

another place the Minister in charge should discuss this matter and, if the check valve does not take the place of the injector, arrange for the word "injector" to be inserted in the appropriate place.

Mr. MIBUS (Minister of Mines).—I shall make the necessary investigations and, if needed, an amendment will be moved in another place.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House with an amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next at half-past Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I take this opportunity of asking the Premier what business the Government intends to proceed with first on Tuesday next.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—It is the intention of the Government to proceed with the second-reading speeches on the Local Government (Building Regulations) Bill, the Railways (Commissioners) Bill, the Freedom of the City of Melbourne Bill, the Game (Destruction) Bill, and The Geelong Gas Company's Bill. Then the House will consider the Police Offences (Control of Raffles) Bill, the Country Roads Board Bill, the Police Offences (Amendment) Bill, The Victoria Racing Club Bill, and any other business which may be ready. I take this opportunity of informing honorable members that from next week it will be the intention of the Government to ask the House to sit also on Thursdays.

Mr. CAIN.—If necessary.

Mr. BOLTE.—Yes.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.41 p.m. until Tuesday, May 8.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, May 8, 1956.

The **PRESIDENT** (**Sir Clifden Eager**) took the chair at 4.52 p.m., and read the prayer.

MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.

SUPREME COURT (WARDS OF COURT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests), was read a first time.

RURAL FINANCE CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.

BOILERS INSPECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

STEAM LOCOMOTIVES IN SERVICE: NUMBER DUE FOR OVERHAUL.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

(a) What is the number of steam locomotives in service in the Victorian Railways?

(b) How many locomotives are due for overhaul at the Newport works and, in respect of each, what is its—(i) age; (ii) class; and (iii) estimated cost of overhaul?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answers are—

(a) Four hundred and fifty-seven.

(b) Seven.

(i) 4-1/12 years, 4-2/12 years,
4-2/12 years, 4-5/12 years,
4-7/12 years, 4-10/12 years,
4-10/12 years.

(ii) "R."

(iii) £750, £1,200, £1,200, £750, £1,000,
£1,000, £1,700.

SANDRINGHAM-BLACK ROCK STREET RAILWAY.

The Hon. G. L. TILLEY (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

(a) In connexion with the operation of the street railway between Sandringham and Black Rock during each of the years ended on the 30th June, 1951 to 1955 inclusive, what was (i) the number of car miles; (ii) the number of passenger journeys; (iii) the gross revenue; (iv) the

ordinary working expenses; (v) the Commonwealth pay-roll tax paid; (vi) the depreciation incurred; (vii) the total working expenses; (viii) the net revenue, after deducting depreciation; (ix) the amount of interest, exchange, and sinking fund contributions; and (x) the net profit (or loss) after charging depreciation?

(b) During each of the years, ended on the 30th June, 1920 to 1955 inclusive, what was the approximate amount expended on track maintenance?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answers to the questions are presented in the form of a voluminous document and, subject to the permission of the House, Mr. President, I suggest that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—Permission is granted.

The answers were as follow:—

(a)

—	1945-46.	1950-51.	1951-52.	1952-53.	1953-54.	1954-55.
Car miles	128,636	105,031	126,808	129,315	129,491	129,722
Passenger journeys	2,223,515	1,362,821	1,551,175	1,472,117	1,443,554	1,386,324
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Traffic revenue	20,118	18,584	23,897	27,319	27,425	25,945
Treasury recoup to limit interest, &c., payments to 1 per cent. on loan liability	..	1,111	1,064	1,029	998	989*
Total Gross Revenue ..	20,118	19,695	24,961	28,348	28,423	26,934
Ordinary working expenses ..	12,143	19,178	27,435	29,914	27,378	28,723
Commonwealth Pay-roll Tax ..	221	378	549	540	502	581
Depreciation incurred† ..	330	329	329	329	329	312
Total Working Expenses	12,694	19,885	28,313	30,783	28,209	29,616
Net revenue after deducting depreciation	† + 7,754	+ 139	— 3,023	— 2,106	+ 343	— 2,370
Interest, Exchange, and Sinking Fund Contribution ..	1,754	1,483	1,425	1,395	1,361	1,349
Loss after charging depreciation	Profit } 5,670 }	1,673	4,777	3,830	1,147	4,031

* This recoup has been withdrawn by the Treasury as from 1st July, 1955.

† + Net Revenue; — Loss on operation.

‡ The depreciation shown in the above accounts is the amount allowed. The question was "What depreciation was incurred?" The answer to this question is—"A sum of money necessary to replace the equipment at the end of its useful life." The sum required exclusive of tracks and roadway (see answer to question (b)) is £88,000, the annual depreciation to meet which would be approximately £3,000.

(b) Approximate amount expended on track maintenance:—

Year	£
1919-20	1,141
1920-21	670
1921-22	665
1922-23	963
1923-24	2,379
1924-25	1,102
1925-26	2,672
1926-27	3,280
1927-28	3,248
1928-29	1,839
1929-30	1,006
1930-31	1,327
1931-32	301
1932-33	327
1933-34	269
1934-35	286
1935-36	396
1936-37	873
1937-38	1,710
1938-39	2,323
1939-40	410
1940-41	421
1941-42	652
1942-43	1,238
1943-44	1,037
1944-45	1,117
1945-46	781
1946-47	876
1947-48	917
1948-49	818
1949-50	930
1950-51	1,323
1951-52	1,661
1952-53	2,163
1953-54	1,648
1954-55	1,353

The Railways Commissioners for a number of years have been endeavouring to have buses substituted for the trams. For this reason, track maintenance has been kept to a minimum consistent with safety. If the tramway system were completely rehabilitated, it is estimated that expenditure of the order of not less than £10,000 per annum would be necessary to keep the track and roadways in first class condition, including the carrying out of all renewals as and when required.

The estimated cost of reconditioning the track and roadways is approximately £300,000.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

BENDIGO JUNIOR TECHNICAL SCHOOL:
BENDIGO GIRLS' SECONDARY SCHOOL.

The Hon. ARTHUR SMITH (Bendigo Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

Will he lay on the table of the Library the files in connexion with the Bendigo Junior Technical School and the new Bendigo Girls' High School?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The files in connexion with the Bendigo Junior Technical School and the new Bendigo Girls' Secondary School have been placed on the table of the Library.

ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT.

OPERATION OF NORLANE-GEELONG SERVICE.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON (South-Western Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

Was an investigation made on Saturday, 28th April, 1956, of overloading of a street passenger transport vehicle on the route from Norlane to Geelong; if so, will the Minister furnish full particulars of the incident?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

No special investigation was made on Saturday, 28th April, of overloading of a street passenger transport vehicle on the route from Norlane to Geelong. Officers of the Transport Regulation Board were on duty and observed the operation of the Norlane service on that date as part of their general supervision of the Geelong bus services. Nothing was observed which called for any special investigation.

In periods of heavy passenger traffic, however, such as worker and shopping peak periods, some overcrowding, as in all transport services throughout the world, must be anticipated.

MEDICAL (REGISTRATION) BILL.

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the registration as medical practitioners of persons qualified in that regard in certain other countries.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was brought in and read a first time.

