LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, August 30, 1973

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Fire Brigades Act Amendment,
Planning and Development Act Amendment,
Police Regulation Act Amendment,
Young Men's Christian Association of Port Pirie Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS

HEALTH SERVICES

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: My question relates to the introduction of a change in the national health scheme at the Commonwealth level, and I want to refer to what I might term the great health debate. The emphasis so far in this debate has been in the form of a confrontation between the medical profession and the Commonwealth Government. There is, however, an equally important aspect of the controversy that has as yet not been aired. The States are primarily responsible, through the policy the States adopt, for the delivery of health services to the consumer, and any Commonwealth policies adopted will have far-reaching effects on the ability of the State Governments to deliver all the community health services. Has the Minister recognized this aspect of the Commonwealth policies; if so, what studies of the position have been undertaken by the Minister?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: We have considered this question very deeply, but we must bear in mind that at present the final policy has not been determined by the Commonwealth Government. Officers from the Health Department in Canberra, together with officers of my department and of the Hospitals Department, have been in close contact. We appreciate that there will be difficulties and we are assessing how the policy may be framed in an attempt to be up with it if and when the legislation is passed in Canberra.

SOUTH-EAST SALEYARDS

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Is the Minister of Agriculture able to announce the terms of reference for a proposed committee to inquire into the rationalization of stock saleyards in the South-East?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The Government issued a statement a short time ago regarding this important matter that concerns the South-East, and I have been delegated to draw up the committee's terms of reference and to engage consultants to carry out this work. The terms of reference are as follows:

(1) To review existing facilities in the South-East area of the State (south of a line running east and west through Coonalpyn) for the selling of cattle, sheep and pigs in respect of location, condition, capacity and throughput relative to existing turn-off of livestock from the areas now served.

(2) To estimate the future requirements for market facilities, having regard to the potential expansion of livestock production in the South-East during the next 10 to 20 years, including consideration of areas in western Victoria that normally market through South Australian centres.

(3) To advise on the location and capacity of any additional market facilities required, having regard to the potential future adequacy of existing markets (including Naracoorte, at present under construction) as either store and fat stock markets, and the probable future movements and destinations of livestock marketed in the South-East.

(4) To advise on the desirability or otherwise of market facilities being constructed and operated by a State, local or semi-government authority or by private enterprise, and appropriate sources of finance for their construction and maintenance.

(5) To recommend on the form, structure, and siting of livestock markets in relation to future marketing and selling methods (for example, by liveweight) and to physical structure, drainage, and operational aspects (for example, location in relation to townships, regard for pollution, relationship to transport facilities, disease control and the provision of special handling facilities).

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Can the Minister say who the consultants will be and, bearing in mind that, when conditions at the abattoirs were inquired into last year, it was done on the basis of a verbal report and not a written report, will the Minister assure honourable members that the consultants to be engaged on this occasion will be asked to supply their report to him in writing?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The answer to the second question is "Yes". Regarding the other part of the question, I am unable to answer it now because I am still waiting for people interested in the project to contact me. Regarding the consultants engaged by me who made only a verbal report, 1 do not wish to add anything further at this stage.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: Can the Minister say whether every opportunity will be given to interested parties to present evidence to the consultants and whether, when the consultants' findings are accepted by the Minister, they will be binding on the parties interested in the establishment of stock saleyards in the South-East?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: Regarding the first part of the honourable member's question, every opportunity will be given to people who wish to make representations to the consultants, whoever they may be, because they will be dealing with a very important matter. I cannot give the honourable member any guarantee regarding the second part of his question because I do not know exactly what will be submitted to me. Until I receive the submissions, I cannot give the honourable member an answer.

ELIZABETH COUNCIL

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a statement prior to asking a question of the Chief Secretary, as acting Minister of Local Government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I address my question to the acting Minister of Local Government, in the absence of the Minister, who is overseas. By way of preface, I indicate that, as other honourable members have no doubt read, this morning's *Advertiser* contains an article to the

effect that the Elizabeth council, by a vote of six to four, has decided to resign from membership of the Local Government Association. The article states:

The Mayor (Mrs. Eastland) said the council's action left it wide open to unions which had already asked it to adopt a 35-hour working week for outside employees.

