LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Thursday, September 26, 1974

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:

Egg Industry Stabilization Act Amendment,
Local Government Act Amendment (General),
Motor Fuel Distribution Act Amendment,
Superannuation Act Amendment.

PETITION: LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS presented a petition from 106 residents and ratepayers of the District Council of Mudla Wirra, expressing dissatisfaction with the first report of the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas and praying that the Legislative Council would oppose the recommendations as applying to the redistribution of the Mudla Wirra council boundaries.

Petition received and read.

QUESTIONS

BETHESDA CENTRE

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 Bethesda Rehabilitation Centre in Mount Gambier. Pastor Kummerow has been the Superintendent of Bethesda and for many years the driving force behind its development as a rehabilitation centre, and his work in establishing it deserves the highest commendation. However, Pastor Kummerow was recently asked to resign as Superintendent, and I should like to read from a letter which he wrote and which was published in the *Border Watch* on September 24. The letter states:

. . . I wish to put right a wrongly held belief that Bethesda is owned by the State Government. Bethesda is and always has been owned and administered by St. Martin's congregation as an inner mission of the Lutheran Church, as clearly stated in the constitution of the centre. The land on which the centre is located is owned by the State Government and is rented back to St. Martin's Lutheran congregation as owners of Bethesda Rehabilitation Centre. At least one member of the Bethesda management committee believes that the centre belongs to the Government, because of a statement he made to me recently, and I quote Mr. Burdon's own words: "I consider the centre a Government instrumentality."

I challenge Mr. Burdon to deny having made this statement to me, through the *Border Watch*. Mr. Burdon is the current Chairman of the management committee, and if he claims that, because of the amount of money put into Bethesda by the Government it is now owned by the Government, then no doubt he would believe that all other centres receiving help from the Government also belong to the Government . . . I wish it to be known that my services as Superintendent of Bethesda were terminated by the management committee with no reason given, and when I requested a reason it was refused.

Would the Minister of Health care to comment on that letter?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I knew that the pastor was no longer occupying the position he previously held at Bethesda. Although I agree that the Government does not own the centre, it has assisted it considerably in the way of subsidies. I was not aware of what brought about the management committee's request for the pastor to resign. If my colleague, Mr. Burdon, did make such a statement, I shall inform him of the position.

INTEREST RATES

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: Has the Chief Secretary a reply to my question of September 10 about the problem of higher interest rates for house owners?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: Whilst the practice of extending the terms of mortgages as a means of cushioning the effect of increased interest rates on borrowers has been adopted by some lending institutions, it is not considered to be a very effective method of doing so. It is also generally accepted that interest payments should rank in priority over the principal repayments in respect of housing mortages. The extension of the terms of mortgages as a means of solving the problem does not effectively ease the burden placed on mortgagors because (*a*) on examination of tables showing the results of extending the time for repayment of mortgages it is evident that there is very little real benefit to the borrower in the short term; and (*b*) in the long term, such action tends to increase the overall amount to be paid.

For the information of the honourable member, the saving to a mortgagor whose interest rate is 11 per cent per annum through extending the term of his loan from 25 years to 30 years is 85c a $1 000 of loan a quarter. If the loan period is extended from 25 years to 35 years, the saving is $1·32 a $1 000 of loan a quarter. It must also be borne in mind that, although interest rates have risen sharply during the past 12 to 18 months, wages have also increased substantially during that period.

GLEN OSMOND ROAD CROSSING

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister representing the Minister of Transport.

Leave granted.

The Hon. Sir ARTHUR RYMILL: Honourable members who have been in this Chamber for some time will recall that I referred occasionally to a crossing known as the Hackham crossing. I nagged away at the then Government about the Hackham crossing and finally I got action. The Government did not alter the crossing: it merely stopped altogether the railway running across it, which shows what can happen. I now have another crossing to complain about, and that is where the Glen Osmond Road joins Young Street and Kenilworth Road, at Parkside, and superimposed on this difficult traffic intersection is yet another crossing, a pedestrian crossing, or there may be two pedestrian crossings. Add to that fact that it is at the beginning of the Princes Highway, which carries an enormous amount of traffic at all times of the day, and moreover this must be the slowest set of traffic lights in South Australia. Feeling convinced, as I do, that something could be done about this, I ask the Minister of Health whether he would be good enough to refer the matter to the gentleman he represents in this Chamber, the Minister of Transport, to see what can be done about speeding up this crossing, and particularly giving more priority to the main road traffic. I should like to add, not by way of complaint, that, if I receive the usual answer that nothing can be done, I will continue to nag about it until I get some satisfaction, and even take the liberty of making some suggestions myself, because I think it is only a matter of common sense.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague. In the meantime, I trust he will not think that we will close that road and make detours.

WARDANG ISLAND

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: A fortnight ago, I asked a question about the trouble that exists on Wardang Island. It was in relation to, but not identical to, a question asked by the Hon. Mr. Hill. Has the Chief Secretary a reply?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: The Aboriginal Lands Trust has consulted appropriate Government authorities and the Point Pearce Community Council about future management and operations on Wardang Island. The trust is acting responsibly in its attempts to solve the problems associated with the operation of the island as a tourist resort. I have referred the honourable member's allegation of mismanagement to the Aboriginal Lands Trust to be dealt with as it thinks fit.

MILK

The Hon. C. W. CREEDON: On September 17 I asked the Minister of Agriculture a question regarding unpalatable milk that was being delivered in Gawler. Has he a reply?

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I took up the honourable member's inquiry with the Metropolitan Milk Board and, while the board's jurisdiction regarding retail distribution does not extend to the town of Gawler, it is probable that the milk would have been produced in the metropolitan producing area and processed in treatment plants under its control. The board has reported to me that it received complaints about milk bottled during the period September 8 to September 13, some of which was found to have a peculiar "feedy" flavour (not uncommon during the spring season). Bacteriological tests conducted on this milk were, however, quite satisfactory.

I am informed that the bottling company concerned has dismantled its processing equipment to check for faults, and has even replaced a section of the equipment as a precautionary measure. However, the Milk Board is not satisfied on the available evidence that this was the cause of the trouble. The problem is a complex one, and this is emphasised by the spasmodic nature of the complaints. No major faults on the part of producers, transport, processing or distribution under the board's control have been identified, but investigations are proceeding.

UNFAIR PRACTICES

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I refer to a letter to the editor in the August, 1974, issue of the Housing Industry Association newsletter, part of which states:

As a builder member of H.I.A., I read with increasing apprehension and disgust statements about new measures being proposed by the State Government to further protect the homeowner from the "shoddy" builder. I refer particularly to the idea of a six-year written guarantee against faulty materials and workmanship.