WORKERS COMPENSATION (POLICE) BILL.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The purpose of this Bill is to bring members of the Police Force within the definition of "worker" for the purposes of the Workers Compensation Acts. When the first Workers Compensation Act was passed in 1914 it purported to

exclude from its benefits members of the Police Force appointed before the 25th November, 1902, because they were entitled to pensions. In 1923 the Police Pensions Act authorizing a superannuation scheme for all members of the Force was passed. By section 24 of that Act the definition of "worker" in the Workers Compensation Act 1915 was amended to exclude all members of the Police Force, presumably on the ground that pensions were to be available to them. Then in 1948, due to the substantial increase in workers' compensation benefits, the exclusion of members of the Police Force was struck out of the Workers Compensation Act 1928 in the belief that such action would confer the benefits of the Act on members of the Force, and this provision was continued in the Workers Compensation Act of 1951.

On the face of it, therefore, the workers compensation legislation purports to apply to members of the Police Force and, indeed, section 4 of the Workers Compensation Act 1951 states that the Act applies to workers employed by or under the Crown. Recently, however, the Privy Council, in *Attorney-General for New South Wales v. Perpetual Trustee Company*, decided that a member of the Police Force is a constable with special duties and, when exercising his powers of constable, is acting not as an employee but as a ministerial officer exercising statutory rights independently of contract.

Under the Workers Compensation Act 1951, a "worker" means a person who has entered into or works under a contract of service or apprenticeship or otherwise with an employer. This requires that the relationship of master and servant must exist between the worker and some employer, and as the case cited decides that such a relationship does not exist between a member of the Police Force on the one hand and the Crown on the other there can be little doubt that a member of the Force is not a "worker" within the meaning of the Workers Compensation Act 1951. The Government is of the opinion that members of the Force should be covered

by workers' compensation and therefore desires to amend the Act accordingly.

Sub-section (1) of section 4 of the Workers Compensation Act 1951 provides that the Act shall apply to workers employed by or under the Crown or any Government Department in all cases where it would apply if the employer were a private person. Clause 2 of the Bill brings members of the Force within the provision of sub-section (1) by providing that they shall be deemed to be employed by the Crown under contract of service and that the relationship of master and servant shall be deemed to exist between the Crown and each member of the Force in respect of the exercise and performance by him of all his powers and duties as such a member.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON (South-Western Province).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I should like an adjournment until this day week.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I have no real objection to the proposed adjournment, but would point out that this is a very simple Bill of a machinery character. It does not seem desirable to delay the passage of this measure which will bring members of the Police Force within the provisions of workers compensation legislation—that is, unless there is some reason that Mr. Ferguson may propose to state.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I understand the view of the Leader of the House, but I regard this measure and all others brought forward by the Government as being of some importance and I consider it to be our duty to examine them. Frequently, a Minister, when introducing a Bill, describes it as a simple little measure, but experience has shown that all such Bills should be carefully examined. As a party, we have no desire whatever to impede the work of the Government and, for the information of Mr. Gawith, who has just interjected and who seems to regard it as proper for the Opposition to agree to

The Hon. A. G. Warner.

everything the Government puts forward, I would stress that it is our bounden duty as representatives of the people to consider every piece of legislation very carefully in the interests of the community.

Mr. Ferguson is entitled to the adjournment of the debate. He has charge of this Bill on behalf of the Labour party, and it is his right and duty to examine it carefully. Surely, then, there can be no objection to his proposal for a week's adjournment.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—This Bill has appeared on the Notice Paper for a considerable period. If the Opposition members desired really to examine it, they had one whole week in which to do so, for in that period the Bill has been available to everybody concerned.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—You have only now explained it.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—It is so simple that even non-legal members could quite easily understand it. However, if it is desired to delay the police in obtaining their rights in this matter of workers' compensation, I have nothing more to say.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

GRAIN ELEVATORS (FINANCIAL) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This short Bill contains two amendments to existing legislation which are designed to facilitate the financial arrangements of the Grain Elevators Board. The first amendment, contained in clause 2, authorizes the State Savings Bank to invest in debentures or stock of the Grain Elevators Board. The State Savings Bank Act sets out the stock and debentures in which the State Savings Bank Commissioners may invest portion of the funds held by them. These include, in addition to Government stock, debentures and Treasury bonds, municipal debentures or inscribed stock of the Melbourne and

Metropolitan Board of Works, the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust, or any municipal tramways Trust, or Harbor Trust, but does not at present include stock or debentures issued by the Grain Elevators Board. The stock and debentures issued by the Grain Elevators Board are considered suitable investments for the State Savings Bank Commissioners. Under this measure, such investments will be permissible, at the discretion of the Commissioners.

The second amendment, contained in clause 3 of the Bill authorizes the Grain Elevators Board to invest its reserve funds in stock or debentures issued under the Grain Elevators Act. Under this Act the Board is required to establish a general reserve fund, an insurance reserve fund and a reserve fund to cover renewals and depreciation, the amount to be carried to each of these funds in each year being subject to the approval of the Treasurer of Victoria. The practice of the Board has been to invest its reserve funds in trustee securities issued by public authorities and in securities issued by the Commonwealth Government.

The Grain Elevators Board will require further loan moneys to complete its construction programme and in view of the uncertain condition of the loan market at the present time, and in order to give greater flexibility to its investment policy, the Board desires to invest its reserve funds in its own securities. In its present form the Act does not provide the requisite authority. Hence the reasonableness of the proposed amendment.

The Grain Elevators Board is a State instrumentality which acts as an agent for the Australian Wheat Board. In fact, its main function is to handle wheat on behalf of that Board. The proposed amendments are desirable and the Government hopes that the House will assist in the speedy passage of the Bill.

The Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—With the concurrence of Mr. Jones I would suggest that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

The Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province).—This measure incurred a good deal of debate in another place and, consequently, I ask for an adjournment for one week.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—In his second-reading speech, the Minister has clearly explained the purpose of the Bill and I should think that one day's adjournment would prove sufficient. Consequently, I ask Mr. Jones not to insist on the longer interval he seeks. If he does, it may not be possible to deal with the large number of Bills that the House is expected to discuss.

The Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province).—I am prepared to proceed with the second-reading debate to-morrow.

The motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until next day.

PENAL REFORM BILL.

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

In Victoria there are eleven penal institutions, the principal of which is Pentridge. At present Pentridge is divided into five divisions. A division is a small security division, with a capacity for 130 prisoners. B division is supposed to be a maximum security division capable of holding 150 prisoners. It may not actually be in that category at present, but the Government is spending up to £50,000 on the construction of a new wall with a view to tightening security. C division, which is regarded as an archaic section of the gaol, is to be abolished. D division, which is the remand and vagrancy section of the gaol, is capable of accommodating 200 remand prisoners and 150 vagrants. Prisoners in this division could be termed "temporary guests," and they occupy what was formerly the women's section of the gaol. Female prisoners were recently

transferred to Fairlea, a gaol designed to accommodate a maximum of 100 prisoners.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Are 100 prisoners there now?

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR.—No, only 40. In the country, there are a number of penal establishments, one of which is located at Bendigo. This gaol, with a capacity of 90 prisoners, is used for technical training purposes. Prisoners at Beechworth also receive technical training and undertake plantation work and the like. The Beechworth gaol will hold 80 prisoners. The Geelong institution has recently been converted into a technical training gaol, and will hold 150 inmates. The Castlemaine establishment, which was opened by the previous Government, is used for semi-invalid prisoners needing medical attention; 100 prisoners can be accommodated there. The Sale and Ballarat gaols are small, local institutions set aside for persons serving sentences up to twelve months. Each of these gaols will accommodate 50 prisoners. Cooriemungle is an "open" prison in which farming and forest clearing work is done. Areas of land that have been thus treated are eventually made available for closer settlement purposes. The present capacity of 40 may shortly be increased. The Langi Kal Kal institution is another open gaol, where the potential capacity as regards accommodation of prisoners is 200. At present, Langi Kal Kal is used as a reformatory, but under this measure it will be regarded as an ordinary gaol.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON.—What is the difference?

