

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, September 24, 1974

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

## QUESTIONS

## PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I seek leave to make two brief explanations before asking questions of the Minister of Agriculture, representing the Minister of Environment and Conservation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I make my first explanation before asking a series of three questions. On August 13, 1974 (page 390 of *Hansard*), the Minister, in reply to question No. 3 of some Questions on Notice by the Hon. G. J. Gilfillan, said:

Studies are being undertaken to determine toxicity levels for ethylene-dichloride.

My first three questions are as follows: first, are these studies completed; secondly, if so, can results be made available to Parliament; and, thirdly, if not, when will they be available? In reply to question No. 4 of the same Questions on Notice, the Minister said:

A large spillage of EDC to the gulf would constitute a major catastrophe although trace quantities will naturally oxidise. Every measure will therefore be taken to prevent the occurrence of any spillage but as a security precaution the consortium is preparing contingency measures for the long odds of such an event occurring.

My further questions are as follows: first, what amount of EDC spillage would constitute a large spillage; secondly, what amount of EDC would constitute trace quantities; thirdly, can the Minister explain how trace quantities of EDC will naturally oxidise; and, finally, if a large spillage of EDC was to occur, what action could the consortium take?

Further to those questions, I ask the Minister, first, after ponding of effluent for the required number of days, in what concentration will EDC be discharged into the gulf; and, secondly, what research has been done so far on the effects of EDC entering the food chain in much the same way as does D.D.T.?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's questions to my colleague and bring down replies when they are available.

## UNDERGROUND WATERS COMMITTEE

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked on September 10 regarding the Underground Waters Preservation Act Appeals Committee?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: On the assumption that the honourable member was referring in his question to the Underground Waters Appeal Board, I point out that the matter was taken up with the Minister of Works, who states that the board consists of six members and, under the terms of section 40 of the Underground Waters Preservation Act, comprises a Chairman who shall be a legal practitioner of not less than seven years standing, a person suitably qualified in engineering, a person suitably qualified in geology or geophysics, a landholder who is suitably qualified and experienced in agricultural matters, a person experienced in well drilling, and a legally qualified medical practitioner. There is no provision for the appointment of a representative of local government.

## COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: I seek leave to make a short explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister of Health, representing the Minister of Local Government.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. CAMERON: My question relates to the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas. It must be clear to most members that there is now widespread dissension in the community relating to this matter and, in fact, all members have received petitions from the various councils. Certainly, at present most of the time of the secretaries of members of this Council is taken up with receiving from councils objections to these proposals. Will the Minister ascertain whether the Minister of Local Government has submitted a Bill to Cabinet to implement the findings of the Royal Commission? If such a Bill has not been submitted, when will it be submitted; or has Cabinet already rejected such a Bill?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I will seek a report from my colleague and bring the honourable member up to date with the latest information.

## MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Has the Minister of Health a reply to the question I asked some time ago about medical equipment which I understand was invented by a South Australian and in use in South Australian hospitals?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The equipment referred to by the honourable member has been tested at both the Royal Adelaide and the Queen Elizabeth Hospitals. The equipment was given a long trial at the Royal Adelaide Hospital but was found to be unsatisfactory for several reasons. The major fault was the use of special sheets on which the patient lay. These were expensive and a large number was necessary as it was essential for the patient to remain on the sheet until his location in the hospital was stabilised. The sheets shrunk with laundering which made them difficult to fix to and disengage from the lifting frames. The frames were found to be too short for taller patients and too long for use with the standard bedstead. The latter fault resulted in patients having to be manhandled from the edge of the bed to its centre.

A different model lifting device which uses plastic instead of sheets is now being tested with much more satisfactory results. The Bonnin patient lifter has been on trial usage at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in both operating theatres and the Casualty Department. The principle on which the system is founded has promise, and the trial will continue at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. A report has also been received from one country Government-subsidised hospital to the effect that Mr. Bonnin's equipment has proved to be very satisfactory in the handling of patients brought to the hospital by ambulance. There is much interest throughout the Hospitals Department generally in equipment which can improve efficiency and safety in the handling of patients, and further evaluation of equipment developed by Mr. Bonnin and others will continue.

## MURRAY RIVER FLOODING

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: I seek leave to make a brief explanation prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Works.