The letter later continues:

Despite this I'll gladly accept the six-year written guarantee, however, in return for a similar written guarantee from each of the following:—

The engineer against any failure of the footings or house superstructure from any movement or deficiency of the subsoil and the suitability of the footing specified.

The suppliers against any deficiency in the quality of materials purchased.

The subcontractors against any shortcoming in the standard of their particular part of the final product and for which they have received full payment for first-class work.

The homeowner against misuse, careless attention to drainage, or any other aspect of occupancy deemed necessary by the engineer to maintain the long-term stability of the structure.

All other sections of the community on their particular products which I may care to purchase in return from the profit I make from my own.

My final condition would be that the homeowner reimburse me with half the capital appreciation of the house if he sells during the period of the guarantee, and I will make up the difference if this falls short of the initial contract price.

In reply, the editor said:

Perhaps you are being unrealistic to ask for any reciprocal fair treatment in our consumer protected society, but you do have a point.

Finally, the editor said:

I suggest instead you get yourself included in The Investigating Committee of Unfair Trade Practices by the Consumer, when and if the Government thinks it is necessary to establish one.

Will the Chief Secretary ascertain whether the Government has considered establishing such a committee to protect the rest of the community against unfair practices by the consumer?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: I hope the Leader was not being facetious in what he said. I will convey his request to my colleague and bring down a reply as soon as it is available.

GOVERNMENT WORKS

The Hon. C. M. HILL: Will the Minister of Health ascertain from the Minister of Transport whether any arrangements exist in the current financial year for the Public Buildings Department to carry out work for the Highways Department and, if such arrangements exist, what are those arrangements?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague.

ROYAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Read a third time and passed.

SWINE COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

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

EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is designed to introduce new reciprocal procedures under which South Australian courts may co-operate with courts of other States, Territories and countries in the taking of evidence. At present the procedures are rather complicated and lack uniformity. Some time ago recommendations were made to the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General that there should be uniform procedures for the taking of evidence outside the territorial jurisdiction of a court and that these procedures should apply as between the Australian States and Territories and New Zealand and should be capable of extension to other countries. This proposal was endorsed by the Law Reform Committee in its twenty-first report and has the support of the Law Society. There are, of course, at present various provisions that are to some extent analogous to the present Bill; for example, Order 37 of the Supreme Court Rules deals with the subject. These provisions appear to cover civil and criminal proceedings.

In the Local and District Criminal Courts Act, provision is made in sections 284 to 292 for the taking of evidence away from the court. These provisions, however, relate only to civil matters and do not extend to district criminal courts. There does not appear to be any general power in the Justices Act for this purpose, but certain legislation

(for example, the Community Welfare Act) deals with the subject in so far as the proceedings authorised by the legislation are concerned. The amendments contained in this Bill will provide a procedure, which it is hoped will become uniform throughout Australia, under which many of the present complexities and inconsistencies will be avoided.

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 are formal. Clause 4 enacts new Part VIB of the principal Act. Under new section 59d the Attorney-General may, by notice published in the *Gazette*, declare that a South Australian court corresponds to a foreign court for the purposes of the new provision. Section 59d (2) provides that the new Part will extend to both civil and criminal proceedings. Section 59e provides that a South Australian court may request a corresponding court to take evidence of a witness or to order the production of documents. Section 59f is a reciprocal provision providing that where a corresponding court requests a South Australian court to take evidence the South Australian court is invested with all the necessary powers for that purpose. Section 59g provides for verification of depositions. Section 59h deals with a case where a witness from whom a South Australian court is requested to take evidence is proceeding to some other country or State. In that case a request received from a corresponding court may be transmitted to another court to whose jurisdiction the witness is proceeding. Section 59i provides that the new provisions do not limit the power of a court to require a witness to attend in person. It further provides that the provisions of the new Part are supplementary to, and do not derogate from, the provisions of any other Act or law.

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

ART GALLERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Following an administrative reorganisation, it has been decided that Ministerial responsibility for the Art Gallery Act, 1939, as amended, should be borne by the Premier instead of by the Minister of Education. This short Bill proposes, therefore, that the definition of "Minister" in section 3 of the principal Act be struck out. The effect of this amendment will be to permit the free application of section 4 of the Acts Interpretation Act, 1915, as amended. In effect, this application provides that a reference in the Act to the Minister shall be read as a reference to the Minister to whom, for the time being, the administration of the Act is committed. On the enactment of this measure, the way will be clear for the administration of this Act to be committed to the Premier.

The Hon. JESSIE COOPER secured the adjournment of the debate.

EVIDENCE (AFFIDAVITS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

By an amendment in 1968 to the principal Act, the Evidence (Affidavits) Act, 1928, as amended, it was provided that affidavits for use in any court could be sworn before "proclaimed bank managers" within the meaning of the Oaths Act, 1936, as amended. This Bill provides that such affidavits may in addition be sworn before "proclaimed postmasters" and "proclaimed police officers" within the meaning of the Oaths Act.

Such an extension, it is suggested, is in the public interest, in that the widening of the classes of person before whom affidavits may be sworn will ensure that affidavits may be executed more conveniently. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends the long title of the principal Act to reflect the change proposed. Clause 3 amends section 2a of the principal Act by enlarging the classes of person before whom affidavits may be sworn.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

JUDGES' PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In essence, the Bill provides for appropriate amendments to the principal Act, the Judges' Pensions Act, 1971, as amended, to incorporate into the scheme for judges' pensions some, at least, of the provisions of the scheme of superannuation for public servants and others approved by this Council in the enactment of the Superannuation Act of this year. In addition, some other changes have been made following consultation with the judges.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3, which amends section 4 of the principal Act, being the section that provides the definitions necessary for its purposes, inserts a definition of "eligible child" and "notional pension", which in terms follows similar definitions in the Superannuation Act. Clause 4 makes a drafting amendment to section 5 of the principal Act to bring the reference to a repealed Superannuation Act up to date. Clause 5 will enable a judge to retire on pension at age 60 if he has the necessary qualifying service. This accords with the retiring age of 60 years recognised in the Superannuation Act, 1974.

Clause 6 repeals and re-enacts section 8 of the principal Act, with the effect that the widow or widower of a deceased judge will be entitled to pension and the rate of that pension will be 66⅔ per cent of the notional pension of the deceased judge in lieu of 65 per cent of that pension. Clause 7 amends section 9 of the principal Act and makes substantially the same amendment, in relation to deceased former judges, as has been indicated in the explanation of clause 6. Clause 8 amends section 10 of the principal Act and is consequential on the proposed enactment of new section 10a (as to which see clause 9).