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR.—Only prisoners who have been sentenced to a reformatory may be sent there, but the Bill provides for the abolition of reformatories—in future, all penal institutions will be designated gaols. The McLeod training centre at French Island is reserved for prisoners between the ages of 21 and 25 years. The capacity of this institution is 50.

At present there are 1,500 prisoners in gaols throughout Victoria. This number is not excessive when viewed in

conjunction with the State's population of approximately 2,500,000. It is interesting to note that the gaol population has not increased during the past four or five years.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE. — Are women prisoners included in the total of 1,500?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—Yes, although there are only 40 women prisoners. It might be interesting to honorable members to learn that the policy of the Government is to classify prisoners and develop training centres. The old practice of throwing a man into gaol and letting him rot, so to speak, has gone, and the trend is to increase training centres in order to assist prisoners to rehabilitate themselves.

Part I. of the Bill deals with the question of probation. The probation system is nothing new; it has been tried successfully in other countries, particularly New Zealand, where it has been in use for 30 years. This Bill, which provides for the implementation of the probation system in Victoria, is the first measure of penal reform that Parliament has dealt with since 1907; and legislation of this type is long overdue. Under the proposed system the court, or a Judge, may release a convicted person on a probation order. To implement the system it will be necessary to appoint a chief stipendiary probation officer and a number of stipendiary and honorary probation officers who will be under the direction of the court making the probation order, but otherwise under the control of the Director of Penal Services. It will be necessary to recruit and train these probation officers. To this end it is provided that certain provisions of clause 3 will come into operation as soon as the Bill is passed.

A similar system of probation has operated within the jurisdiction of the Children's Court for 25 years or more, and in that field the probation officers have acted in an honorary capacity. It is hoped that those experienced persons will assist in the training of stipendiary and honorary probation officers to be appointed under this legislation. The

proposed new method of releasing offenders on probation will replace the existing bond system, under which a prisoner may be freed on a bond and required to come up for sentence if and when called upon to do so. It is considered that probation is superior to the bond system because a convicted person who has been released on a probation order will not be entirely free from the supervision and guidance of the authorities. Many convicted persons released on a bond imagine that they have been "let off" completely. To some extent that is so, because they are quite free to move about in society and are not called up for sentence unless during the period of their bond they commit a crime or break a condition of the bond.

In making a probation order the court may impose conditions suitable to the circumstances of the case. For example, the person concerned may be required to change his place of residence, or report to a police station at specified intervals. He might even have to undertake to relinquish certain companions. One of the duties of a probation officer will be to supply the court with a pre-sentence report. That is an innovation in Victorian penal administration. On conviction, a court may call upon a probation officer to provide such a report, which will enable the Judge or the court to examine a man's personal history, character, environment, and so forth. That will assist the Judge or court in determining whether a convicted man should be released on a probation order rather than be sentenced to imprisonment. In New Zealand, the courts called for 1,800 such reports in 1953. That indicates how valuable the courts in the Dominion regard such reports as a guide when dealing with convicted persons. Probation possesses several virtues. First, it represents an attempt to deal with and rehabilitate a convicted person outside prison walls. By means of the probation system, the court will be able to exercise considerable control over an offender, and it will eliminate the possibility of his being contaminated by association with "old lags"; further, he will not carry the

stigma of having served a period in gaol. Probation will be looked upon as a privilege.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY. — That privilege exists at present under the bond system.

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR.—That is so, but whereas when a person is released on a bond he is virtually free of control, under a probation order, the court—through the work of the probation officers—will be able to keep him under surveillance and help him, if possible, to regain his place in society. In the case of release on a bond, the offender is left free unless he breaks the bond by committing another offence.

The second point in favour of the probation system is that if the convicted person carries out the conditions of his probation the conviction is expunged. That is a valuable privilege and it is also an incentive for a man to observe the conditions of the probation order. Thirdly—although, perhaps, we should not stress the financial angle—I understand that the estimated cost per annum to the State in the case of the release of an offender on a probation order is £20 as against £365 if he is retained in gaol. Thus the taxpayer will be saved a considerable sum of money. The enormous expense involved in keeping prisoners in gaol is not generally appreciated. The present gaol population of 1,500 at the rate mentioned, costs the taxpayers £547,000. If by the probation order system we can more effectively guide convicted persons and keep them out of further trouble, its introduction will be worth while. In other parts of the world such a system has been operated with great success, and I strongly recommend its adoption in this State.

Part II. of the Bill deals with the parole system which also has been successful in other countries. In order to implement this reform in Victoria it will be necessary to establish a Parole Board. The Government's view is that a Supreme Court Judge should be appointed by the Chief Justice as chairman of that Board, with the consent of the Judge proposed to be appointed. The second member of the Board

will be the Director of Penal Services, and there will be three other members, appointed by the Governor in Council. Actually six such members, three male and three female, will be appointed. When the prisoner applying for parole is a male, the three male members will join the chairman and second member on the Board. When the prisoner is female, the three female members will make up the Board with the chairman and Director of Penal Services. A number of parole officers will be appointed to carry out certain duties under the direction of the Parole Board. The Governor in Council will decide on the payment of such officers.

A provision novel to Victoria is included in the Bill. It will be mandatory for a court to fix both a minimum and a maximum sentence when the sentence exceeds twelve months. The interval between the minimum and maximum sentence will be an appropriate period of time during which the prisoner may apply to the Parole Board to be released on parole.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON.—Does the prisoner apply for parole?

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR.—I am not certain on that point, but will clarify it and other points when the Bill is dealt with in Committee. Doubtless, the Parole Board will consider reports by the prison authorities as to the prisoner's progress in gaol, including his technical training and the likelihood or otherwise of his making good in society if he is paroled before the end of his maximum sentence. The proposed parole system will take the place of the present regulations which govern the remission of sentence for good conduct. At present a prisoner is entitled to such remission unless it is definitely excluded in his sentence. The Parole Board will function as a semi-judicial body. That is why it is suggested that the chairman should be a Supreme Court Judge, as in New Zealand, where the Board has functioned successfully. Decisions of the Parole Board will be of great importance. Clause 23 in Part II. of the Bill abolishes the Indeterminate Sentences Board. That Board dealt with prisoners who were confined in a reformatory at

the Governor's pleasure. The system of indeterminate sentences caused some dissatisfaction, as many prisoners felt that they were being stultified and were suffering injustices. Others lost heart because their sentences were not for any definite period. The Government decided that although the Indeterminate Sentences Board had performed good work in the past, it should be abolished because it was outmoded. The Parole Board will take over its functions. Moreover, it will deal with the cases of persons at present confined in gaols.

Clause 29 deals with that class of person formerly known as an habitual criminal. It gives power to a Judge to sentence a man to a term of imprisonment of up to ten years under certain conditions. It seems almost impossible to believe that many of the incorrigible types of persons who are well known in the courts will respond to any treatment based on clemency.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Is a person who was sentenced to life imprisonment, without the benefit of remissions, eligible for parole?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—No. Those who qualify for parole will be prisoners who are eligible for remission of sentences for good conduct.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Under which provision will they be dealt with?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—I cannot cite the clause. In explaining this Bill, I thought it better to make a broad survey. When the measure is in Committee, I propose to deal with the clauses in detail.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I was hoping that you might be able to refer me to that provision, because there could be some public uneasiness on the question.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That matter will be clarified in Committee. The parole system is designed to deal with those prisoners who are entitled to remissions of sentence because of good conduct. It was suggested that a man would have more incentive to do well if he knew that the Parole Board

would deal with his case than he would if he were waiting for the ordinary remission of sentence that could be obtained by every prisoner—the exceptionally well-behaved man receiving no special benefit.