Leave granted.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: My question relates to the expected flooding of the Murray River. On Thursday last, officers of the Engineering and Water Supply Department toured the Lower Murray and met councillors and residents. I made a tour of the same area last Saturday and also spoke

to councillors and residents. I understand that departmental officers will make recommendations to the Minister on steps proposed to protect some property in the area. In general, the recommendations seem to be generous and realistic, and I hope the Minister approves them. However, there is one case where I do not think all factors have been taken into account. I understand that the recommendation concerning Flower's store at Purnong is that it be not sand-bagged, as it is considered that it will be isolated and flooded in any event. In my opinion, it probably could be saved, but an important point is that it is in a very unprotected situation and is of light construction. If it is not sand-bagged it is likely that it will be severely damaged by wave action. Will the Minister consider providing at least some protection for the store?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I do not know whether or not my colleague will do it, but I will refer the honourable member's question to him. I will ask my colleague to consider the matter when he is examining the officers' report.

#### LIBRARIES

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Education.

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In September of last year the Minister of Education set up a committee to investigate the practicability of greater community use of school libraries, particularly in country areas. The committee established that there was a need for community school libraries and submitted a report to the Minister last February. A press report of last week states that the Commonwealth Government has made a grant of \$8 700 to establish a community library at Cleve Area School. It is envisaged that the library will provide books free of charge to the general public as well as cassettes and cassette players for a trial period of two years. First, will the Minister ascertain whether the Education Department intends to act on the committee's report and to provide State funds for further school community libraries this financial year; secondly, will the Commonwealth Government be asked to establish further school libraries, such as that at Cleve Area School; and, thirdly, will the Government amend the Libraries and Institutes Act so that the proposed Commonwealth Government spending at Cleve Area School will be subject to some control and oversight by the Libraries Board of this State?

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.

#### FLAKE

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: I seek leave to make a short statement before asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Fisheries.

Leave granted.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Victorians are expressing concern at the high mercury content of flake, or school shark, being sold in Victoria and presumably caught in South Australian waters. Fishermen in South Australia are showing equally as much concern about the controversy, which dates back to 1972, when the first alarm was raised that South Australian flake carried more mercury than the level prescribed in Victoria. At that time the then Minister of Fisheries (Hon. T. M. Casey) made representations to the Victorian Government. During the discussions, it was proposed that a standard be sought from the World Health Organisation. It was hoped that this, together with other negotiations instigated at that time, would clear up the

matter. Can the Minister say whether there has been a report from the World Health Organisation on the acceptable level of mercury, and are there currently any negotiations with the Commonwealth and Victorian health authorities to reach a compromise?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I shall refer the matter to my colleague in another place and bring down a reply when it is available.

#### MONARTO

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: Has the Minister of Agriculture a reply to the question I asked on September 18 regarding wheatgrowing at Monarto?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My colleague, the Minister of Development and Mines, has informed me that wheat will not be grown by the Monarto Development Commission or by contractors on the Monarto site in the 1975-76 season. An assessment has now been made of farming activities at Monarto, and this indicates that there will be no commercial wheatgrowing activities within the designated site after the end of the current season. The wheat quotas applying to land within the designated site, therefore, will be returned to the Wheat Delivery Quota Advisory Committee. Wheat quotas for land acquired by the Monarto Development Commission outside the designated site will be retained by the commission at present, as this land may be returned to wheatgrowing in the future.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: ROAD TOLL

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Mr. Hill has informed me in writing that he wishes to discuss, as a matter of urgency, the matter of the need for immediate action to improve road safety and to contain the road toll. In accordance with Standing Order No. 116, it will be necessary for three members to rise in their places as proof of the urgency of the matter.

*Five members having risen:*

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): I move:

That the Council at its rising do adjourn until Wednesday, September 25, at 1.30 p.m.

There is ample evidence here in South Australia of the extremely serious problem of the road toll.

The Hon. T. M. Casey: In the other States, as well.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: If the Minister will contain himself and be patient, I shall endeavour to answer his comment in the body of my speech as I proceed. I was saying that there was tremendous evidence here in this State of the serious problem of the road toll. There is loss of life, pain of injury, human suffering to those near and dear to the accident victims, social damage within families and within the community at large, and the great cost in money terms (which, of course, is very difficult to assess) as the result of road accidents. Last week, on Monday, September 16, the *News* contained an article at page 3 which states:

State is heading for worst road carnage—400 deaths predicted.

The article went on to state:

South Australia is heading for its highest road toll. Road Safety Council experts believe the toll will exceed 400. Today, the toll stands at 272—60 more than for the corresponding period last year.

The article then indicated that last year's total was 327. Elsewhere, by comparison, the article stated that, in New South Wales, 16 people were killed on that State's roads during the weekend, bringing the New South Wales road toll to 883, or 42 more than for the corresponding period last year.