Clause 9 provides, in terms similar to the provisions of the Superannuation Act, 1974, at sections 85 to 90, for the payment of child benefit in the case of the death of a judge or former judge. Clause 10 makes certain consequential amendments to section 12 of the principal Act to enable pensioners who derive their pensions from this section (that is, pensioners whose rights to pension vested before the enactment of the principal Act), to be covered by the provisions relating to automatic adjustment of pensions. In addition, a right, previously enjoyed in relation to former judges who derive their pension from this section, is restored. This was the right of a widow of the former judge to receive a pension even though she married the judge after he retired. Clause 11 repeals section 14a of the principal Act and provides for a system of "automatic" adjustment of pensions related to movements in the cost of living. In terms this provision clearly follows the corresponding provision in the Superannuation Act, 1974.

The Hon. F. J. POTTER secured the adjournment of the debate.

BUILDERS LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is designed to amend the Builders Licensing Act in two main areas. First, it deals with certain relatively minor deficiencies that have appeared in the practical operation of the Act. The Bill expands upon the statutory prerequisites to the obtaining of licences by requiring applicants to have the capacity to organise, supervise, and control building work of the relevant kind. The Bill closes a loophole in some provisions of the Act under which it appears possible for an unqualified person virtually to carry on business as a general builder through the instrumentality of subcontractors.

This deficiency became apparent in the recent case of *Andrew v. Cox*. In that case, an architect called for and accepted tenders from tradesmen, co-ordinated their activities, and gave directions as to the performance of their contracts. No general builder was engaged. Mr. Justice Hogarth held that he had not "caused" the construction of a building contrary to section 21 (11) of the principal Act. The Bill therefore expands subsections (6) and (11) of section 21 to deal with a person who "organises" or "arranges for" the performance of building work.

At the same time, a new subsection (21) is inserted to protect an architect acting in the ordinary course of his profession. The combined effect of these amendments will be to prevent unqualified persons from taking advantage of the interpretation placed on the provisions by Mr. Justice Hogarth, while allowing properly qualified persons to practise their professions without impediment. The Bill also prevents the holder of a restricted builder's licence from undertaking to carry out work outside the scope of his licence.

The most important aspect of the Bill relates to the Builders Licensing Board. The Bill is designed to convert the board into an administrative body, and to separate out its *quasi* judicial functions. These will be vested in a new body to be known as the Builders Appellate and Disciplinary Tribunal. In future the board will have the administrative function of granting licences and will exercise a general supervisory oversight of the work of licensed builders. There will be a right of appeal to the Builders Appellate and Disciplinary Tribunal against any decision of the board. This tribunal will have power to reverse decisions of the board and to exercise the disciplinary powers which were previously vested in the board.

This separation of powers will leave the board free to exercise its consumer protection function. Where complaints are made to the board about defective workmanship, the board will be able to call the builder in question before it and, if it appears necessary to do so, to order him to undertake remedial work. It is intended that the board shall have power to act as quickly and expeditiously as possible and, clearly, this is inconsistent with the formal procedure for an inquiry. Therefore, in those serious matters in which an inquiry must be held, that inquiry will be held by the separate tribunal.

Clauses 1, 2 and 3 are formal. Clause 4 inserts a definition of "the tribunal" in the principal Act. Clauses 5, 6, 7 and 8 make consequential amendments. Clause 9 provides for the publication of the register of licensed builders in October of each year instead of March. Clause 10 makes a consequential amendment. Clauses 11 and 12 provide that an applicant for a licence must have had such experience as would render him fit to organise, supervise and control building work of the relevant kind.

Clause 13 provides that the board, when it refuses an application for a licence, must give reasons in writing for its refusal. Clause 14 repeals sections 18 and 19 of the principal Act and enacts new Parts IIIA and IIIB of the principal Act. New Part IIIA confers new powers upon the board. It provides that the board, upon receipt of a complaint, or of its own motion, may conduct an investigation in order to ascertain whether the holder of a licence has carried out building work in a proper and workmanlike fashion. If the board finds that building work has not been carried out in a proper manner, it may order the holder of the licence to carry out remedial work.

The board may further order the licensed builder to produce certificates from qualified persons certifying that the remedial work has been properly carried out. Part IIIB constitutes the Builders Appellate and Disciplinary Tribunal. The tribunal is to consist of a chairman (who will be a Local Court judge), and four other members with special expertise in the building industry. The tribunal is given the various disciplinary powers which were previously exercisable by the board. In addition, the tribunal is competent to entertain an appeal from any decision of the board itself.

Clause 15 repeals section 20 of the principal Act. This provision is no longer necessary in view of the provisions of Parts IIIA and IIIB of the Bill. Clause 16 amends section 21 of the principal Act. The amendments increase penalties under the various provisions of section 21. The holder of a restricted builder's licence is prohibited from contracting to carry out work outside the scope of his licence under the provisions of new subsection (3). New subsection (6) prevents a person from organising, or arranging for, the construction of a building for immediate sale, or for immediate letting under lease or licence, where the construction is not to be carried out under the personal supervision and control of the holder of a general builder's licence. Corresponding amendments are made to subsection (11). These amendments do not, however, affect a registered architect who is acting in the ordinary course of his profession.

Clause 17 amends section 22 of the principal Act which confers on the board certain powers of entry upon land. The amendment is made to make it clear that the board has power to make the various inspections that will be necessary if it is to exercise its supervisory role in ensuring that licensed builders carry out their work properly. Clauses 18 and 19 increase penalties.

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

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS BILL

Second reading.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It provides for the registration of occupational therapists and for the supervision and control of their professional activities. In form and substance, it is not dissimilar to a measure introduced by Mrs. Joyce Steele, a former member of Parliament. In the event, the measure introduced by Mrs. Steele did not become law, but the Government acknowledges its debt to her for her activity in this matter. Perhaps the best method of determining the scope and application of this measure is to consider it in some detail.

Clauses 1 and 2 are formal. Clause 3 sets out the definitions required for the purposes of the measure, and I draw honourable members' particular attention to the definition of "occupational therapist". Clause 4 establishes

a board entitled the Occupational Therapists Registration Board of South Australia, and provides that it shall be a body corporate with the usual powers and functions appertaining to a body of this nature. Clause 5 sets out the composition of the board and is in general quite self-explanatory. Clause 6 sets out the terms and conditions of office of the members of the board, and subclause (3) of this clause provides the grounds on which members may be removed from the board. Clause 7 provides for a quorum of three members of the board and in general sets out the manner in which the business of the board is to be conducted. Clause 8 is a provision in the usual form validating acts of the board where there is a vacancy in the membership of the board. Subclause (2) of this clause again gives the usual protection against legal proceedings to members of the board for acts done in good faith and in the exercise, or purported exercise, of their powers and functions.