She also said that the council would no longer have the benefit of the Local Government Association's full-time industrial advocate. Can the Minister say whether it is the policy of the Local Government Department to encourage all councils to belong to the association, and does he agree that it is desirable, on policy matters that affect local government, that the association should act for all of local government, instead of having a series of local government bodies making varying representations?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The destiny of each council is, of course, in its own hands, and if a council decides to act in this manner there is nothing I can do about it. I believe it is the department's policy to encourage all councils to belong to the Local Government Association, though in its dealings the department listens to individual councils as well as to the association. It all depends on the areas of approach that are made to the department.

FISHING

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Has the Minister of Agriculture received from the Minister of Fisheries a reply to my recent question regarding fishing permits or licences?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: The Minister of Fisheries reports that there has been no change in the procedure regarding applications for abalone permits or fishing licences. These applications are still to be made to the Director of Fisheries. However, it is intended to introduce legislation under which committees will be appointed to consider applications for managed fishery authorities and permits. It is intended that these committees will comprise the Director of Fisheries or his nominee, a nominee of the relevant fishermen's association, with an independent chairman. These proposals will be brought into operation as soon as practicable.

PACKAGING

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister of Health.

Leave granted.

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: On August 21 I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question concerning the packaging of agricultural chemicals, in reply to which the Minister said that the matter came under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health. He also asked me to give some examples of the products to which I was referring. One of the poor types of packaging to which I referred is diuron, which is marketed in paper bags under the trade name of Karmex, and is produced by the Dupont Chemical Company. The product in the bag is worth over $10, although the bag containing it is worth only a few cents.

Another example is the Agricultural Chemicals Company, which supplies all its chemicals in green 4-gallon (18.18 *l*) drums. I have received representations from a seed-grower in the South-East who lost a valuable medic crop by spraying it with 2-4D Amine. Apparently the label had come off the container in his damp shed and he thought he was spraying the crop with insecticide. Will the Minister of Health investigate these types of poor packaging?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I am surprised that the Minister of Agriculture passed the buck to me. However, I shall be happy to look into the matter raised by the Hon. Mr. Chatterton.

MODBURY-MANNUM ROAD

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Will the Acting Minister of Transport say what the time schedule is for the reconstruction of the Modbury-Mannum main road?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will make inquiries and let the honourable member know as soon as possible.

RAILWAY FENCING

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: The Chairman of the District Council of Mallala has drawn my attention to the poor state of some of the fencing along the railway line between Mallala and Salisbury, and I have no doubt that honourable members can think of other places where the fencing is not all that it should be. Apparently, in some places this constitutes a hazard. Will the Minister ask the South Australian Railways to attend to the hazard that exists in these places?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will call for a report on this matter and have it investigated.

HOSPITAL ESCAPEE

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Recently, there has been alarming news of a 19-year-old man who had been found guilty of killing a child in South Australia and. who escaped from Hillcrest Hospital on August 10 last. Can the Minister of Health assure the Council that the security arrangements at Hillcrest Hospital are now to his and the Government's complete satisfaction? If not, has any action been taken to ensure that there will not be similar escapes in future?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I think the position can be properly cleared up if I give the honourable member the following information. In March, 1970, the man concerned, Mitchell, was placed under the control of the Minister of Social Welfare until the age of 18 years, by the Supreme Court, on a charge of manslaughter. At the same time, he was placed on a bond for three years with supervision to commence from his eighteenth birthday. This bond would have been supervised by the Adult Probation Service from May 9, 1972, but in May, 1971, Mitchell absconded and was committed by the Juvenile Court on June 11, 1971, to McNally Training Centre for two years. That order expired on June 11, 1973.

Following a request from the Department of Community Welfare, Mitchell was examined by the Mental Health Services in early June, 1973, and was transferred from McNally Training Centre to Hillcrest Hospital on June 8, following certification. On August 10, 1973, Mitchell absconded from Hillcrest Hospital. The Police Department was immediately notified. Mitchell has now been arrested at Traralgon, Victoria, on a housebreaking charge. It is evident that he has been in Victoria for about the last two weeks.