I want to highlight the point that, on the basis of the percentage increase in the toll between the two States (and this will interest the Minister who interjected), the South Australian increase this year so far has been 28 per cent and the New South Wales increase 5 per cent. On the day following that article, the *News*, in its leader, under the heading "Stupidity on Wheels" stated that South Australians were well on the way to setting a new record in road deaths. South Australians are asking: is everything possible being done to contain this problem? I have waited for a week to hear some news from the Minister and the Government of some action that the Government is to implement or is planning as a result of that publicity and, of course, the hard facts revealed by it.

As far as I know, no announcement or plan has been forthcoming. I submit there is a strong and definite need for further action here in this State to cope with this road carnage, as the newspaper so aptly describes it. I believe a constructive proposal to improve the situation would be the implementation of a priority road system. In effect, this would be part of a new traffic code displacing our present traffic policy of giving way to the right.

It has been mooted from time to time over many years that this change should be considered in South Australia. For some years I was opposed to the change, but times have changed and I think one must be prepared to look at alternatives that may have the effect, amongst other things, of saving lives on our roads. I have looked closely at this alternative and I now wholeheartedly support it. The new code would mean that, wherever there was a "stop" or "give way" sign, the present rule of giving way to the right would not apply. It would mean that a motorist approaching a "stop" sign would have to yield to traffic on both his right and his left. The policy not only would imply general improvement of our road system and traffic aids, which are a part of the road environment, but particularly would mean a change of rules at intersections. It would produce more control at intersections.

I want to dwell upon intersections for one moment. In the official journal of the Australian Road Federation of September, 1974, called *Road News*, the editorial deals with the matter in this way. It takes as an example the calendar year 1973, and states:

Of the total accidents in Australia—

that is, road accidents—

for that year, of 70 151, 4 501 occurred at controlled intersections and 27 742 occurred at uncontrolled intersections. Of the 3 679 persons killed on the roads last year, 94 were killed at controlled intersections and 810 were killed at uncontrolled intersections. Of the 95 204 persons injured, 6 212 were injured at controlled intersections and 38 261 were injured at uncontrolled intersections.

The article continues as follows:

The above indicates quite clearly that lack of control of road traffic at intersections is the cause of a horrifying number of movements and collisions causing injury and death . . .

In this connection there appears no valid reason for any Government to delay the introduction of an easily understood system of intersection priority roads which will ensure that death-dealing intersection conflicts are minimised. The National Council of the Australian Road Federation has sought the advice of Australian and overseas organisations on the value of such intersection priority roads and is convinced that their use Australia-wide is well overdue.

The National Council has, therefore, decided that the Australian Road Federation should promote, through its regional organisations, the implementation of an Australia-wide system of intersection priority roads. We expect the regions to work to and with the relevant State road authorities and all road safety minded bodies to have a uniform system operating Australia-wide at the earliest possible time.

Therefore, the problem of intersections must be tackled. This can be done only by introducing priority roads, which are necessary in today's traffic conditions. However, this situation has not been suddenly sprung upon us, and I refer to the Committee of Inquiry into Road Safety, which was set up in 1970. All honourable members will agree that that committee did a splendid job, and that its report is a significant document. On page 32 of its report under the heading "Priority Rule", among other things, the committee stated:

There are basically three priority rules in force in various countries:

- (i) offside priority rule (for example, South Australia);
- (ii) priority road system (for example, United Kingdom);
- (iii) nearside priority rule (for example, United States).

The report continues:

Studies conducted both in Australia and overseas indicate that of the three rules the offside priority rule (give-way-to-right in South Australia) results in the least delay to traffic and the highest intersection capacity. The nearside priority rule is considered to provide the least degree of safety of the three. A quantitative comparison of the degree of safety provided by the offside priority rule with that provided by the priority road system has not been made. The major objection to the offside priority rule is that it concentrates an undue proportion of the driver's attention on the off-side. He has to inspect every vehicle entering from the offside to decide—

that is, on his right—

- (a) whether it is entering from a side road or from a private exit, and, if the former,
- (b) whether it will take priority or whether it will, itself, have to give way to a vehicle on its off-side.

This is a complex judgment, liable to take time and to cause serious neglect of the road ahead and of the nearside. Objection to the present offside priority rule and preference for a priority road system was expressed in a number of submissions received from the public. A further disadvantage of the offside priority rule is that it does not legally favour the major relative to the minor traffic stream. The recommendation made in section 5.1 of this report concerning a hierarchy road system would provide most effectively and within improved safety that the arterial road traffic encounters minimum interference from side-street traffic.

Then as a recommendation, the report states:

The committee recommends that, if the results of the pilot study proposed in section 5.1 are favourable, a priority road concept be introduced on major roads either by traffic control or by legislation. The present offside priority rule should be reviewed when the results of these developments are known but should meanwhile be retained.