Clause 9 provides for the appointment of a Registrar, and it should be pointed out that this clause has been drafted in such a way as to enable the administration of the medical and paramedical registration boards to be centralised in the interests of economy. Clause 10 provides for the funds of the board, and subclause (2) of this clause provides for the application of the funds. Clause 11, being a clause to which honourable members' attention is particularly directed, provides for the requirements for registration. Clause 12 provides for a registration period of up to one year and for the renewal of such registration. Clause 13 gives the Registrar certain powers of investigation, and is generally self-explanatory. Clause 14 sets out in some detail the power of the board to make inquiries into the conduct of any registered occupational therapist. Clause 15 sets out the procedure in relation to such an inquiry.

Clause 16 sets out the powers of the board in relation to such an inquiry. These three clauses are generally self-explanatory. Clause 17 provides for the fixing of costs in circumstances when the board thinks it is just and reasonable that costs should be provided for. Clause 18 provides a right of appeal to the Supreme Court. Subclause (2) sets out the procedures to be followed in relation to such an appeal, and subclause (3) sets out the powers of the Supreme Court in determining an appeal under this Act. Clause 19 provides for the suspension of any order of the board until an appeal has been determined. Clause 20 makes it an offence for any person to take the name of "occupational therapist" unless he or she is a registered occupational therapist under this Act. Clause 21 is formal. Clause 22 provides for the making of regulations under the Act. In the nature of things, these regulations will of course be laid before this Council.

The Hon. V. G. SPRINGETT secured the adjournment of the debate.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from September 25. Page 1124.)

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): I rise to speak to this Bill at a time when the financial situation of the State and of the individuals within it is very serious. I concur in the sentiments of the Hon. Mr. DeGaris when he stressed this point yesterday, and also in the opinion of the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill, who asked many pertinent questions on this matter yesterday.

No matter whether we talk of individuals in their homes endeavouring to balance their own household budgets, whether we talk of self-employed people in small businesses, or whether we talk of the larger-style businesses in South Australia, everyone to whom one speaks today is worried about the financial situation facing him.

When he introduced this Bill, the Minister painted a gloomy picture of the situation from his Government's point of view. He said that, when the Bill was first introduced in another place, the Government forecast a deficit to Revenue Account of $12 000 000 in this current financial year. Then he went on to say that a $6 000 000 grant that the Treasurer had expected from the Commonwealth Government was not forthcoming, and that, of course, immediately caused that estimated total deficit to rise to $18 000 000.

Then he brought in another factor, which was that, based on the Australian Treasury official estimate of a 20 per cent escalation, certain revenue assistance grant arrangements were expected, but, since the 20 per cent estimate had been given and accepted, the Commonwealth officers had reached the opinion that it would be necessary to accept a 25 per cent escalation estimate. The Minister pointed out that the net outcome of this would be a further $4 000 000 deficit to our Revenue Account, which brought the total estimate deficit to $22 000 000.

But that is not all of the gloomy story. The Minister then went on to say that, since the Estimates were first drawn up, the practical results of State revenue during the first two months of this current financial year showed a current deficit for that period of $19 000 000. He said that this unfortunate situation was caused mainly because the estimated revenue through land transactions (and by that I am sure he means principally stamp duty income) had fallen away and had not reached the estimated amount; that it was unlikely that the position regarding the number of conveyances, which had fallen significantly during the month of August, would improve, but he could not forecast what this would lead to for the 10-month balance of the year.

The Minister did not give an indication of the general seasonal trend in regard to revenue, and I think that is important if we are to make some accurate forecast of what the position may be at the end of this current financial year; but at least we can accept the Minister's gloomy prediction that all is not well and that the State is in a very serious plight. He admits to an estimated $22 000 000 deficit and to an actual deficit, in only the first two months of the year, of $19 000 000. That is a serious situation.

It causes me to support the Hon. Mr. DeGaris's prediction yesterday that this State could well be heading for a $40 000 000 deficit in this current financial year, which, of course, is a situation we have never before had in the history of South Australia. Despite those figures that the Chief Secretary gave, there are also some items of estimated revenue in the Estimates before us that are open to serious challenge. One of these is the Government's estimate of income from succession duties. In the financial year just ended, the Government received $12 600 000 from this source, and it estimates in the Budget that it will receive $13 500 000 this financial year.

The Hon. F. J. Potter: It has inflation working for it.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is so, but there has been a reduction in the capital value of some estates. This applies particularly to the value of shares, which in many cases form a considerable portion of a deceased person's estate. Also, there is the land market situation, which has already been highlighted by the deficit of $19 000 000 that has been incurred in the first two months of this financial year.

The capital value of properties is in many instances declining, and this will cause not an increase but a reduction in succession duties. Therefore, the Government's estimate of $13 500 000 (which is nearly $1 000 000 more than the sum received last year) to be received from succession duties this financial year may well prove to be wrong.

The Government has estimated that it will receive $474 800 in revenue from the South Australian Film Corporation this year. However, I look on that estimate with much suspicion. I do so for two reasons: first, because the corporation's actual receipts in 1973-74 totalled $52 534 (which is a long way off the figure of nearly $500 000 that the Government estimates it will receive this year) and, secondly, because of a press report of September 23 headed "Government Film Corporation under fire for no sales", part of which states:

The Government-backed South Australian Film Corporation has come under fire for making films and television series it has not sold.

The report continues:

A Sydney newspaper has reported that the S.A.F.C. was getting "anxious" because it was spending a lot of money but little was coming in.

There is no harm in being confident and hopeful regarding business. However, to estimate that the State should benefit by nearly $500 000 from this source, when the revenue obtained therefrom in the financial year just completed was only about one-tenth of that sum (and especially when it appears, if that press report is correct, that the corporation has not yet sold any of its films), may be stretching things too far.

If honourable members analysed the Revenue Estimates before them in detail and if they had much more information regarding some of the matters contained therein, I am sure that other items could come under serious challenge regarding whether or not the estimates would be reached. This adds to the serious situation to which I have referred. It concerns me greatly (and I am now examining the matter from the point of view of the general Parliamentary system, under which, as honourable members know, Bills must be passed by both Houses of Parliament before they can become law) that a Bill such as this, after being introduced in another place and having passed that place, was introduced into the Council, at which stage the Minister said, "Circumstances have changed considerably since the Bill was first introduced in another place."