So he was not in Hillcrest Hospital as a criminal serving a sentence: he was put in there as a certified patient and was receiving the same treatment as any certified patient would receive. I am satisfied that the supervision for that type of person is adequate.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Was any publicity given to the fact that Michael David Mitchell had escaped from

Hillcrest Hospital? If not, why not? Is the report in this morning's press correct that Mitchell is regarded as dangerous?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: It is not the usual practice to give publicity to a case when a patient walks out of a mental institution, and I point out that Mitchell was nothing more than a patient as far as we were concerned. He had served the sentence imposed on him by the court, and the hospital could give him only the usual treatment there. Mitchell was not sent to the hospital for admission to the security block; he was there because he had been certified as being mentally defective. No publicity was given because it is not the usual procedure to publicize such a matter, and it would not have been in the best interests of the public to do so. When the patient absconded, the police were notified and they took the necessary steps in endeavouring to have the patient returned to the hospital.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Minister has not answered the last part of my question: is the report in this morning's press correct that the mental health authorities, I presume, regard Mitchell as dangerous?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: That report is not correct.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Will the Minister closely examine the policy in regard to the release of news of the escape of mentally defective people from the Hillcrest Hospital? I am sure that the public is alarmed at what has happened. If publicity was given to abscondings, householders near the hospital might be able to assist the hospital authorities and the police. In many cases the assistance of householders may lead to the early return of a patient to the hospital.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I appreciate the honourable member's concern. However, I believe that our present policy is correct. If there is any concern for the public safety, abscondings are undoubtedly publicized. I shall be happy to have a look at the present policy, but I do not think it would be wise to create panic unnecessarily.

BIRDSVILLE TRACK

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Can the Acting Minister of Transport say what the current position is regarding upgrading the Birdsville track; how much money has been spent on it during the last financial year; and when it will be completed as an all-weather road?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I will obtain the information for the honourable member as soon as possible.

ABDUCTIONS

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER: Is the Minister of Health aware that there was an attempted abduction, possibly by a mental defective, at the Adelaide railway station yesterday?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I was not aware of that.

CONSUMER TRANSACTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The House of Assembly intimated that it had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This short Bill has the effect of increasing the number of Ministers of the Crown provided for by the principal Act, the Constitution Act, 1934, as amended, from 10 to 11. It also continues in operation the provisions that of the whole number of the Ministers of the Crown at least three shall be members of the Legislative Council. This result is achieved by providing that not more than eight of the enlarged Ministry may be members of the House of Assembly. Honourable members will no doubt appreciate that with the growing complexity of administration the burdens cast on a Ministry of the present size are becoming increasingly heavy. The Government feels that following the creation of the additional Ministerial office a redistribution and rationalization of Ministerial duties and functions can be effected that will not only be of benefit to this Parliament but to the people of the State generally.

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

PAY-ROLL TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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.

The main object of this Bill is to give effect to an agreement reached at the Premiers' Conference on June 28 and June 29 of this year that pay-roll tax levied by the States should be increased by 1 per cent to 4½ per cent in respect of taxable wages paid or payable on or after September 1. To this extent, then, the Bill must be regarded as essentially a revenue-raising measure, and is introduced in consequence of the stated intention of the Government to ensure that its certain substantial revenue deficit is less than it otherwise would be. In addition, opportunity has been taken to deal with two other matters of some importance but necessarily of less import than the main object of this measure adverted to here.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends section 9 of the principal Act and provides that, in respect of taxable wages paid or payable after September 1, 1973, pay-roll lax will be payable at the rate of 4½ per cent, in lieu of the previous rate of 3½ per cent. Clause 3 amends section 12 of the principal Act. This section, amongst other things, provides that most Government departments shall be exempt from a liability to pay pay-roll tax on wages paid by them. When the power to levy pay-roll tax was transferred from the Commonwealth Government to the States in 1971 it was thought that an exemption for Government departments would save unnecessary book-keeping and administrative work.