That was in 1970, and that South Australian committee sought a pilot study on this subject. The recommendations of that committee, which the present Minister of Transport has from time to time acclaimed, apparently have not been put into effect. If they have, I should like to hear about the pilot study and its results. If the pilot study was carried out, it seems that it must indicate that the Government did not intend to change to a priority road system.

The public was very interested in the subject then, and, most certainly after four years and because of the ever-increasing road toll, is even more interested in it now. That major inquiry into road safety in this State is not the only inquiry in which this matter has been raised. Indeed, there was a major inquiry at the Commonwealth level, the report of which (called "The Report on the Road Accident Situation in Australia") was made to the Commonwealth Minister for Transport in September, 1972. That was two years after the committee of inquiry had brought down the findings to which I have just referred. The conclusions and recommendations of the Australian committee, under the heading "Intersection Rules", were as follows:

Accidents at intersections are a major problem in Australia. They could be reduced by the increased use of control devices to assign priority at intersections. It is recommended that:

Increasing use should be made of traffic control devices which assign priorities at intersections.

Priority routes should be introduced together with continuing studies of their effectiveness under various conditions.

The meanings invested in road signs, especially the "stop" sign, should be made uniform throughout Australia. The "stop" sign should mean "stop and give way" as provided in Western Australia and Tasmania and recommended by the 1968 U.N. Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

The give-way-to-the-right rule should be retained at all uncontrolled intersections.

It is recommended also that studies be undertaken to:

Determine traffic control systems appropriate to particular road and traffic conditions.

Evaluate the give-way-to-the-right rule in the light of experience with priority route projects and other specially designed investigations.

Again, I ask whether the Government or the Minister of Transport in this State took any heed of those recommendations that were made in 1972. Because no change has been announced, it would appear that the Government either investigated the matter and decided not to proceed or that it did not take much notice of the second expert report.

Change, as I am suggesting and as it was stated in the Commonwealth report, has come in Western Australia and, indeed, in Tasmania. Recently (in fact, only about a month ago) it has occurred in New South Wales. I have recently had discussions with traffic experts in New South Wales on this matter and driven in the metropolitan area of Sydney. I spoke to many motorists there, and everyone in Sydney to whom I spoke on this subject approved, and indeed welcomed, the change.

Although I am willing to admit that its resources for research are much greater than ours, New South Wales has in recent years undertaken extremely important research into all aspects of road safety. South Australia's road toll has increased 28 per cent this year on that of last year, whereas in New South Wales the increase has been only 5 per cent. I am willing to believe that that situation has been brought about by the great deal of research done by the Government and the relevant Minister in that State on the whole matter of road safety.

This further strengthens my point that, now that New South Wales has joined the other two States in implementing this change and as it appears that the change has been welcomed there, this is a change which is here to stay. This is a trend which is here to stay, and it has, as its final result, the objective that we must all have: a reduction in the accident rate and in the road carnage, to which the *News* report referred.

At the beginning of August, New South Wales regulations covering "stop" signs were amended in such a way that drivers are now required to stop and give way to all conflicting traffic in an intersection, that is, traffic on the right and on the left. In other words, the traffic on the right and left has priority over a driver who stops at a "stop" sign. There are continuity lines, as they are called, painted on the roads, and these white broken lines are painted across the full width of a street in which a "stop" sign or a "give way" sign is installed, and they are provided in line with the kerb alignment.

Also, at the "stop" sign itself, which is some distance back from the continuity line to which I have referred, an unbroken white line is painted. This completes the guidelines and directions used by motorists when they approach "stop" signs. As well as that, there are "controlled intersection" or, as they are popularly called, "rocket" signs at

all intersections on roads that have "stop" signs and continuity lines. Such streets then become priority roads and have a tremendous advantage in relation not only to traffic flow but also to improved driver confidence.

The most important point is that they eliminate road accidents. It might be thought that the last major change to improve road safety was the introduction of seat belts, but generally speaking seat belts assist only in the case of frontal accidents, whereas accidents occurring at intersections are usually right-angle accidents, which are even worse than side swipes.

The protection afforded by seat belts is not as great in right-angle accidents as it is in frontal accidents. At busy times New South Wales motorists wishing to cross or enter a main road seek an intersection controlled by traffic lights. Our main metropolitan arterial roads leading from the city, such as South Road, Goodwood Road, Glen Osmond Road, and Main North Road, have a series of traffic lights. So, we can see how the system implemented in New South Wales could be implemented here very successfully.