I do not recall that having happened before, and I should think that the proper and most democratic thing that ought to be done in a case such as this, when circumstances are found to be seriously different from those that obtained when the Bill was first introduced into another place, would be for the Government to withdraw the Bill and reintroduce it in the other place, letting it take its normal democratic course based on exactly the same information.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Or introduce a mini Budget.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is so, so that the Parliament would know what it had in mind and could query further the estimates that had gone wrong. That is not all that is involved in relation to the procedural problem. I believe the Government's practice of increasing its revenue by imposing additional taxes between Budgets ought to cease. It should be a principle that increases in State revenue should be debated in totality at Budget time. Only in an extreme emergency, such as when it might be necessary to introduce a mini Budget, should there be any division in this debate.

In recent years Budgets have been first introduced with an air of confidence and with statements being made that the State's financial situation is nowhere near as bad as some people think. However, some time prior to the introduction of the Budget increased taxes have been invoked, and it becomes a political ploy for Governments not to face up to their responsibilities and the criticisms they should face for their total taxation increases in any financial year but to introduce those increases throughout the year and not just at Budget time.

These points are indeed relevant. I fail to see that it is correct Parliamentary procedure when we are debating a Bill in the Council and have been given certain information that was not known to the Government when it introduced the Bill in another place. I will therefore listen with much interest to the rest of this debate and the contributions of other honourable members. If a suggestion that in light of the new information that has come to hand the Bill should be returned to another place for further consideration is supported, I will support it. In any case, before this Bill passes, I should like to hear what the Government has in mind regarding its new taxation measures. Now is the time when they should be disclosed and when the Council should be debating them. The whole should form a totality in this debate on the State's taxation proposals and financial measures.

There is no doubt that what the Government must do will be extremely severe. Indeed, we have seen evidence of this in the past few days in the other States, and we see ample evidence of it in the figures the Minister has supplied to the Council, the deficit in the first two months of this year having run to an astronomical $19 000 000. Apart from that, the Minister has admitted that there will in any case be a $22 000 000 deficit. It is therefore necessary for me to stress the extremely unfortunate situation in which this State now finds itself. In a situation such as this I do not accept that the Commonwealth Government is alone to blame; that is a form of propaganda that the present State Government has been promulgating. One cannot blame the Commonwealth Government only; the blame must be shared, and very serious blame can be placed on the doorstep of the present State Government.

I want to dwell on two aspects of the blame that the Government must accept for the present financial situation. First, I refer to the continual cry that we hear from the Government in response to the call from the people on what the State Government is doing about it. The Government replies, "We must maintain the services of this State."

We have heard this reply from the Treasurer on many occasions, and yesterday we heard it from the Leader of the Government in this Council. In reply to a question from the Hon. Sir Arthur Rymill, the Chief Secretary said, "We must maintain services. What do you want us to do? Do you want us to cut down on our services?" That seems to be the Government's never-ending reply.

The hard fact of life is that that reply must be studied a little further. What does the Government mean by it? If the Government is referring to education, hospitals and social services, I have no argument against that. But what about the other services in this State? There are many areas in which the Government can and must cut down if it is to tackle responsibly the financial problems besetting us at present.

There is no doubt that the Government must reduce some of its expenditure. All individuals are doing this at present; they have no alternative to doing it. Even the householder is cutting down here and there to make ends meet. Businesses large and small throughout the State are reducing expenditure: they have no alternative. And

the State Government, if it is responsible, has no alternative, either. I believe that the politically biased reply that we hear all the time ("You certainly would not want us to cut down services") does not stand up to real examination.

Yesterday the Chief Secretary challenged members on this side to say where the Government could and should cut back, rather than see the Government pursue a policy of increased taxation. In this connection I think the department that stands out and deserves closest scrutiny is the Premier's Department. Yesterday, the Hon. Mr. DeGaris mentioned one or two points in this connection, and they are worth repeating.

In the Estimates of Payments, under the Premier's Department there is an item "Overseas visits of Premier and officers". Twelve months ago Parliament approved, according to these figures, an allocation of $16 000 for oversea visits by the Premier and officers in 1973-74. Despite the fact that $16 000 was appropriated by Parliament, the sum actually spent was $50 885; that is extravagant beyond question, and the Treasurer is asking in these Estimates for another allocation, although the figure probably will not mean much if we can take last year's example as a guide. The new proposal is for $30 000 to be spent in the current year.

When we consider that we have trade representatives in various capital cities overseas, that the staff has been increased at South Australia House, that some of the staff members have a roving commission throughout Europe and the Middle East to look after South Australia's interests and help South Australian business people, and that the financial situation in South Australia is as bad as it is at present, there is no need for expenditure of this kind by the Government. It is the people's money that is being spent.

Where is the Treasurer off to this year? I read recently in the press that he intended to visit Penang, but I believe that expenditure on a visit to Penang is unnecessary and wasteful. The association of this State with Penang has developed because of an association between the city of Adelaide and the city of Penang that was established because Colonel Light, the founder of the city of Adelaide (I stress that he was not the founder of South Australia), spent his early years in Penang. I wholeheartedly support inter-city relationships of that kind, but basically it is a local government matter of one city's relationship with the other. However, the Treasurer has got into the act in such a way that he has an excuse for another oversea trip.

At a time when the people are being taxed to the hilt, their money is being spent on this trip. When a high dignitary of Penang came to this State a year or two ago, instead of the city of Adelaide entertaining him, the Treasurer took the initiative, and we had a magnificent State banquet in the dignitary's honour. No doubt he was given V.I.P. treatment on behalf of the State, and I am not being critical of that, because one could argue that he deserved it. However, instead of the Lord Mayor of Adelaide going to Penang, as should be the case in an association of this kind, the Treasurer is to use public money so that he can get another oversea trip, despite the fact that he and his officers spent about $50 000 in 1973-74; that is wasteful expenditure.

The Government should take another look at the whole question of the Treasurer's oversea trips and of Ministers' trips. At times like this, when we must tighten our belts, oversea trips must come under close scrutiny. I am speaking on behalf of the people who sent me here. The Government's spending money on trips for wives of Ministers at times such as this, when the housewife can hardly make ends meet at the supermarket and when she knows that some of her taxation is being spent on oversea trips for Ministers' wives, is a state of affairs that the people of this State do not approve.