However, with the benefit of hindsight, this exemption has in fact caused some problems, particularly where work is done by a Government department and the costs thereof have to be recovered from some outside body. In these circumstances it is usual to make a charge to cover the "notional pay-roll tax" that should properly be a component of the cost of the work performed by the department. Unless there is a clear liability for the department involved to pay pay-roll tax, some difficulty may arise in collecting this component of the cost. Accordingly, this clause proposes that on and from July 1, 1974, all Government departments will pay pay-roll tax on their taxable wages.

Clause 4 amends section 14 of the principal Act and is intended to deal with a difficulty that has arisen in connection with the transitional arrangements consequent upon

the assumption of taxing powers in this area by the State. Subsection (3) of this section provided that possession of a certificate of registration as an employer under the Commonwealth Act would entitle the holder of that certificate to be "deemed to be registered" as an employer under the State Pay-roll Tax Act. However, although there was power in the Commonwealth to issue those certificates of registration, in fact none have been issued since 1957. Accordingly, the amendment proposed by this clause will ensure that mere registration under the Commonwealth Act will result in the employer being deemed to be registered under the State Act. Clause 5 is an evidentiary provision.

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

STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL

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

AGENT-GENERAL ACT AMENDMENT 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.

In the past it has been customary to fix the salary of the Agent-General and his officers in the United Kingdom in pounds sterling. However, this method of salary fixation has, due to a decline in the value of the pound sterling in terms of the Australian dollar, caused an appreciable erosion in the salary of the Agent-General and his officers when expressed in terms of Australian dollars. Steps, which do not require legislation, have already been taken to express the salaries of the officers of the Agent-General in Australian dollars, and the purpose of this short Bill is to perform the same function in relation to the salary and expense allowance of the Agent-General.

It is simply not a question of converting the salary of the Agent-General as expressed in pounds sterling to Australian dollars using the present "Treasury" rate of $1.75 equalling £1 sterling since this would result in a diminution of the Agent-General's salary (expressed as dollars) payable to him in terms of his original appointment. Accordingly, a rate of salary and expenses has been struck which, in all circumstances, seems to be an appropriate rate for the office of Agent-General and at the same time opportunity has been taken to apply to the salary of the Agent-General adjustments of the same order as are provided for by the Statutes Amendment (Public Salaries) Bill, 1973, at present before this Council.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 amends section 5 of the principal Act by providing that from June 4, 1973, when the national wage increase had effect, the salary of the Agent-General will be $11,297 a year until August 27, 1973, when it will be $14,700 a year. An expense allowance of $10,100 a year is also provided for by this clause.

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

SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for the supplementation of pensions payable before a day to be fixed by proclamation by 8.7 per cent. This increase is the same increase that will be provided for pensions for former members of the judiciary and former Parliamentarians, and it is intended to reflect the rise in the cost of living since the last increase in pensions was made. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 is an amendment consequential on the proposal to supplement pensions.

Clause 3 repeals section 100d of the principal Act and replaces it with two sections, 100d and 100e, which are in much the same form as in previous pension supplementation Bills. As is usual in this case, an operative date will be fixed by proclamation in order that all pensions payable pursuant to the relevant Statutes will be increased at approximately the same time.

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

PARLIAMENTARY SUPERANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This short Bill, which is in substantially the same form as a measure introduced and passed last year, is intended to increase pensions that had a determination day, as defined, that occurred before June 30, 1972, by 8.7 per cent. Honourable members will recall that it is customary to increase pensions in this manner so as, to some extent, to reflect increases in the cost of living. Action is being taken to increase pensions payable to former members of the judiciary and former members of the Public Service by a similar percentage.

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

PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL

Read a third time and passed.

PHYSIOTHERAPISTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

POLICE PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

HOUSING AGREEMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It authorizes the Treasurer to execute on behalf of the State of South Australia a new housing agreement with the Commonwealth. The agreement authorized to be executed must be substantially in accordance with the form set out in the schedule to the Bill. The agreement provides that, in the five years commencing this financial year, the Commonwealth will make advances to the State at low interest rates for what are described as welfare housing purposes. The advances will be made for two purposes: *(a)* for allotment by the State to its housing authority for provision of housing in accordance with the agreement; and (b) for payment to an account at the State Treasury, which in the case of this State will be known as the Home Builders Account No. 3, for application by the State for mortgage lending to prospective home purchasers by way of loans through the State Bank of South Australia.