Division 1 of Part III. deals with amendments to the principal Act and other Acts. Paragraph (a) of clause 35 proposes to amend the Public Service Act and changes the title of the present Inspector-General of Penal Establishments and Gaols to "Director of Penal Services." This officer will be responsible for the administration of the probation, prison, and parole services. I shall deal with the remaining amendments in Committee.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Do the proposals in this Bill affect men who have already been sentenced by a court and are undergoing imprisonment?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—Yes. Those persons will be affected beneficially because they will be brought into the parole system under the transitory provision contained in Division 2 of Part III. of the Bill.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—Did you not explain that the Parole Board would deal with prisoners serving a maximum and minimum sentence?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That is so. It will be found that provision is made in the measure for the Parole Board to re-sentence a person now confined in prison.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—The Board could alter the sentence imposed by a Judge?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That is so.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I should say that it would not be proper for the Parole Board to take that action.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That is an argument in favour of a Supreme Court Judge being a member of the Parole Board.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Do you suggest that the Parole Board can alter the sentences of prisoners now undergoing servitude?

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—Yes, but it could not alter the maximum sentence.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Under the present system, there is no maximum sentence.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That is so, but under this Bill it is proposed that a prisoner shall be given the opportunity of applying for parole. This proposal favours the prisoner.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—If a man is sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, and is later granted parole, the conviction stands.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—That is correct. If he breaks his parole, he can be returned to gaol. The transitory provisions in this Bill favour the prisoner. I hope that the Labour party will not oppose any suggestion that a man should be able to take the opportunity of being released on parole. At present, prisoners do not have that opportunity.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Prisoners might prefer the devil they know to the devil they do not know. After all, a man undergoing a sentence imposed by a court of law knows where he is, but now it is proposed to place him in the hands of the Parole Board, which may re-sentence him.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—The Board cannot impose a sentence greater than the prisoner has already received. All it can do is to fix a minimum time so that he may be given an opportunity to apply for parole.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON.—The Judge, not the Parole Board, fixes the minimum sentence.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—Prisoners at present serving sentences are not subject to any minimum; they will be brought under the new system.

The Hon. G. S. MCARTHUR.—It is true that the Bill is somewhat complicated, but the transitory provisions have been drawn with considerable care. I wish to thank certain persons who have assisted the Government in connexion with this Bill. It was introduced into the Legislative Assembly deliberately towards the end

of the last sessional period in order that honorable members and the public might be given an opportunity to express their views on the novel proposals it contains. I wish to place on record the appreciation of the Government of the assistance given by Supreme Court Judges, the Prisoners' Aid Society, and other bodies which examined the Bill after its introduction. I pay tribute also to the members of the Labour party and the Country party who at non-party conferences ironed out some of the difficulties that Mr. Galbally foresees. I realize that to a practising lawyer some provisions of this Bill are so novel as to be almost startling. I look forward to receiving assistance from all members when the Bill is being dealt with in Committee. I am sure that the Government will not be unappreciative if members can help to improve the measure.

On the motion of the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

RETURNED SERVICEMEN'S BADGES BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 17) on the motion of the Hon. E. P. Cameron (Minister of Health) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—In the unavoidable absence of my colleague, Mr. Slater, I wish to continue the debate on this Bill. There can be no objection to the principles it contains. Those who wear a returned serviceman's badge without authorization should be dealt with by the law. It is claimed that this Bill raises certain drafting difficulties, and I have just been handed an amendment which, I understand, the Minister of Health proposes to move in Committee. I have not yet had the opportunity of perusing it, but I shall be interested to hear what the honorable gentleman has to say on the subject. Otherwise, my party believes that the Bill should be passed.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM (Northern Province).—As has been stated by Mr. Galbally, the Minister intends to submit

an amendment to the effect that the offences created by this Bill shall not be deemed to have been committed by a person who is, or at some time was, a member of the returned servicemen's league and merely happens to be unfinancial inasmuch as he has not renewed his membership. My understanding is that the honorable gentleman intends also to submit a further amendment with the object of defining a badge more clearly. Under the rules of the returned servicemen's league, a badge is merely a small miniature with a current financial membership clip attached, and so, to preclude the possibility of an effective defence being submitted by an imposter who has a badge with no clip attached, I understand that the Minister has had drafted an amendment covering the description of a badge. Subject to those amendments, the Bill has the support of the Country party.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—Our party supports this measure, and agrees that the amendments that have been foreshadowed are necessary. I foresaw that an imposter might wear an emblem which would have the effect of conveying to the general public that he had a war record. I do not know that the general public would be interested to learn whether the wearer of a league badge was financial, but they would want to know whether he possessed the qualifications necessary to enable him to join that organization. If a former member had encountered economic difficulties which resulted in his becoming unfinancial, the community would not consider that he was deceiving anyone if he wore a league badge. Apart from the factors which render the proposed amendments necessary, members of our party can discover no fault in the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, providing, *inter alia*—

(1) No person shall wear a badge of the kind issued by the Returned Sailors Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, Victorian Branch, for the purpose

of indicating that the wearer is a member of the said League or, without lawful excuse, have in his possession such a badge unless such badge has been issued to him under the rules of the said League.

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health).—I thank members of all parties for their co-operation concerning this Bill which, last week, was transmitted to this House hurriedly. I propose to endeavour to correct certain deficiencies in clause 2, and so I move—

That the following sub-clauses be added, to follow sub-clause (1):—

() A person who has been a member of the said league and who has not been expelled under the rules of the said league and who wears or has in his possession a badge of the league shall not thereby be guilty of an offence under this section notwithstanding that such person at the time that he wears or has in his possession such badge is not a financial member of the said league.

() An emblem shall be deemed to be a badge of the said league for the purposes of this section notwithstanding that no clip denoting that the member is or has been a financial member of the league is attached thereto.

Mr. Feltham has really explained the substance of the Bill. An unfinancial member who has not been expelled will not be liable under this measure.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—Can you state how many members have been expelled from the league since its inception?

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON.—No. I have no doubt that in that regard Mr. Fulton possesses as much knowledge as I do. A few members were expelled some years ago when the question of Communism arose. Under the rules of the league—as was pointed out by Mr. Feltham—a badge is an emblem with a “year” clip attached. The latter portion of the amendment I have submitted will remove any difficulty in that regard in that it will provide that an emblem alone, without a “year” clip, will be regarded as a badge under this measure.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I thank the Government for its decision to amend the Bill. As originally drawn, the measure left certain aspects in doubt.

The position will be met adequately by the amendment submitted by the Minister of Health.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

The Bill was reported to the House with an amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BROAD-MEADOWS) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this short Bill is to enable the Governor in Council to declare the Shire of Broadmeadows to be a city. Special legislation is necessary because the circumstances of that municipality are such that it cannot be declared a city under the normal provisions of the Local Government Act.

Under section 16 of that Act, the Governor in Council is empowered to declare to be a city any borough which, in the preceding twelve months, had a revenue from general and extra rates of not less than £30,000. This provision cannot be applied to Broadmeadows, because the municipality is a shire—not a borough. Moreover, Broadmeadows cannot be declared to be a borough because of its large area. Under the principal Act, any portion of Victoria to be constituted a borough must have an area of not more than 9 square miles, with no point more than 6 miles from any other point therein.