It may be claimed that it is too early to judge the benefit of the change in the New South Wales system, but I refer the Government to the Tasmanian situation. I have previously referred to the report of September, 1972, to the Commonwealth Minister for Shipping and Transport. The following is an extract from page 89 of that report:

In Tasmania, "give way" signs along a priority route were supplemented by broken lines across a minor leg street. An accident study found a substantial reduction in accidents as a result.

That extract contains significant points that should be borne in mind by people who believe that the change I am suggesting would not improve the situation in South Australia. I am not alone in my call to the Government to change, in the interests of road safety and traffic flow, from the give-way-to-the-right rule to a system of priority roads. Under the system I am suggesting, the give-way-to-the-right rule would still remain on all intersections not controlled by signs.

The South Australian inquiry of 1970 states that public submissions made to it were strong on the point that there was a need for change in this State. Those submissions were made by individuals and associations vitally interested in this subject. The President of the Royal Automobile Association (Sir Keith Angas), when elected in 1973, was reported in the press as saying that the give-way-to-the-right rule was confusing. The press report states:

The new President of the Royal Automobile Association of South Australia (Sir Keith Angas) is an opponent of the give-way-to-the-right rule. "I think it is a very confusing rule," Sir Keith said. "I much prefer the old English system." (In England all roads intersecting a main road are controlled by traffic lights, or compulsory "stop" or "give way" signs).

The R.A.A. represents the motoring public of this State. So, when its views, expressed through its President, a man of great experience, are made public, the Government of the day should place some credence on them. People directly concerned as owners or drivers of motor cars and people concerned with investigating road safety here and at the Commonwealth level are strong in their claim that a change would be for the better.

However, in addition, I wish to refer to the spring edition, 1974, of *Road Alert*, the magazine of the Road Safety Council in this State. That magazine has an article by Mr. W. O. Gibberd, President of the St. Peters Residents Association; here is a new angle on the same question coming from a residential community interested in the

environment and the quality of life. The President of that association argues against the give-way-to-the-right rule. In the article he says:

We would like to put the opposing view—

that is, the opposing view to the give-way-to-the-right rule—that a traffic code based on major and minor roads, or priority roads, such as is used in the United Kingdom and most European countries, has many advantages over the one used in Australia based on the give-way-to-right rule.

There are two main advantages. First, it is safer and, second, it allows a smoother flow of traffic. The increased safety arises mainly because a driver is enabled to concentrate on the traffic immediately in front of him. Straight in front is a natural way for a driver to look and he can do so much more effectively when his attention is not distracted by the possibility of a vehicle emerging from his right. Secondly, the give-way-to-right rule is not decisive when it comes to making a decision on who first crosses an intersection.

With the priority road system, indecision is removed. The driver on the major road proceeds; the driver on the minor road waits until the crossing is clear in both directions.

Perhaps, as members of the St. Peters Residents Association, we should state our particular interest in this matter. This arises because accidents *pro rata* are higher in local suburban streets than on arterial roads.

We in St. Peters, in common with other suburbs, are faced with the problem of discouraging through traffic in local streets. There is no doubt that a priority road system would act in this way for the reasons given above and thus both the safety and the pleasantness of many suburbs would be increased.

I therefore submit that at a time when we are reading ghastly predictions, as we did last week, surely this is a matter of grave public importance. Road accidents cost South Australians more than \$60 000 000 annually; each fatal accident costs about \$50 000; and more than 12 000 South Australians are injured annually. In these circumstances, the Government should take firm action.

The Australian rate of urbanisation is the highest in the world, and I point out that the remedy I am concentrating on at present involves cities and towns. Further, we have a high rate of car ownership, second only to the United States of America. In this situation surely we should immediately change from the present give-way-to-the-right rule and follow Tasmania, Western Australia and New South Wales, thereby moving towards uniformity.

At a time when many South Australians expect their Government and the Minister of Transport to show leadership and decisive action to contain the road toll, this major step should be taken. The change must be implemented to reduce our accident and death rate on the roads, and the ease with which motorists could enter or leave the city would be welcomed by all. I call on the Government to act to reduce the road carnage by adopting a priority road traffic code.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I do not suppose there is a more pressing matter in our community than road safety. One has only to look at statistics of road accidents and deaths and injuries occurring on our roads to realise that the most important public health problem in the community today is that of injury through road accidents. Leaving aside for a moment the pain and suffering occasioned to families as a result of this problem, one must also consider the tremendous cost to the community of our road toll. The statistics are alarming. This year, for example, it has been predicted that the total of road deaths will reach the staggering figure of 400; adding to that the countless thousands injured in road accidents, one must examine the question of the cost to the community of such a problem.