The agreement requires that not less than 85 per cent of family houses built by the trust under this agreement

are to be allocated to families where the average gross weekly income of the main breadwinner does not exceed 85 per cent of the average weekly earnings each employed male in the State (or in Australia, whichever the State may elect) as published by the Commonwealth Statistician during the preceding December quarter. Where the family includes more than two children this will be increased by $2 a week for each child beyond the second. Similar extensions are provided for aged couples and single aged persons. The State is required, moreover, to ensure that the total of family dwellings allocated by the Housing Trust during each of the years of the agreement to persons eligible under the needs test described shall be at least the equivalent of the total of family dwellings built with these special advances plus 25 per cent of the number of dwellings built under this or earlier agreements which become available during the year for reallocation.

Whilst the agreement does not of itself spell out a maximum rent that is chargeable, the Commonwealth Minister for Housing has suggested that rents charged to families at the upper limit of the needs test should not exceed 22½ per cent of income and that the proportion of rent to income should decline as income reduces. The agreement also provides that, at least once in each financial year, the State Housing authority should review its rentals and make adjustments when necessary. The Commonwealth Minister has taken the view that regular smaller rental reviews are preferable to infrequent and larger rental adjustments. One of the more important aspects of Commonwealth housing policy relates to the building up of a stock of rental houses, and thus the agreement restricts to 30 per cent the percentage of family dwellings built with funds provided under this agreement that may be sold, either by direct sale or under agreement. Also, where such houses are sold the purchasers must satisfy the needs test, and the interest charge to purchasers is limited to 5¾ per cent a year. A purchaser of such a house may not dispose of it, other than to the Housing Trust, for at least five years after the date of sale, and, even subsequently, intending vendors will be required to give the Housing Trust first option to purchase at a fair market value.

As I indicated earlier, the special provisions in the agreement will enable this State to continue to divert more than 50 per cent of these special funds to the Home Builders Account for advances to intending house purchasers through the State Bank. Here again the funds passing through this Home Builders Account must be used for welfare purposes to benefit the more needy applicants. The needs test set for applicants for concessional interest rate housing loans, which in this State will carry an interest rate of 5½ per cent a year, is that those eligible will be families where the average gross income of the main breadwinner does not exceed 95 per cent of average weekly earnings plus $2 a week for each child beyond two. Average weekly earnings for these purposes means the average weekly earnings of each employed male unit in the State (or in Australia) during the December quarter preceding the date at which the loan is approved. The minimum deposit to be found by a borrower will be 3 per cent of the value of the land and house erected thereon. The foregoing is, of course, a summary only of the conditions contained in the new agreement. Persons seeking to determine their eligibility to obtain houses from the Housing Trust or loans from the State Bank may obtain full details from those authorities.

I think that it is appropriate for me to say that, whilst we welcome those low-cost moneys as an addition to our funds for housing, this is not the complete picture. The Housing Trust has been in the housing business now for many years and, in addition to having a stock of rental houses passing through its hands for reallocation, it also has a considerable circulating fund built up from borrowings outside the Commonwealth-State housing agreements that have been used in general in the house sales programmes of the trust. It is confidently expected that these funds will meet the requirements placed on the trust for rental and rental purchase houses for allocation to persons in various areas who may not meet the needs test criteria that have been attached to these new Commonwealth funds.

The agreement provides that not less than 20 per cent nor more than 30 per cent of welfare housing advances shall be paid to the Home Builders Account but, when a State Minister so requests and where a State has made allocations to its Home Builders Account in the two preceding years that are in excess of 30 per cent, the Commonwealth Minister may approve an allocation to the Home Builders Account in excess of 30 per cent of the total of Commonwealth advances for a year. This is a special provision to deal with the position in South Australia, which, with a tradition of house ownership, has, for a number of years, diverted 50 per cent or more of the total funds provided for housing into the provision of funds, on attractive terms, for persons seeking to buy houses.