The other point I wish to raise relates to how we can reduce expenditure. Yesterday the Chief Secretary asked, "Do you want us to cut down on essential services?" It is all very well putting that point: it is good politics, and it is an echo of what the Treasurer says when he is challenged. At the other end of the scale, some expenditure can and must be reduced.

In this connection I turn to the monitoring services that the Government has installed. On September 20, I read an article in the press, headed "Government's $7 000 ear ready", stating that the Government's radio and television monitoring equipment would have a trial run in the following week. It went on to explain that every talk-back and radio programme in which the public was involved, and all television and other news media, especially news sessions, would be monitored and shown simultaneously in a South Australian Government office. This means in effect that, as soon as there is the slightest criticism of the Government, the machinery will be put into force and the media stations (radio and television) will be swamped with propaganda rebutting the submission or submissions to which the Government objects. That is nothing more than Government propaganda of the Goebbels' kind.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Page 3 of today's *News* is interesting in that respect.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I shall be most interested to read that report. In criticising this unit, its installation and its architects, I am in no way criticising Mr. Kevin Crease, the officer involved; indeed, he is a gentleman for whom I have a high regard. However, $7 000 worth of equipment has been installed, and $7 000 of the people's money has been spent. There is then the cost of maintaining the equipment.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That will cost infinitely more.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: True, and the cost of officers to work this equipment is extremely high. Although I am not saying they are overpaid, I am arguing that people cannot afford such expenditure when the State is faced with its present financial situation.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Would you estimate the cost at $100 000 a year?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: We will find that out in 12 months time, if the State is still solvent, and that is how serious the situation is. We have to face the fact that the State is faced with bankruptcy.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: We are not an orphan in that. How are the other States going?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: The other States are in a financial predicament too. Of course, they are willing to announce in their Budgets what taxation measures they will implement. That is not done here, because the political tactics are not the same.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: But they've still got their problems, haven't they?

The Hon. C. M. HILL: True, they have their problems. I hope the Minister is following my argument, which is based on two headings. It is not sufficient for the Government to say, "We cannot do anything about this financial situation. We blame the Commonwealth Government. We are not going to cut down on the services of the State." That is what the Government has said.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You are reading Askin's words.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is what the Chief Secretary said yesterday.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Askin said it today.

The Hon. A. F. Kneebone: I did not say that we would not cut down on expenditure. I said that we had.

The Hon. C. M. HILL: I submit, and I want to be fair about it, that the tenor of the Minister's reply to Sir Arthur Rymill yesterday was, "Do you want us to cut down on services in this State?" That is the reply that the Treasurer gives to similar questions. However, the question goes much deeper than that. Before talking about that kind of expenditure, the Government should first look in the mirror to find out where it can cut down unnecessary expenditure in times such as these, and I suggest that in the allocation to the Premier's Department, under the heading "Overseas visits", expenditure should be reduced, just as I believe the expenditure on the monitoring service should be reduced.

I refer now to the expenditure involved with the South Australian Film Corporation. I have earlier stated that it appears that the corporation has not yet sold any films. It seems that the Government estimates that it will receive about $500 000 revenue from the corporation this year. However, in the Estimates before us, under the heading "Miscellaneous" in the Premier's Department, the estimate for the payment for production of films by the corporation is $285 000. Just below that we find the estimated payment to the corporation itself in this current year to be $1 005 000.

The actual expenditure in the year ended June 30, 1974, was $505 362. In other words, the Government spent about $500 000 on the corporation in the year just ended, and it now estimates that it will spend more than $1 000 000 in this current year. Additionally, if the press report to which I have referred is correct, the corporation has not yet sold a film, and it is this sort of situation that a responsible Government examines closely when it is in a financial predicament such as this Government is in.

I am not against the film corporation's being established but, in all matters of this kind, one must crawl before one walks. It is this basic sort of principle that small business people and others throughout South Australia understand and accept. However, the Premier's Department intends to spend more than $1 000 000 on the film corporation, and a further $285 000 on the production of films (and I am not certain why these two estimates have been separated); nevertheless, the increased sum that is intended at this time, when the Minister has asked us where economies can be made, is the type of expansion that could wait for a year or two until the financial situation in this State improved. That is the third point on which I criticise the Government and on which I say it should reduce expenditure.

I now refer to the allocation to the Minister of Transport and the departments under his control. I refer to the figures included in the Auditor-General's report. The Railways Department, which is under the Minister's control, had a loss in the year just ended of $29 985 887. In the previous year the railways lost $25 883 986. In the year ended June 30, 1974, the Government had to appropriate $30 000 000 of revenue from this State to bolster up the Railways Department. Certainly, when the Minister or the Government asks what we can do, here, surely, is an area which must be thoroughly investigated and from which an improved financial result must be obtained if the Minister and the Government face up to their responsibilities, as they should. One has only to read the report of the Auditor-General to see where close investigation must be made and change implemented to improve the finances of the railways, so that $30 000 000 in taxes, paid by people who cannot afford to pay them, will not have to be channelled into the department to make it viable.

The Auditor-General referred to country rail services which, for many years, he has maintained should be closely examined. One such service is the Victor Harbor line. Last year a loss of $454 000 was incurred on that line. If the Government wants to start working on reducing its expenditure in the railways, that line must come under close scrutiny. Nearly $500 000 is being lost on that one service to a town and a district serviced well by road transport, which is not subsidised in any way. Many other country goods and livestock railway services should be investigated to see whether or not changes could be made. More than $2 000 000 is lost on the railway that services the Upper Murray district, to take another example. I am not advocating the closure of that line, but I am saying the matter should be looked at most carefully.

We have, in the Railways Department, the almost unbelievable situation of losses that can best be highlighted, in my view, by repeating the figures in the Auditor-General's Report showing that the loss for each journey on passenger services in the Adelaide suburbs is 59c, the loss for each journey on passenger services to country areas is $15·93, and the inter-system or interstate service shows a loss for each journey on passenger services of $7·07.

This means that, when a person steps on to a train to take a country trip, the State automatically subsidises that trip by $15·93. When anyone boards a train to go to another State, the other people in this State are automatically subsidising the Railways Department by $7·07. I am blaming the Minister in all these matters, because I know from my own experience how Railways Department officers themselves are most concerned and continually make to the Minister recommendations, about which outsiders never hear, as to how these things can be improved.

I wonder what would happen if fares to other States were suddenly increased by $7·07. I wonder whether the fear that patronage would suffer would be justified. I have some doubt about whether patronage would suffer. I believe that interstate fares, for example, could be increased and I think the patronage of the railways services might not suffer as a result.