We look at the question of public health. Our expenditure on public health amounts, perhaps, to \$2 000 000 a year but, when one looks at the damage being done to the

whole of our society, in terms of economic costs, by road accidents, one can see that this is probably the most important public health problem facing the community. In 1969, I spoke on this question in this Council at some length, but I cannot find the reference to it in *Hansard*, although I have been searching for it. Possibly it was in the debate on a Bill having little to do with road safety.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: Then I don't know how you got away with it.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: We have a very understanding President; let me assure the Minister of that. I think from memory that, at that time, the figures I gave the Council showed that the total cost to the community of accidents on the road amounted, as a direct cost, to about \$40 000 000 a year. That is the burden on the taxpayer in providing hospital treatment, rehabilitation treatment, and the whole range of other services required to cater for people unfortunate enough to be involved in road accidents. While the direct cost is something the community cannot overlook, one must add the cost to the community of having people out of the production line and having other people who are not only out of the production line while they are injured but who will never again take a full part in the production activities of South Australia. One can see the seriousness of the problem; I do not think any honourable member would deny that. It is the most serious public health matter facing the community.

The Hon. Mr. Hill has dealt specifically with the adoption of a system of priority roads. I find that the give-way-to-the-right rule is the most appropriate one and must be maintained for certain of our roads, but there is no doubt that the use of the priority road system in New South Wales is operating most satisfactorily; indeed, from information we have received from New South Wales, it seems that the system will be extended throughout that State as quickly as possible. However, a whole range of other matters relating to road safety must be examined without delay.

The unfortunate thing is that we are dealing with people in this difficult situation, most of whom drive motor cars, and a greater number of restrictions will have to be placed on the motoring public and greater research carried out into the whole question of providing laws that will overcome the tremendous problem South Australia faces in relation to road safety. This State's record in that regard is probably not the worst in Australia, but, with a predicted 400 deaths on our roads, it must go very close to being so this year. I saw some figures a few years ago in looking at the death rates on the roads in the various States, going back to about 1960, showing that Melbourne, on its roads, had the highest death rate in the world—higher than New York, London, or anywhere else. Within a few years, the Melbourne figure had fallen significantly and, if we could get the figures for each 100 000 of population in the various States of Australia at the moment, they would prove most interesting. Although Adelaide has great advantages, with wide streets and a well laid-out city, the figures, if examined at present, would probably show that Adelaide was fast approaching the extremely poor position held by Melbourne in relation to road safety in the world context.

I support the Hon. Mr. Hill in raising this matter, and I am certain every honourable member must be seized with the importance of road safety. So far, much publicity has been given by the Minister to road safety matters, but the figures do not show that we are achieving very much. I do not think the Government can deny that if one looks at the predicted statistics for this year. Much publicity has been given and much has been said, but we are achieving nothing.

Many areas, including the question of priority roads, should be looked at by the Government in its efforts to overcome our tremendous road safety problems.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: I remember the priority road question being first raised by Mr. Shirley Jeffries, as he then was, in about 1930; it has been an active issue ever since, but nothing has happened.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I cannot remember back quite so far as the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill in these matters, but I bow to his superior knowledge of past history of this question that has been raised previously. I am a strong supporter of the give-way-to-the-right rule because, in a State such as South Australia, I do not think it is possible to have a series of priority roads covering the whole of the State. Any honourable member could see that.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: That is the system in France, which has the right-hand rule in the cities and priority roads in the country.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I have never driven in France. Perhaps, hearing about French drivers, that is why I am still alive.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill: One must keep to the right in France, you know.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Keeping to the right is a good principle for most people. The position is quite clear; it is assuming grave importance in South Australia. Whether or not the Government moves more rapidly in the question of priority roads, a whole range of other matters needs to be introduced in relation to road safety.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Call on the business of the day.

#### HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CENTRES

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

That this Council resolve that the providing of hospitals and medical centres by the Government of this State shall be a public purpose within the meaning of the Lands for Public Purposes Acquisition Act, 1914-1972; and that a message be sent to the House of Assembly transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence therein. At present no power is conferred by any Statute to provide public hospitals. The Hospitals Act merely provides, in the main, for administrative procedures in relation to existing institutions that are proclaimed to be public hospitals. However, the Lands for Public Purposes Acquisition Act, 1914-1972, enables the Government to acquire land for certain public purposes not covered by particular Statutes. This motion is moved pursuant to paragraph iii of section 4 of that Act, which provides:

The Governor may by proclamation declare to be a public purpose any purpose which both Houses of Parliament, during the same or different sessions of any Parliament, resolve shall be a public purpose within the meaning of this Act.