It will be seen, therefore, that under existing legislation a shire cannot be declared to be a city, and this particular shire cannot, because of its area, be constituted a borough as a preliminary step to becoming a city. It can become a city only by enabling legislation.

Broadmeadows was constituted as a shire in 1871; the Shire of Merriang was united with it in 1915; but in the following year portion of its territory was severed and annexed to the Shire of Romsey. It had an area of 176 square miles until last year, and it extended from the northern boundary of the City

of Essendon almost to Kilmore. However, following a request from rate-payers, a poll was held in 1954 concerning a plan to constitute the southern portion of the shire as a separate municipality. This proposal was agreed to, and was subsequently approved by the Governor in Council, with the proviso that the northern areas of the shire should be severed and annexed in portions to the shires of Kilmore, Whittlesea and Bulla. As a result, the area of the present shire is only 35 square miles. In view of its intensive development the Government felt that the council's desire to achieve the status of a city was reasonable and accordingly agreed to introduce this enabling Bill.

Similar action has been taken on previous occasions to enable shires which, by reason of size, could not first be declared boroughs to be given status as cities. The most recent case was in respect of the City of Sunshine, but other cities such as Heidelberg which has an area of 42½ square miles, Moorabbin—19 square miles, and Preston—14 square miles, were also the subject of special legislation similar to the Bill now before the House.

The southern portion of Broadmeadows shire is only five miles and a half from the General Post Office, and the more distant parts are within 13 miles of Melbourne. It has a valuation of over £600,000, a rate revenue of £120,000 and a total revenue of about £148,000. The population is 26,000. As a rate revenue of £30,000 only is required before a borough can be declared a city, the municipality easily meets the financial requirements of the Act. When the Bill was being debated elsewhere—

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—Was the Minister of Agriculture about to refer to a debate in the Assembly?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER. — My notes do include a reference to a debate in another place, but I shall put the point in another way. It is the desire of the municipal councillors and of certain honorable members that the municipality of Broadmeadows should be proclaimed a city as soon as possible

after this enabling Bill has been passed. As the principal Act prohibits such a proclamation between the months of April and August inclusive, it is my intention to move an amendment in the Committee stage to suspend the operation of the relevant provisions in the principal Act so that Broadmeadows can be proclaimed a city at an early date.

The area to which this Bill relates is part of the Southern Province represented by Mr. Rawson and myself. It is growing rapidly and is well worthy of the honour of being proclaimed a city.

On the motion of the Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province), the debate was adjourned until next day.

SUPERANNUATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Honorable members will recall that during the last sessional period Parliament passed a rather involved Bill amending and consolidating the Superannuation Acts. On that occasion, the view was expressed that it might be necessary to consider further legislation in order to rectify any anomalies that might be created. Mr. Smith spoke to the Bill on behalf of the Labour party and displayed great knowledge of the superannuation provisions. He has since had several private discussions with me and we realized that certain anomalies did exist. One is that a pensioner who contributed for eight and a half units of superannuation during his working life now receives a smaller pension than a person who contributed for eight units, and a person who contributed for nine units, and was retired an superannuation before the passage of the most recent amendments, receives a smaller pension than a contributor who retired subsequent to the amendment of the Act. This Bill seeks to rectify those anomalies. It provides also that a special children's allowance of £52 per annum shall be payable in all cases where both parents have died either

before or after the passage of the provision authorizing the payment. Another purpose of this Bill is to ensure that the Superannuation Fund will continue to bear, in respect of all pensions, only the proportions of such pensions for which the fund was originally constituted and for which provision was made in the principal Act. Except in respect of certain age 30 concessions units, those proportions are £13 a unit per annum in the case of a former contributor's pension and £6 10s. 0d. a unit per annum in respect of both a widow's pension and the allowance for each child. The present measure will operate from and inclusive of 30th November, 1955—the date on which the Royal assent was given to the Superannuation Act of that year. Some honorable members may have doubts as to what will be the position of contributors who were pensioned between March, 1955 when the Bill was introduced and November, 1955, when the Act was proclaimed. The Government can give an assurance—backed by opinions of the Parliamentary Draftsman and other officers of the Law Department—that those pensioners will be fully covered.

As all honorable members will be desirous that this legislation should come into operation as soon as possible, I trust the Bill will have a speedy passage.

The Hon. ARTHUR SMITH.—The Minister of Health has pointed out that men who retired on superannuation after March, 1955 will be fully protected, but what is the position of those who retired prior to March, 1955?

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON.—Those officers were covered under the previous legislation.

On the motion of the Hon. Arthur SMITH (Bendigo Province), the debate was adjourned until next day.

The sitting was suspended at 6.28 p.m. until 8.8 p.m.

MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill makes three small but important amendments to the law governing the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners. There is no common link between these amendments, the first of which affects the Trust's power to lease land. Section 51 of the Melbourne Harbor Trust Act authorizes it, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to grant leases of land for a period of up to 56 years, but the concluding part of the section states that no land within 410 feet of a defined waterfront shall be leased for a period longer than 21 years.

Previously, the Trust was enabled to grant comparatively long leases of general lands under its jurisdiction, but not upon that portion of the land which was within 410 feet of the waterfront. This might have been a reasonable provision in the days of tin sheds, but, it is not at present. For example, the Vacuum Oil Company has spent more than £20,000,000 in the erection of an oil refinery at Altona, and in such an instance the existing law is a sheer absurdity. Furthermore, the cost of materials and labour has increased much faster than has the value of this type of land.

In order to encourage the construction of a better class of buildings within this area, the Melbourne Harbor Trust seeks power to grant leases, subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, for up to 56 years. I do not think there is any complication. It is merely a question of whether Parliament considers encouragement should be given for the erection of better buildings by allowing longer leases of land.

The second object of the Bill is to extend the power of the Melbourne Harbor Trust to raise money. At present, it is authorized to borrow up to £13,500,000. At the 30th of June last year, the Trust's loan liability was £9,996,826, so that the unused loan-raising capacity at that date was £3,503,174. The Trust has listed the following programme which it desires to undertake during the next five years, and for which the extra borrowing authority is needed:—Appleton Dock, first section, £2,000,000; Victoria Dock, new sheds, &c., £1,150,000; North Wharf, reconstruction wharves and

road, £500,000; South Wharf, wharves, roads, sheds, £1,170,000; Station Pier, Port Melbourne, £150,000; river entrance, docks, first section, £2,000,000; Williamstown, piers extension and reconstruction, £320,000; mechanical equipment, £700,000; hopper barges, tugs, and grab dredge, £600,000; widening Yarra river below Newport, £360,000; removal of Williamstown ferry, £100,000; a total of £9,050,000. If the Trust is to carry out the foregoing works, it must have further statutory authority to borrow. Merely empowering the Trust to raise additional money does not necessarily mean that it will be able to do so.

The third question dealt with in the measure relates to a somewhat curious anomaly which has arisen regarding the salary of the chairman of the Melbourne Harbor Trust. Originally, it was proposed to increase the figure to only £2,800, but in view of the fact that a salary of £3,000 had been promised by the previous Administration, the Government agreed to increase the remuneration to that figure. Amendments were prepared for that purpose, including an amendment allowing the salary to be increased to £3,000 during the chairman's current term of office. During the debate in the Assembly, the Government agreed to a suggestion that the maximum salary be £3,250 and an amendment was moved accordingly. However, it was overlooked that a consequential amendment was needed to the provision permitting an increase during the current term of office of the present chairman. The amendment, as it was passed, applied only to a person occupying the office for a new term. In order to obtain the increase the chairman would have had to resign and be re-appointed. The Bill corrects the position by enabling his salary to be increased during the current term to £3,250. Thus, the chairman will receive the sum intended to be given to him when the previous legislation was passed. Nobody will deny that the present holder of the office—Mr. Mackenzie—is worth at least that amount.