In the current financial year the State has secured a total of $32,750,000 for welfare housing purposes, of which $17,250,000 (or 52.7 per cent) will be available for mortgage loans through the State Bank and $15,500,000 (or 47.3 per cent) will be available to the South Australian Housing Trust. These amounts compare to $15,500,000 and $14,000,000, totalling $29,500,000, which was made available from State Loan funds to the State Bank and to the South Australian Housing Trust respectively during 1972-73.

Advances will be made available to the State during the five-year period of the agreement at a rate of interest of 4 per cent in respect of advances made to the Housing Trust and at a rate of interest of 4½ per cent in respect of that part of the advances which will be paid to the Home Builders Account. The advances will be repayable with interest at these rates over a period of 53 years commencing with the year after the year in which the advances are made. Advances made to the South Australian Housing Trust may be used as follows: *(a)* to meet the cost of acquisition and development of land for residential purposes; *(b)* to meet the cost of construction of dwellings; *(c)* to meet the cost of purchase, upgrading, renovating and substantially improving existing dwellings; and *(d)* for provision of bridging finance for community amenities that are not the responsibility of the Housing Trust.

In the same way, although the concessional interest rate funds provided through the Home Builders' Account must be reserved for persons who meet the needs test that has been set, the circulating funds that have been growing in the Treasury and in the State Bank as a result of interest margins and repayments of principal under earlier agreements and supplemented by appropriation of State Loan funds will provide the necessary funds to enable the State Bank to assist in catering for the mortgage loan requirements of persons who do not meet the needs criteria. As I have announced earlier, loans to those persons will be made presently at a rate of 6½ per cent, compared to the 5½ per cent rate available to applicants who meet the needs test. Loans available after June 30, 1973, for both classes of

applicant may be granted to a maximum amount of $12,500 compared to the limits of $10,000 for new dwellings and $9,000 for established dwellings that applied prior to that date.

I will now deal with the Bill in detail. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 provides appropriate definitions in the measure. Clause 3 authorizes the execution and the carrying out of the agreement. Clause 4 authorizes the Treasurer to make loans to a lending authority of the State approved by the Minister and authorizes that authority to borrow the money. The Commonwealth Minister has already indicated that he will approve the State Bank as a "lending authority of the State" for this purpose. Clause 5 provides that any other moneys advanced to the State, other than moneys payable to the Home Builders' Account, shall be paid to a special account at the Treasury and shall be paid from that account to the South Australian Housing Trust. Subclause (2) authorizes the Treasurer to use moneys paid to him by the trust, or moneys in the Home Builders' Account, to meet interest obligations and principal repayments due to the Commonwealth under the agreement.

Clause 6 provides for the situation where, for any reason, payments to the State by the Commonwealth under the agreement may be delayed. This clause authorizes the Treasurer to make advances to the Home Builders' Account to enable funds to continue to be available for mortgage lending. Since the Housing Trust has other sources of funds, a similar provision is not required to cover temporary advances to the trust. Clause 7 in substance will allow the State to anticipate the execution of the agreement and, indeed, the passage of this Bill. In effect, it provides that moneys may be made available for housing purposes at any time in anticipation of the execution of the agreement and that any advances or repayments referred to in this clause will, as it were, be retrospectively validated. I make no apology for the inclusion of a clause of this kind since, in the view of the Government, the sooner money is made available in accordance with the terms of the agreement the better it will be for those in this State who are in need of suitable housing.

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

GIFT DUTY 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 is intended to make it clear that the definition of "Commissioner" under the Gift Duly Act accords precisely with that under the Succession Duties Act. Honourable members will no doubt be aware that, by virtue of section 4 of the Gift Duty Act, the office of Commissioner under that Act is in fact vested in the Commissioner of Succession Duties appointed under the Succession Duties Act. However, in the Succession Duties Act it is recognized that many of the duties and functions of the Commissioner will, in fact, be performed in his name by his departmental officers. This is merely recognizing the practicalities of the administration of a substantial department of the Government.

To ensure that this situation is reflected in the Gift Duty Act, it is intended that this position will also be clarified in relation to that Act. Accordingly, the operative clause of this Bill, clause 2, proposes the insertion of words providing for the recognition of any officer who is performing any of the duties or functions of the Commissioner of Succession Duties and hence, by extension, of the Commissioner under the Gift Duty Act.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT secured the adjournment of the debate.