The effect of such a proclamation is that the purpose so declared is deemed to be an undertaking within the meaning of the Land Acquisition Act, 1969-1972, and the procedures outlined by that Act apply in respect of any land required for the undertaking. The motion is moved at this stage to enable the Government's proposal to establish a hospital and medical centre in the Salisbury-Elizabeth area to be implemented.

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

#### BOATING BILL

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

That the time for bringing up the report of the Select Committee on the Bill be extended to October 1, 1974.

Motion carried.

#### ROYAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

Report received and ordered to be printed.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD moved:

That the Bill be recommitted to a Committee of the whole Council on the next day of sitting.

Motion carried.

#### ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Second reading.

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

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

The Treasurer gave a lengthy explanation when introducing this Bill in the House of Assembly. That explanation is Parliamentary Paper No. 18 in another place but Parliamentary Paper No. 22 on honourable members' files. The Treasurer's speech is recorded in *Hansard* of August 29, 1974, at page 773. For that reason, I do not intend in this Chamber reading through the whole of the Treasurer's speech, but I shall give a short second reading explanation in respect of certain things that have happened since the Treasurer delivered his speech; I will also speak to the clauses of the Bill.

As a result of three factors that have emerged since the Treasurer presented the Budget to the House of Assembly, some further comment is necessary. In presenting that Budget, the Treasurer forecast a deficit on Revenue Account for the year 1974-75 of \$12 000 000 and pointed out that, were that forecast to be borne out, the State would have an accumulated deficit of \$4 000 000 as at June 30, 1975, after bringing to account the completion grant for 1972-73 of \$8 500 000; and we would be expecting to receive shortly after that a further completion grant in respect of 1973-74.

The first factor to emerge is that the further grant of \$6 000 000, which, after discussion with the Prime Minister, the Treasurer was very confident would be received, was not forthcoming. Let there be no doubt about this matter. The Treasurer believed sincerely, on the basis of his discussions with the Prime Minister, that this would be forthcoming. Indeed, the Prime Minister's statements during the most recent Premiers' Conference supported that belief to the extent that the Treasurer took the unprecedented step of including in the Revenue Estimates a figure of \$6 000 000 under the description "Grants and/or taxes and charges not yet determined". However, as we know now, no provision for such a grant was made in the recent Australian Government Budget and, whilst the Treasurer has made further and urgent submissions to the Prime Minister, we must now look to other ways of meeting this short-fall in revenue.

The second factor relates to the calculation of financial assistance grants. Based on information given by the Australian Treasury, the figure included in the Revenue Estimates for the financial assistance grant was based on a 20 per cent escalation in the level of average wages, and the complementary estimates of pay-roll tax receipts and the provision necessary to meet increased salary and wage costs were based on the same percentage.

The Prime Minister has now stated that, for the purpose of the formula that escalates these financial assistance grants, a figure of 25 per cent increase in the level of average wages

has been adopted in lieu of the previous 20 per cent. However, this will not assist our Budget: quite the reverse. First, we will not get the increased grant and increased pay-roll tax, unless the increase in average wages is of the greatest order. Secondly, if this increase does occur, the increase in grant and in pay-roll tax will be more than offset by the complementary increase in the cost of salaries and wages to be met from the Budget. It is estimated that a further 5 per cent increase in the cost of salaries and wages would cost the Budget about \$18 500 000, whereas the associated revenue increases would be an increased grant of \$11 200 000 and increased pay-roll tax of \$3 300 000, making a total of \$14 500 000, so the effect of the revision of the estimated increase in the level of average wages would be to increase the prospective revenue deficit by \$4 000 000. On these two counts alone, and in the absence of further revenue-raising measures, the prospective deficit for 1974-75 would be raised to \$22 000 000.

The third factor to emerge is concerned with the revenue results for the two months to the end of August which show a current deficit of \$19 000 000. Whilst the Government will take all action possible to hold expenditure within the constraints of the Budget, there are certain areas of revenue over which it has no control. In forming its Budget proposals, the Government was aware of the down-turn of land transactions which occurred some months ago in other States but, up to the time the Budget was drawn together, a similar down-turn had not occurred here, and there were indications that something of a plateau had been reached. However, in the month of August, there was a sharp fall in the number of conveyances submitted for stamping, and the fall has continued into September. It seems certain then that, even if there is a recovery in these areas, the revenue will fall a deal short of estimate. It is inevitable, therefore, that the Government will need to consider the practicability of increases in taxes and charges beyond those already announced, as well as the imposition of new taxes.