Losses on the Overland club and buffet cars amount to $54 000 a year. If the people of South Australia are to subsidise to the extent of $7·07 every passenger who takes his journey, surely that passenger should be able to pay for the drinks and refreshments he has on the train so that the financial results of that catering facility would balance out. I ask the Minister and the Government to look at these things so that a better result can be obtained; if that could be done (and there is no need for me to labour the point) less revenue would have to be poured into the Railways Department to maintain the services and there would be less need for the increased taxation that is inevitable and that looms in the near future.

I have always believed that railway housing should be organised in such a way that the Housing Trust should be asked to supply houses for rental for railway employees. Not only would this provide the advantage of houses, in some instances, bigger and better than the existing railway cottages, but inevitably it would take railwaymen into the townships rather than having them grouped down near the railway yards or railway station. I think that would have some social benefit.

The figures for the year 1973-74 show that the revenue from these cottages was $460 000, while the cost of maintenance, excluding interest and depreciation charges, was $1 157 000. One could go through the Auditor-General's Report on the Railways Department and query many of the headings. I am quite sure (because it happened, in

fact, during the term of office of the previous Government) that, when a businesslike approach is adopted, the department's deficit is contained and, in fact, reduced. When we mention some of the other items, we are not getting into figures dealing with millions of dollars, but we are certainly doing that in speaking of the manner in which the Railways Department's deficit can be improved.

I am not opposed to grants to the arts; indeed, I favour the arts receiving grants, under normal economic conditions, in ever-increasing proportions, but in the figures before us we find, under the Premier's Department, that grants and provisions for the arts last year amounted to $894 896, and the proposal in the Budget before us is that the allocation this year should be $1 406 990. That represents an increase of more than $500 000 at a time when we are facing a serious financial situation, and when the Government seems to take the view that it cannot do anything about its expenditure and that there is no alternative but to increase taxation.

All the details involved under that heading are not available for members on this side, but I am certain that, if we knew the exact details, the arts could receive an increased appropriation in this financial year and could be helped more than in the past year, without the necessity for being assisted by an additional $500 000 in a financial year such as this.

The cost of the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas so far has been $29 853, and we are being asked to approve an appropriation, in passing this Bill, of a further $25 000. I know what many people in this State would think about the expenditure of about $55 000 on this investigation. It is, in my view, wasteful expenditure. There are rumours in the corridors, and there was a report on the front page of the press yesterday, that the matter will not proceed. If that is so, can Parliament recommend that this appropriation of $25 000 be struck from the Estimates? If the Government has reached a decision along these lines we should be told, because we should not proceed to vote this $25 000 in this financial year if the Government knows that that amount is not to be spent. These are merely several of the items that one can glean from the Estimates if one tackles the problem (as tackle it one must, and tackle it the Government should) of reducing expenditure rather than rushing in and further increasing taxation, thus placing a further financial burden on the people of this State.

As regards the Public Buildings Department, I ask the Government whether it has any plans at all to introduce a further system of private contract work within that department. The Auditor-General's Report states that the total salaries and wages paid by the department for the year ended June 30, 1974, were $18 400 000, an increase of $4 107 000 over the previous year. Some of that increase, of course, would be because of the inflationary spiral, but I return to the point that there is increased expenditure year by year on salaries and wages in that department when at the same time surely we would all expect that more work would be done for the existing expenditure if more private contract work was done.

We have an example in this particular building. I say frankly that I believe that, when all this work in Parliament House is completed, it will cost about $3 500 000, but there could have been a saving of $1 000 000 on this project if the work had been given to a private contractor, by the normal tender system. I do not believe the people of this State accept the Government's method of having work done by day labour rather than by private contract. We cannot put anything over the man in the street, who knows that the Government would be getting better value for its expenditure and more work done (or, alternatively, it would not need so much money and, therefore, there would not be the need for such great taxation) if a policy of more private contract work was adopted.

I hope that at some stage the Government will come to realise this and will accept that policy, and then we shall have the results I have mentioned. When I advocate that, I am in no way advocating a policy of retrenchment of labour. I have never done that on any occasion when I have advocated or implemented this principle. Because of the high turnover of labour in the changes that occur through the resignation of people, people moving from one part of the State to another or to other States, retirement, or other reasons, it is possible for a situation to occur where the fall-out of labour is not replaced and there is no need for retrenchment when a change of policy to private contract work is adopted.

I do not want to continue further pointing out the areas where the Government could save money, but I stress again that, if that policy was adopted, taxation would not be so high. I come now to the second point I was going to mention about the State's financial predicament. The blame for it must be accepted by the State Government as well as by the Commonwealth Government. The blame for the situation must also be placed on the State Government because of some of its legislation. I refer particularly to the Land and Business Agents Act, the architect of which was the Attorney-General.

In this matter, I have had some experience of the results of the Act being brought into force, because, as honourable members know, I am reasonably close to the real estate industry of this State. Because of the great change caused in procedures and in the work that those involved in real estate must undertake to comply with the new law, I have seen a loss of confidence in the real estate market and a reduction in business sales (by which I mean land and property sales); I have seen a loss of revenue to those involved in the industry being the cause of unemployment in this State; and I have seen unemployment being caused by the provisions of that Act that deal with licensed land brokers.

I said at the time we debated the legislation, and I say it again, that this Government has always traditionally supported a policy that it would not change legislation so that unemployment would result in a particular calling or work; but all that has gone by the board, and sincere and genuine citizens of this State, who have been involved as licensed land brokers, have in some instances had to give up part of their income. In some instances they have had to be retrenched by their employers, and in some instances, where they are independent brokers, they have seen a falling off in their income because of the loss of general business caused by the ridiculous red tape, forms and public disclosures that must be made to comply with the new Act, in respect of people's private affairs.

Time and time again, I have tried to rectify this position; I tie this matter up with the fact that stamp duties, which are so important to the revenue in this Budget, are falling away. The Government admitted in its explanation of this Bill that it was unexpected: it had expected a plateau, but it is not a plateau—it is a steep dropping away, which is a principal cause of this record $19 000 000 deficit in the past two months.

So not only is the Government losing revenue from stamp duty but people are on the street, people who do not deserve that kind of treatment from any kind of Government. It

is a disgraceful situation. The Real Estate Institute has made representations to the Minister and the Premier, and has had assurances that something will be done; but in fact nothing has been done that I know of. I asked a question about it and was given a reply that, in effect, I had to wait on the Government's pleasure. The situation is worsening all the time and, when I hear the Premier make public announcements that the Attorney-General is the best Attorney-General the State has ever had, I express my view that I think he is the worst Attorney-General the State has ever had.