ELECTRICITY TRUST OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As was foreshadowed in the speech of His Excellency the Governor on the opening of this session of Parliament, the Government must increase its revenues if it is to avoid an even more substantial deficit on the Revenue Account than that for which it is at present obliged to budget. The alternative, which is to decrease the range and standard of services that the people of this State have a right to expect, is beyond contemplation. The method of increase in revenue provided for by this Bill has been selected because it can be shared generally by the whole community and it requires no increase in administrative costs for its collection.

Honourable members will recall that in 1971 provision was made, by an amendment to the principal Act, the Electricity Trust of South Australia Act, for the trust to contribute 3 per cent of its revenue, from the sale of electricity, to the general revenue of the State. Those contributions are made on a quarterly basis. The effect of this measure is to increase that contribution by 2 per cent to a total of 5 per cent and the increased contribution will apply to the revenue accruing to the trust from the third quarter of this calendar year and from each succeeding quarter thereafter. There will thus be three quarterly payments to revenue at the increased rate during 1973-74. The operative clause of the Bill, clause 2, provides for this increase.

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

STATE LOTTERIES 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 arises from representations made by the Lotteries Commission of South Australia and the Auditor-General. Honourable members will be aware that section 15 of the principal Act, the State Lotteries Act, 1966, provides not only for a formal audit at the end of every month but also for the report of the Auditor-General on each such audit to be tabled in this Council. The Auditor-General considers that this requirement is no longer warranted, particularly when he has found the internal checks and controls operated by the commission "very satisfactory". With this view the Government concurs.

Accordingly, the amendments effected to section 15 of the principal Act provide for an annual audit and annual report rather than the monthly audit and report. However, I wish to make clear that the over-riding right of the Auditor-General, to make such inspections of the books and property of the commission as he sees fit, is still preserved, and the Auditor-General will be quite free to exercise his powers in this matter as the circumstances dictate.

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

REGISTRATION OF DEEDS 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 is mainly intended to deal with a situation that has been brought to the attention of the Government by the Registrar-General of Deeds. In 1961, section 20 of the Real Property Act was repealed. This section provided that, before entering the duties of his office, the Registrar-General, an Acting Registrar-General, or a Deputy Registrar-General shall make a declaration in the form set in that section before a judge of the Supreme Court. Since that repeal, declarations under that Act have of course not been necessary.

However, at and since that time, the fact that an oath of office in somewhat similar terms was required to be sworn under the Registration of Deeds Act was overlooked. As a result, since 1961 such oaths have not in fact been sworn. There appears little doubt that declarations and oaths of this kind are really not necessary, and it is desirable that the provisions in the Registration of Deeds Act relating to the swearing of an oath should be repealed, and to deal with the situation as it has existed since 1961 appropriate validating legislation should be enacted.

I will now consider the Bill in detail. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 repeals section 7 of the principal Act, which provided for the taking of an oath of office, and replaces it with an appropriate validating provision to cover cases where officers have not sworn such an oath. Clauses 3, 4 and 5 make appropriate amendments to quantities expressed in English units of measurement to convert those units to metric units.

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

CROWN LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 29. Page 562.)

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I rise to support this Bill, which conforms to what has been happening over a period of time in the irrigation areas of South Australia. Renmark paved the way and I am pleased that, in respect of the oldest irrigation settlement in Australia, Renmark, the Government gave its servants and members of the Renmark Irrigation Trust the opportunity to go and see what was happening in other parts of the world. The information they brought back was not merely for Renmark: it helped Berri, which comes under the provisions of this legislation, the Barmera area, and particularly Lyrup.

Lyrup is unique in that it is the only scheme left out of all the schemes that started round about 1892 and were built up socialistically, coming about as a result of the bank crash of 1892 and people being out of work. It was believed that water could be used in those areas. Lyrup is the one scheme that has survived, and it has done very well. I think it provided the cheapest irrigation water per capita in the whole of South Australia.