The clauses of the Bill contain two additional kinds of authority this year. The first restores the automatic appropriation authority for pay-roll tax costs arising from award increases which was contained in Appropriation Bills prior to the removal from Government departments of the obligation to pay this tax in 1971. Now that the tax has been restored it is only sensible that the authority too, should be restored. The second change, on the other hand, is an extension of previous appropriation procedures.

Since 1970 the automatic appropriation authority given by section 32a (2) of the Public Finance Act has stood at 1 per cent of the totals contained in Appropriation Acts each year. The intention behind this section is to give Governments some flexibility in budgeting while retaining for Parliament close control over total effective appropriations. Lately, however, large increases in grants to institutions subsidised by the Government, consequent on large award increases affecting their employees, have pre-empted much of this extra authority and left the Government with very little flexibility in its own sphere of direct control. Because of the close comparability between the situation of these institutions and that of Government departments faced with award increases, it was decided that the most appropriate way to overcome this difficulty would be to provide the same appropriation authority for the costs of wage and salary increases in subsidised institutions as currently applies for the costs of similar increases affecting Government departments. In accordance with this decision, the Bill before the Council provides for Governor's warrants

to be issued in respect of wage and salary increases payable either by the State or in relation to any "prescribed establishment" as defined.

Clause 1 gives the short title. Clause 2 authorises the issue and application of such a further sum as will, together with the sums authorised by Supply Acts, amount to \$613 453 000. Clause 3 (1) appropriates the sum of \$613 453 000 for the purposes set out in the schedule. Clause 3 (2) provides in the normal way that, if increases of salaries or wages become payable by the State pursuant to any determination made by a wage-fixing authority, the Governor may appropriate additional funds by warrant, but it extends the provision to cover increases affecting "prescribed establishments" and the liability to pay pay-roll tax. Clause 3 (3) provides that, if the costs incurred by the Engineering and Water Supply Department for electricity for pumping water should be greater than the amounts set down in the Estimates, the Governor may appropriate the funds for the additional expenditure. Clause 3 (4) is a new one and defines a "prescribed establishment" as one in respect of which an operating grant has been included in the Estimates for the year in question.

Clause 4 authorises the Treasurer to pay moneys from time to time up to the amounts set down in monthly orders issued by the Governor, and provides that the receipts obtained from the payees shall be the discharge to the Treasurer for the moneys paid. Clause 5 authorises the use of Loan funds or other public funds if the moneys received from the Commonwealth Government and the general revenue of the State are insufficient to make the payments authorised by clause 3.

Clause 6 gives authority to make payments in respect of a period prior to July 1, 1974. Clause 7 authorises the expenditure of \$8 700 000 from the Hospitals Fund during 1974-75 and of \$3 000 000 in the early months of 1975-76, pending the passing of the Appropriation Bill for that year. Clause 8 provides that amounts appropriated by this Bill are in addition to other amounts properly authorised.

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

#### MOTOR FUEL DISTRIBUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 19. Page 1055.)

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): I support the Bill, which involves two principal changes to the Act that was passed a year or two ago in this Chamber. I remember that when the Act was passed honourable members pointed out that there were some complexities in it that were difficult to understand, and it was generally accepted in the Council that there might have to be some further amendments to make workable the whole matter of registration of service stations.

The Government has now introduced this amending Bill, and it has pointed out that instances have occurred where landlords, who were not oil companies, have been able to take advantages of the present Act and have acted in an unreasonable way by making demands on their principal lessees, namely, the oil companies, before those landlords would agree to apply for registration. I accept the Government's concern in this matter, and it seems only reasonable that the principal Act should be amended to overcome this anomaly.

The second point to which I refer concerns the date by which applications should be made for the appropriate licence or permit. Obviously, the date now provided of

September 30 cannot be met by the people concerned, and I believe that the date of January 1, 1975, appears to be reasonable. Indeed, representations have been made to me today by people interested in the Bill who are concerned that, unless the Bill receives a speedy passage, people throughout the industry at all levels will be inconvenienced. I therefore give the measure my support.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Prescribed interest."

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN: Although definitions of "prescribed interest" and "prescribed lessee" are contained in the Bill, can the Minister say whether these will be further defined by regulation? Can I take it that the word

"prescribed", as it is used in the Bill, does not refer to further definitions by regulation but is used merely as a means of differentiating between a prescribed interest or lessee and an ordinary interest or lessee?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD (Minister of Health): I assure the honourable member that that is the position. It ties in with the definitions in the previous clause.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (4 to 15) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 3.47 p.m. the Council adjourned until Wednesday, September 25, at 2.15 p.m.