On the motion of the Hon. G. L. TILLEY (South-Eastern Province), the debate was adjourned until next day.

KEILOR (UNIMPROVED RATING POLL) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 1) on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province). — In his second-reading speech the Minister in charge of the Bill fully outlined its principles. It is not necessary for me, therefore, to deal with them in detail. It will be advisable, however, if I refer to some of the main points associated with this measure. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1946, Part XI., the requisite number of ratepayers in the Shire of Keilor made a demand, on the 28th January, 1955, for a poll on the unimproved rating principle. According to the Act, the poll should have been held in August, 1955, the time for the holding of the municipal election, but the council was unable to fulfil its obligation because it could not acquire the services of a valuer. Eventually it was successful in obtaining a suitable person, but not until February of this year. The Shire of Keilor comprises 53 square miles and consists of built-up areas, land for subdivision and rural lands. Honorable members can imagine what a considerable task faces the valuer.

This Bill provides for the poll to be postponed until August of this year or, if the valuations cannot be made in time, until August, 1957. It appears, from reports received, that the valuations will not be made in time for a poll to be taken in August of this year. Keilor is a rapidly developing area and its shire council has to contend with many problems. No-one knows that better than the Minister of Agriculture who, with myself, represents Keilor in this House. It has probably a greater intake of migrant population than any other district on the outskirts of Melbourne, and the shire council has been enthusiastically doing its best to accommodate these new citizens as well as the old ones. I have already attended three naturalization ceremonies in the shire and hope to have the pleasure of attending still another in the next two or three weeks.

This influx of migrant people poses a problem which, along with the many other existing problems, is giving the council a tremendous amount of thought and work; this bears heavily upon its office-bearers and upon the shire secretary in particular. There is especially the problem of the provision of essential loan funds. The shire's quota for 1954-55 was £60,000, but all it could raise was £35,000. In the past year it was allotted £70,000 and to date it has received only £25,000; that amount came from the State Savings Bank and was really a carry-over from the previous year. I recently approached the Premier and Treasurer to see what could be done to help the shire to raise more loan money. He replied, "I think you will find that things are all right now, seeing that the interest rate has gone up." For the information of the honorable gentleman, I may mention that I have been informed by the shire officers that they have approached all those people likely to have money to lend, but that the prospect of obtaining additional finance has not improved.

The Keilor shire is most anxious to dispose of this poll as quickly as it can after the valuations have been made, and for that purpose it would like some time to be fixed between the completion of the valuations and the 1957 annual election. The Minister of Public Works was approached regarding this matter and he promised that it would receive consideration. The Deputy Leader of my party also approached that Minister and was told that the proposal would be considered and that if it could not be acceded to an explanation would be given. I am much surprised that the Minister of Public Works, who is most courteous and considerate on all occasions, has not informed the Deputy Leader of my party why the Government has been unable to grant the request made to it. The proposal, for the poll to be taken at a period between the time by which the valuations will have been completed and August, 1957, has the support of the majority of members of the shire council; the voting at a meeting held recently in this matter was six to two in favour of such proposal.

The reason why the shire wishes to have the poll taken earlier than August, 1957, is that it appreciates that it has a tremendous task in settling its new citizens as well as dealing with the requirements of those already established. On behalf of the council and of my party I ask that the Government agree to an amendment to this Bill that will provide for the arrangement I have described. It is my intention, in Committee, to submit a specific amendment along those lines.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province)—I can endorse Mr. Rawson's statement concerning the progress and extensions taking place in the Shire of Keilor. The township itself is one of the best on the outskirts of the metropolis and is developing rapidly as, in fact, is the northern part of the metropolitan area generally. This is not the first occasion on which a shire in which a proposal has been made to change from the net annual value system to the unimproved rating system has found itself in difficulty with respect to valuations. This legislature has been called upon to pass measures at various times to ratify certain necessary actions on the part of shires. There is no reason, therefore, why this latest proposal should not receive our support.

If the Shire of Keilor changes its present system of rating, its revenue will not be increased. I do not intend to argue the respective benefits of the two rating systems. The adoption of either is in all cases a matter for decision at a poll of ratepayers. I note that the valuer who is dealing with the position in the Keilor Shire has still two or three months in which to complete his valuation. Residents of the metropolis may regard Keilor as a large area but we people in the country are used to shires which comprise hundreds or thousands of square miles and in which valuations can be made at a comparatively rapid rate. The valuer at Keilor should be encouraged to press on with his job and complete it. I do not undertake at this stage to support the proposed amendment but will give it consideration.

The Hon. A. J. BAILEY (Melbourne West Province).—I wish to support this Bill and in doing so I speak on behalf of my party. Honorable members appreciate that the Shire of Keilor has encountered certain difficulties, outside its control, concerning the holding of a poll. The demand for a poll was made by the requisite number of ratepayers applying to the council on the 28th January, 1955, after which the shire made application to the Public Works Department to bring about a poll. Before the poll could be taken a valuation had to be made in compliance with the Act. Unfortunately, as the shire was then without a full-time valuer, there was insufficient time to conclude the valuation before the next annual council election. The Bill will provide the shire with the opportunity of taking a poll when the valuation has been completed, which, it is hoped, will be possible prior to the annual elections this year, although doubt has been expressed in this Chamber as to that hope being fulfilled. Consequently, provision is made in the Bill for the poll to be taken as late as August, 1957.

I support Mr. Rawson, who indicated that he would move an amendment designed to permit the poll to be taken prior to August, 1957. That may prove difficult. However, if at all possible, it would be beneficial for the ratepayers and the shire itself. Both the Minister in charge of the Bill and Mr. Rawson represent the Shire of Keilor in this House, but I also lay claim to that distinction, as a portion of North Essendon, which is in that shire, falls within the Melbourne West Province. Consequently, I am just as much interested in this poll as are the other representatives of the district who have already spoken and I assure the ratepayers of Keilor that anything that can be done to assist them, not only in connexion with the Bill now before the House, but also in relation to future legislation affecting them, will receive my support.

The Minister stated that every member should read the preamble to this Bill. Having done so, I agree with him that the preamble gives the reason why this measure is necessary. If this House can

streamline the necessary procedure and expedite the poll, that would prove of considerable assistance to the shire. The foreshadowed amendment was not moved in another place, although the Minister in charge of the Bill there promised that he would give every consideration to the viewpoint advanced by Opposition members. I trust that the Minister's attitude on that occasion will be shared by his colleague who is piloting the Bill through this House.

The Hon. PAUL JONES (Doutta Galla Province).—A small portion of the Shire of Keilor comes within my province and I support the Bill. The Keilor Shire Council found that it could not obtain the services of a competent valuer to make a valuation within the specified time. The measure will merely extend that time and while safeguarding every member of the Keilor council, will protect the interests of those who made the demand for the poll. It is a simple, straight-out Bill, and I trust that it has a speedy passage.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 3 were agreed to.

