity with a tendency in the Eastern States, ignored the *Song of Australia*. Will the Government consider promoting the *Song of Australia* to the Commonwealth authorities as Australia's national song to be used in association with and, on appropriate and less formal occasions, instead of the National Anthem?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: As this is a policy matter, I will discuss it with my colleagues and bring down a reply as soon as it is available.

#### PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I seek leave to make an explanation prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary, representing the Minister of Development and Mines.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: One of the main requirements for a petro-chemical complex such as the one that has been suggested for Redcliffs, near Port Augusta, is, I believe, a known quantity of ethane gas. Will the Chief Secretary obtain from his colleague information regarding the percentage of ethane in the gases now being taken from Cooper Basin and the known South Australian supplies?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring down a reply as soon as one is available.

#### EGGS

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT: In view of the special circumstances of Kangaroo Island, almost entirely because of its geographical position, will the Minister of Agriculture consider allowing the free marketing on the island of eggs produced there? This consideration would not, of course, apply to eggs sent to the mainland.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the question to the Egg Board, which is the responsible body in this matter, and obtain a reply for the honourable member.

#### TEACHERS' OVERPAYMENTS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Will the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Education, ask his colleague whether it is true that about 50 secondary teachers have recently been overpaid and whether action has been taken to recover the sums, amounting to about \$160 each teacher? If such overpayments have occurred, will the Minister ascertain how many teachers were involved and what is the explanation for such errors having occurred?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring down a reply as soon as it is available.

#### ZONE 5 SETTLERS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: In the Address in Reply debate I dealt with certain matters regarding war service land rentals. I am not criticizing the Minister of Lands for not replying to me in that debate because, after all, it was not that type of debate. In the zone 5 rentals case, agreement was reached between the Commonwealth and the State Governments, as a result of which considerable reductions were made to the rentals. Can the Minister of Lands tell the Council the reasons why the State and the Commonwealth Governments agreed to reductions of rentals in zone 5?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The agreement was a negotiated one between the zone 5 settlers and the Commonwealth Government mainly as a result of their submissions to the Commonwealth and also the submissions by the State that this matter should be looked at. I am not willing to go into the principles on which the rents were fixed at present, because it was a negotiated settlement whereby the settlers' representatives met the Commonwealth Minister without my being present on one occasion but with my being present on another occasion. As a result of those negotiations the settlers had with the Commonwealth Minister and the submissions and figures produced by the State in consultation with the Commonwealth, a negotiated settlement was reached. That is the only way I can answer the question; it was the result of a negotiated settlement.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I desire to make a further explanation prior to directing another question to the Minister of Lands.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I thank the Minister for his reply, but I do not believe he answered the question as I should have liked it answered. Making a reduction in zone 5 rentals means that taxpayers are responsible for large sums of money, so the Government must have had a strong reason for reducing the rentals. Was this done because the rentals were originally improperly fixed or because the settlers had an economic case for the reduction; were these settlers given a reduction because their economic circumstances were such that they needed assistance? Surely there must be a reason why taxpayers' funds were used to reduce the rentals substantially. I believe the Minister should give me an answer to that question.

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: All I am prepared to say is that it was a negotiated settlement between three parties: the Commonwealth Government, the South Australian Government represented by me, and the settlers themselves. However, I am not at liberty at present to divulge the whole of the negotiations that took place and the basis on which final settlement was reached without the approval of the other parties to the agreement. That is as far as I can go.

#### WEST LAKES ROAD

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: During the Address in Reply debate I referred to criticism which was being levelled at the Government by residents in the Albert Park area as a result of the Government's decision to build a wide road

to the West Lakes area and, of course, to acquire residential property for that purpose. The main criticism I endeavoured to stress during that debate was that it appeared from reports that the Government had not consulted the people whose properties were to be acquired before the final decision was made. In the *Advertiser* this morning there appeared in "Letters to the Editor" a further criticism along the same line. The letter was written by a person who appeared to be acting for a group of residents in the Albert Park area who are affected. The criticism centres around this same matter and speaks of the Government's persistent failure to consult local residents. The writer also complains that a different reason was given by the Highways Department for the need for the road compared with the reason given by the Government. So that the matter can be clarified in my mind, I ask these questions: what (if any) discussions were held with local residents prior to the decision to build the road; secondly, what are the reasons for the road being required there?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: As Acting Minister of Transport I have not studied all the ramifications of the honourable member's questions, and therefore I ask him to be patient and I shall get a reply to these questions for him from the department as soon as possible.

#### JOINT COMMITTEE ON SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION

The House of Assembly transmitted the following resolution in which it requested the concurrence of the Legislative Council:

That the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation be empowered to adjourn from place to place.

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

That the resolution contained in the message from the House of Assembly empowering the Joint Committee on Subordinate Legislation to adjourn from place to place be concurred in and that the House of Assembly be informed accordingly.

Motion carried.

#### FIRE BRIGADES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### POLICE REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

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

This short Bill, which is of a somewhat urgent nature, is intended to deal with a problem that has arisen in connection with a decision of the National Standards Commission of the Commonwealth to reject an application for the approval of patterns of "dipsticks" used in certain tankers.

While it is neither appropriate nor proper that the decision of the National Standards Commission to reject the pattern should be traversed here, the decision has given rise to a situation of concern to the users of this instrument in this State. Put shortly, this situation arises from the fact that instruments of this design have in fact been verified and stamped under section 25 of the Weights and Measures Act of this State and the corresponding previous enactment, notwithstanding that they have not been approved by the Commonwealth authorities as required by those Acts.

Now some doubt has been thrown on the technical validity of this verification and stamping. I make no apology for the existence of this situation which arose from a belief, held in good faith, on the part of the authorities here that the pattern would in fact be approved by the Commonwealth authorities. To keep faith with the users of the instruments who have assumed that the instruments were verified and stamped in accordance with the Act, it has been decided that this matter should be made clear in legislative terms and that any technical defect relating to verification and stamping should be covered by validating legislation. At the same time opportunity has been taken to make certain other amendments to the principal Act of a rather less important nature.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 makes a drafting amendment to section 5 of the principal Act by substituting the word "implied" for the word "employed". Clause 3 amends section 15 of the principal Act which deals with casual vacancies on the advisory council. It is provided, at present, that a member of the council representing local government interests may continue to be a member for one month, notwithstanding that he has ceased to be a member of a local government council. This "grace period" was intended to enable the member to seek re-election. It has been put to the Government that this period should be extended to three months, since it is not always possible to arrange an election entirely within one month. With this contention the Government agrees, and this clause is proposed accordingly.

Clause 4 validates the verification and stamping of measuring instruments in the circumstances set out above and is in its terms not confined to the particular instrument there mentioned since it is felt that any other situations of a similar nature, if they in fact exist, should also be covered. Clauses 5 and 6 together remove from the principal Act some now redundant provisions relating to bushel weights. These have become redundant for two reasons: first, most trading in grain is done by weights in the metric system and, secondly, the weights set out in the third schedule are, because of varying water contents and other circumstances, not generally followed in the trade.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 2.47 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, August 21, at 2.15 p.m.