He introduced this legislation with no knowledge of the market whatsoever; it was nothing but theory. It was in keeping with many of his other consumer protection theoretical legislation. Some of that consumer protection legislation was good, but it did not have the mark of a practical man; nor did he take much advice from those in the market. Government revenue from stamp duties will continue to fall away because people will not have their property sold if they have to make personal disclosures to the public at large about how much money is owing on their property, to whom that money is owing, the interest rate they are paying, and so forth. Nor will they complete all the forms that might incriminate them because of the detail that is difficult to understand. Yet the Government does not seem to want to change the situation. It seems to be satisfied to see people being put out of work, severe retrenchments occurring in the real estate industry, and the public's confidence in that area being shattered.

The Commonwealth Government cannot be blamed totally for the present serious predicament in which South Australians find themselves. There are two headings under which the State Government must accept responsibility and, if the Government is a responsible Government, it will at some stage act in relation to those areas. First, where it is possible to cut expenditure, expenditure must be cut. Secondly, where the Government has not honoured assurances it has given that legislation will be amended to make it more workable and to assist people with their employment and incomes, it should undoubtedly do so.

I refer now to the matter mentioned by the Minister when explaining the Bill, seeking for the Government a further flexibility other than that approved in the Budget in relation to its expenditure during the current financial year. There are two ways in which the Government can undertake the expenditure of money that is not directly approved. First, if an item is on a line in the Budget, the appropriation for that line in the new financial year can be exceeded. However, this is subject to challenge when the Budget is reviewed at the end of that financial year. The second method is by Governor's Warrant. The Governor's Warrant adjustment at present runs at one per cent of the total Budget; in other words, as we have a total Budget of about $770 000 000, the Government can spend up to $7 700 000 on work that is not approved by Parliament.

However, the Government is not satisfied with that. It wants the one per cent plus a further allowance for increases in certain salaries. A principle is involved here: this is weakening the Parliamentary system of control over the Executive. Where do we stop if this is extended? Honourable members well remember that not many years ago only $100 000 could be spent under the Governor's Warrant. The figure was increased to $200 000 and, although one per cent may not seem very much, it now involves a figure of nearly $8 000 000. Now, a proposal is before honourable members that the figure should be increased even further.

The Hon. C. R. Story: It will be an undisclosed figure, because no-one is able to find out what are "prescribed institutions".

The Hon. C. M. HILL: That is so. It deals with increases in salaries, caused by inflation, in relation to institutions that will be prescribed. As the Hon. Mr. Story says, we have not yet got before us a list of those prescribed institutions, and I am against opening the floodgates any further in this respect. In today's conditions, $7 700 000 is enough for any Government to exceed its permitted expenditure without Parliament's approval. I do not therefore agree with that.

I return now to the point I made at the beginning of my speech regarding the most unusual circumstances in which the Council is considering this Budget. I refer again to Parliamentary principles under which Bills must be passed by the two Houses. We have here an instance of a Bill that was passed by another place and, when it was introduced in the Council, it was disclosed that the circumstances had changed, the present circumstances not being known when the Bill was introduced in another place.

I will listen with much interest to the rest of the debate. At present, I believe that the whole Budget should be withdrawn and reintroduced in another place and that all the information now known to the Government should be presented to another place and debated there. That information, and the Government's proposals regarding new taxation, should be disclosed at the same time and should form a complementary part of that debate. Surely it is at Budget time that figures like this should be discussed in totality. We should not have a situation in which a Bill is passed by one House and, when circumstances change entirely, it is then introduced in this Council. It is not Parliamentary democracy to adopt a procedure of that kind.

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MEETINGS)

Consideration in Committee of the House of Assembly's message intimating that it had disagreed to the following amendment inserted by the Legislative Council:

In new subsection (3) of section 144 to strike out "at least two-thirds of the total" and insert "a majority of the whole".

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

That the Legislative Council do not insist on its amendment.

I do so, because the amendment removes the compromise unanimously accepted by the House of Assembly. The amendment relates to the percentage of members needed to be present at a council meeting to decide when meetings will be held. The Government compromised considerably on this matter when the Bill was debated in another place, and the amendment moved by the member for Glenelg, a former mayor of Brighton with much experience in local government, was passed unanimously. The Government was willing to compromise and accept that amendment. However, for some reason, when the Bill was before the Council, another amendment was carried. When the Bill was returned to the House of Assembly, that House decided that it would reject the Council's amendment.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: Not unanimously.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: The amendment moved by Mr. Mathwin was accepted unanimously in another place.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: There was no division.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: All I am telling the Leader is that no-one voted against the amendment in the Assembly. The Opposition members and the Government members agreed to it.

The Hon. C. R. Story: Was the Minister in the Chamber at the time?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Unlike members opposite, I have more things to do than to sit in the Assembly gallery. I am willing to accept the House of Assembly's reason for disagreement, "because the amendment removes the compromise unanimously accepted by this House". "This House" means, of course, the House of Assembly. Are honourable members here trying to tell me that that message is not correct? It has been claimed that, democratically, there should be only a majority of the whole, but that does not apply to the State Council of the Liberal Party. In its rules there is provision for a two-thirds majority when some decisions are taken by the State Council or the annual general meeting of the Liberal Party. So, a provision for a two-thirds majority is nothing new to members opposite. The amendment was acceptable to the House of Assembly, and the Government went more than halfway in respect of a compromise.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I cannot support the motion. This matter has been thoroughly canvassed here, and it is purely a "Yes" or "No" question.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You said that when the Bill was here previously.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I realise that, and I have no reason to change my mind. There is no room for compromise, and I see no logic in having any formula that goes beyond having an absolute majority of the total number. I therefore ask the Committee to insist on its amendment. I stress that I am expressing my own view when I say that I cannot see any sense in having a conference between the two Houses on the matter, because there is no area of compromise.

The Committee divided on the motion:

Ayes (6)—The Hons. D. H. L. Banfield (teller), M. B. Cameron, T. M. Casey, B. A. Chatterton, C. W. Creedon, and A. F. Kneebone.

Noes (11)—The Hons. J. C. Burdett, Jessie Cooper, M. B. Dawkins, R. C. DeGaris (teller), R. A. Geddes, C. M. Hill, F. J. Potter, Sir Arthur Rymill, V. G. Springett, C. R. Story, and A. M. Whyte.

Pair—Aye—The Hon. A. J. Shard. No—The Hon. G. J. Gilfillan.

Majority of 5 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.17 p.m. the Council adjourned until Tuesday, October 1, at 2.15 p.m.