I am pleased that the Government has seen fit to assist Lyrup with an additional amount of money because the people there have been battlers in every possible way. I am glad that funds to the extent of $138,000 are proposed to be made available, of which not more than $55,000 shall be by way of grant. This amount of money has been increased and the way that Lyrup has managed its own affairs under a village settlement is remarkable. The Government is acting properly in doing what it is doing. The settlers of Lyrup are entitled to the assistance they are getting, and I have the greatest pleasure in supporting the Bill.

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

FAIR PRICES ACT REPEAL BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 29. Page 562.)

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): This Bill repeals the Fair Prices Act, 1924-1935. This legislation was introduced as a Bill into Parliament in September, 1924, by the Treasurer of the time, the Hon. John Gunn. According to that honourable gentleman:

> Legislation directed against trusts, combines, and monopolies is no new thing in recent political experiments.

Those are John Gunn's own words. He continued his second reading explanation by saying:

> In the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, and several Australian States the Legislature has, by a variety of expedients, attempted to prevent the growth of monopolies and to mitigate their detrimental effect upon the consumer. The Commonwealth Parliament, as far back as 1906, passed an Act which contained provisions similar to those in the United States Sherman Act for the purpose of repressing monopolies, and the New Zealand Commercial Trusts Act of 1910 followed the same principles.

The Commonwealth 1906 legislation was a dead loss and was never acted upon; it reached a situation similar to that reached by the Fair Prices Act here, which is now being repealed. There have been many attempts to legislate in connection with fair prices. The first Bill of this type, the Prices Regulation Bill, was introduced in 1914 by the Hon. Mr. Homburg, and it was repealed in 1919, when a promise was made by the then Government that the Bill's provisions would be re-enacted and modernized at a later date. The later date was 1921, when a Bill was introduced, but it lapsed and did not appear again. As I said earlier, the Hon. Mr. Gunn introduced the Fair Prices Bill, which he said would deal mainly with monopolies and combines, but it took a slightly different line from the line taken by the other legislation to which I have referred. The previous Bills, both Commonwealth and State, used penal measures as their teeth whereas, under the Fair Prices Act, if it was proved that a monopoly, price-fixing ring, or combine had kept prices high, a tribunal had power to reduce the price that had been fixed. So, the Fair Prices Act introduced the idea of a tribunal, but the Act turned out to be no more effective than were previous attempts to control prices.

From this brief history perhaps honourable members can see some similarity between the ideas put forward up to 50 years ago and the debates taking place at present. We have heard about restrictive trade practices legislation, referral of State powers to the Commonwealth, price control legislation, prices justification tribunals, land commissions, land and house price control measures, and many other proposals over the last 50 years.

On looking at the history of the matter, one wonders whether things really change in connection with this type of legislation. Sir Henry Barwell, in replying to a debate on price control, pointed out clearly something that every person must understand: there is only one way in which we will get effective price control—ensuring there is free and open competition on a free market. The market place will always determine the final price of any product. The present position seems to be developing along the line that the paternalistic authorities in Canberra believe that they can solve all problems for us in this regard. How often we have heard the cry that the problem lies with the Commonwealth Constitution and that the powers contained therein are not sufficient to enable the Canberra authorities to suppress price increases.

I ask honourable members, when considering how effective centralized control would be in suppressing price increases, to check what has happened to land prices in the Australian Capital Territory, where the authorities have absolute power to introduce the controls that they want. I agree that, where a combine or ring supplying services to the public uses its monopoly control to exploit the public, there should be measures to prevent that happening. However, filling the Statute Book with experimental legislation that will establish Government control over every aspect of our lives will, in the long run, have a damaging effect on the virility of our economy, on the outlook of the people, and on the general well-being of the total community. Free and open competition is the only real price control that works. We should not be working toward greater bureaucratic control, which will in the end produce a dormant society. I support the second reading of the Bill, because the Act has been shown to be completely ineffective in controlling prices, as has so much similar legislation.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF COUNCIL ACT REPEAL BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 29. Page 563.)

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER (Central No. 2): I support this Bill. As the Minister said in his second reading explanation, the Unemployment Relief Council has ceased to function, and the principal Act is no longer required. Therefore, I can see no reason to delay the passage of the Bill.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.40 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, September 11, at 2.15 p.m.