Clause 4, providing, *inter alia*—

(1) The time for the taking of the poll consequent upon the hereinbefore recited demand shall be postponed until the day and the time for the annual election of councillors of the shire of Keilor in the year One thousand nine hundred and fifty-six or, if the Governor in Council by Order published in the *Government Gazette* so directs, in the year One thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province).—I move—

That after the words "so directs" the following words be inserted:—

"until any other day and time not being later than the day and the time for the annual election of councillors of the Shire of Keilor"

As previously stated, the Keilor shire is anxious to expedite the poll owing to the tremendous amount of work to be done. It expects the valuation to be completed by about October next—two months later than the date mentioned in this Bill. It is hoped that some time after that date—possibly within two

months—it may be possible to conduct the poll. This could not be done without an order by the Governor in Council published in the *Government Gazette*. The amendment will enable the poll to be held at an earlier date than August, 1957, the earliest possible date under present expectations.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The Government does not intend to accept the amendment because the principal Act provides that a poll for this purpose shall be held at the annual municipal elections in the month of August. The reason for that is that the rolls are compiled each year just prior to the annual elections taking place, and therefore they are then up to date. All honorable members realize that the Shire of Keilor is growing rapidly and new names are continually being added to the roll. Consequently, if a poll was held later than envisaged in the Bill, it would be necessary for an out-of-date roll to be used. In any case, it is quite optional for the Governor in Council to let the position drift, so to speak, so that the poll will take place automatically in the month of August, as provided in subsection (1) of section 325 of the principal Act, which reads—

The following provisions shall apply with respect to every poll under that Part:—
(1) The poll shall be taken on the day and at the time for the annual election of councillors next following the delivery of the demand, and, (whether the municipal district is subdivided or not) the proceedings upon the poll shall be taken and had for the whole of the municipal district.

It appears quite evident, therefore, that the provisions of the principal Act provide that the poll will be in August, and if the amendment is agreed to, consequential amendments may be necessary in other sections of the Act. It is imperative that wherever possible, the rolls on which a poll is conducted should be up to date. For those reasons, I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province).—The Minister stated that the rolls would be out of date, but is not that the position when an extraordinary

election occurs? For example, if a councillor dies and there is an election, the old rolls are used. It is important that the shire should be allowed to get on with its work and I do not think the Minister's reasons are sufficiently strong to justify a rejection of the amendment. The honorable gentleman mentioned that it would remain the prerogative of the Governor in Council to decide whether the poll could be held at an earlier date. I recognize that fact and would rely on the goodwill of the Government towards a municipality which is experiencing a difficult period. It has a large job in hand which it desires to complete expeditiously. I have confidence in the Minister of Agriculture, who shares with me the honour of representing the Southern Province. I am sure he will do all in his power to assist the Shire of Keilor.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—From my knowledge of the Local Government Act and its recent amendments, I am sure it adequately covers all eventualities in regard to municipal elections. While I sympathize with Mr. Rawson's point of view, I support the Minister of Agriculture because he has given a sound reason why the amendment should not be accepted. If deferment of a poll until August, 1957, would create a real hardship, I would support the amendment, but I do not think that would be the case. In fact, in many ways it would be easier for the shire to conduct a poll concurrently with its municipal elections, and less expensive. I do not see how the proposal will bring more revenue to the shire, although it may ease its difficulties in the future.

The Hon. A. J. BAILEY (Melbourne West Province).—I support the amendment moved by Mr. Rawson. It is possible that the valuations may be completed soon after the annual elections in August. In that case the poll could be taken in November or December this year. After all, the rolls are not strictly up to date when the elections are held and another month or two would be neither here nor there. I think the fears of the Minister of Agriculture might be sound if completion of the

valuations was delayed considerably and the poll could not be taken until about June 1957, but I point out that even under the amendment the Minister would still control the position, through the Governor in Council.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province).—I support the amendment. The Keilor Shire Council is not responsible for the delay in making the valuations. Unfortunately, the services of a full-time valuer could not be obtained, although it was the desire of the council, its officers, and citizens that the valuations be made at an early date. There is an extensive private streets scheme in Keilor and the municipal officers consider that if the unimproved rating system was approved at the poll, the valuations could be completed by the end of August or early September and then the assessments could be sent out in December. The Minister should accept the amendment on behalf of his much respected constituents.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I agree with Mr. Machin's last phrase, even if I do not agree with the terms of the amendment. Twenty odd years of municipal experience reminds me that about the end of September is the most difficult time for municipal office staff, because then estimates for the following year must be worked out, a rate must be struck, and associated work must be completed. The clause as it stands will not upset the municipality in any way. The provision in the principal Act for such a poll to be taken during the following August has operated satisfactorily for many years. I have no information that the valuations will be completed by the end of August, but accept that statement. Nevertheless, the municipal staff would be in difficulties conducting a poll and working on their estimates and associated matters at the same time. As no hardship will be created for either my very respected constituents or a municipality for which I have the highest regard, I believe the provisions of the principal Act should prevail.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province).—I should have pointed out that it is the considered opinion of the engineering staff of the Shire of Keilor that they would be greatly assisted in the preparation of estimates if they had better knowledge of the revenue which will be obtained under the unimproved rating system.

The Committee divided on Mr. Rawson's amendment (the Hon. D. J. Walters in the chair)—

Ayes	13
Noes	16

Majority against
the amendment .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Arnott	Mr. Sheehy
Mr. Bailey	Mr. Smith
Mr. Brennan	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Jones	Mr. Tilley.
(Doutta Galla)	Tellers:
Mr. Little	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Machin	Mr. Jones.
Mr. Rawson	(Ballarat).

NOES.

Mr. Bridgford	Mr. MacAulay
Mr. Byrnes	Mr. Mansell
Mr. Cameron	Mr. Swinburne
Mr. Chandler	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Feltham	Mr. Warner.
Mr. Fulton	
Mr. Gawith	Tellers:
Mr. Grigg	Mr. Dickie
Mr. McArthur	Mr. Mack.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

CANCER INSTITUTE (LOAN MONEYS) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

RURAL FINANCE CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This is a Bill to amend the Rural Finance Corporation Act, which was passed by Parliament in 1949. Actually,

it was an idea of mine, but, at this stage, I do not know whether I like the child or not. It has done some good. As members are aware, the objects of the Corporation are to encourage and assist country settlement and development, stimulate country production, and develop country industries. Since its establishment it has lent £8,500,000 to primary and secondary industries in Victoria, of which amount £6,000,000 relates to primary industries and £2,500,000 to secondary industries. With this finance, farmers have been assisted to purchase farming properties and to carry out work enhancing the values of their farms. The Corporation has provided financial aid to various industries, including fishing organizations, in country districts to enable them to increase productivity.

The Corporation was also given charge of the administration of the Rural Rehabilitation Fund which, as country members are aware, has been the medium through which much good work has been done over a number of years. In particular it affords assistance to those people who suffer loss as a result of droughts, storms and other climatic conditions. In recent years, the fund has not been used to a great extent, although in 1954 payments were made to dried fruit growers in the Mildura area.

The Bill proposes a number of amendments to the principal Act. Those members who have been supplied with copies of notes in explanation of the Bill will, I am sure, find that those notes are actually more complicated than the amendments themselves. I consider that the objects of the amendments are more easily ascertainable by referring to the various clauses than to the notes. By the amendment in clause 2, the Corporation will be enabled to accept money on deposit from its borrowers. As everyone knows, the Government is short of funds, and it is felt that the Corporation should have an equal opportunity with other instrumentalities to go onto the market and accept deposits. I think all members will agree with that proposal. The amendment contained in clause 3 is to enable the

Corporation to pay out of its revenue any interest upon money it borrows. At present, the affairs of the organization are tied up closely with the Treasury, and this amendment attempts to put the matter on a proper basis.

Section 36 of the principal Act made the Auditor-General responsible for ascertaining the profits of the Corporation. That officer has stated that the provision is rather unusual. The Corporation desires that it shall determine its profits in the normal manner. Of course, its operations will be subject to comment by the Auditor-General whose published report will be available for examination by members. Clause 4 proposes the deletion of the section that places upon the Auditor-General the responsibility of ascertaining the profits of the Corporation. The clause provides also for the insertion of other provisions, under which profits, if any, of the Corporation shall be set aside in a special reserve fund.

Clause 5 has a little more sting in it than appears on the surface. The present position is that the Corporation is authorized to lend moneys only in the normal manner, which means that it must obtain mortgages or bills of sale or other forms of security to preserve its funds. If a borrower from the Corporation desires to purchase a tractor, the Corporation can assist him only if it takes out a bill of sale or holds some other form of registrable security. It desires to enter into hire-purchase agreements with its customers in respect of that type of item, and the amendment contained in clause 5 is designed to vest that power in the Corporation.

At present, the Corporation is entitled to charge such fees as are prescribed. Therefore, if prescribed under an Order in Council or by regulation, such fees must be charged. Because of the class of business conducted by the Corporation, simple valuations might be involved, or, alternatively, a valuation might entail much travelling on the part of the valuer with consequent considerable delay. The Corporation desires to determine the fees on a common-sense basis, instead of having to charge fees

The Hon. A. G. Warner.

as prescribed. The amendment included in clause 6 enables the Corporation to fix fees where they are not prescribed. That sounds a reasonable proposition. The amendment contained in clause 7 is rather simple. It proposes that the Corporation shall be entitled to write off certain bad debts, particularly those that relate to the Rural Rehabilitation Fund.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—That is probably a hangover from the Farmers Debts Adjustment Act.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—That is so. Members who are particularly interested in this question can obtain a full explanation from the notes supplied in connexion with the Bill, but, frankly, this provision does not seem to me to do any more than permit the Corporation to write off bad debts.

The Hon. PAUL JONES.—What would they amount to?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—I have not the exact figure, but I understand that not a large sum is involved. If Mr. Jones is particularly interested, I shall obtain that information for him. The bad debts relate to special loans granted during a period when an endeavour was being made to assist people, in some cases by granting second mortgages.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—Is it intended that those debts shall be written off out of the profits of the Corporation?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—No. I should imagine, judging from the system of accounting that is being followed, that such bad debts could be written off by the Corporation. On the other hand, as they were incurred from a special fund for the purpose of rehabilitation it would be more appropriate to deal with them by a Government grant. They are definitely not related to the profits of the Corporation.

Clause 8 empowers the Corporation to act as an agent for the Government. In other words, it will be enabled to lend money in a particular area which is depressed, or, say, for a housing scheme. To that extent, the Corporation will act as a bookkeeper. I point out that there

is a similar provision in legislation relating to banking institutions of a like character in other States. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

SERVICETON PUBLIC HALL BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 1) on the motion of the Hon. A. G. Warner (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province).—Before discussing the provisions of this measure, I desire to inform the House of living conditions at the town of Serviceton, concerning which I have some personal knowledge. Formerly, as a Commonwealth public servant, I frequently visited Serviceton in the course of my work, and I realize that disadvantages are associated with the locality. Serviceton is a small centre, 290 miles from Melbourne, on the border of Victoria and South Australia, and on the main railway line from Melbourne to Adelaide. Mostly, the population of the town comprises railway men, although there is a fairly solid rural community, because Serviceton is in the midst of a good wheat-growing and wool-raising district. Local residents do not enjoy many amenities. Consequently, the proposed public hall will become the focal point of practically all social activities. I might add that Serviceton has no hotel, but the Railway Department conducts an excellent service by which travellers are provided with meals and accommodation.

At one time, there was a hall at Serviceton, but it was demolished years ago. Accordingly, those who live at that town must travel a distance of approximately 20 miles each way to Kaniva or Bordertown for entertainment. Local residents raised about £2,000 toward the cost of a hall, but, even allowing for the Government grant of up to £1,500, the sum available was insufficient, because of rising costs, to meet requirements. However, arising out of a public meeting in 1955, arrangements were made for the Victorian Railways Institute to combine

with the local folk for the purpose of having a hall erected. The institute is to be commended upon the fine attitude it assumed towards this matter. If a similar spirit obtained in other towns, much good could be achieved for the community.

During the last war a sum of money was collected at Dimboola for patriotic purposes, and some of that fund is still held. Under prevailing legislation, however, the money cannot be used for the construction of a public hall. A similar position obtains at Lal Lal, near Ballarat. At the latter place there is a defunct racing club from which funds could be appropriated toward the cost of a hall, but, because the racecourse is located on Crown land, the authorities are debarred from acting in the matter. It has been held that money raised for a specific purpose must be applied only to that purpose.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Do you commend the Government for bringing in the Bill?

The Hon. J. J. JONES.—Yes. I contend that it is the responsibility of all Governments to act in the best interests of the community. For the information of members, I would mention that girls on the staff of the railway refreshment rooms at Serviceton are on duty daily between 1 a.m. and 3.30 a.m., the period when expresses between Melbourne and Adelaide arrive there. Railway men living in the town work under similar difficult conditions.

While I commend the Government upon this measure, I hope its activities will not be confined to the town of Serviceton, because many other districts that are similarly placed would benefit from the same degree of co-operation as has been displayed in this instance.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL (North-Western Province).—Although I support the Bill, I do not praise the Government for having brought it forward. However, I commend Mr. J. J. Jones for the way in which he submitted the case for residents of Serviceton. I assure him that the spirit of self-help which he eulogized prevails throughout the North-Western Province, which is represented

by Mr. Byrnes and myself. The willingness of a Government authority in this instance to allow some of its land to be used for the erection of a public hall contrasts sharply with the attitude assumed by the Administration concerning the provision of amenities for citizens in other far-flung parts of the State. I know of an instance where the Railway Department charged a municipality rental for land upon which gardens and roadways were constructed.

I commend the Victorian Railways Institute for having made its rules sufficiently elastic to permit of co-operation with the public. Residents of Serviceton raised funds to provide amenities for themselves, but rising costs, coupled with the fact that successive Administrations would not advance sufficient funds, forced them to resort to other means of having the work done. Accordingly, an appeal was made to the trustees of the Victorian Railways Institute. If we are serious in our expressed desire for decentralization, proper amenities must be provided so that country folk will be enabled to obtain amusement. In the larger areas there are picture shows and dance halls, but those who live in sparsely populated areas must provide their own means of entertainment. I believe this Bill will provide one means of enabling that to be done at Serviceton. The Country party commends the Bill, and hopes the Government will extend its activities to other places also.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

PORTLAND HARBOR TRUST (LAND) BILL.

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of State Development and Decentralization).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Under the Portland Harbor Trust Act of 1949, the Trust was vested with certain Crown lands and power to buy or compulsorily acquire other lands for its own use. This Bill widens the powers of the Commissioners in that regard. It is essential that the Trust should be able to buy, sell or lease land in the vicinity

of the harbor. The Geelong Harbor Trust has had those powers over a long period of years and has used them judiciously. It has been enabled to develop the port by that means and to attract valuable industries to the district. Some huge industries have been established. As an example, the Shell Company of Australia Limited has spent £20,000,000 on a large refinery project; and both the International Harvester Company of Australia Proprietary Limited and the Ford Motor Company of Australia Proprietary Limited have erected substantial works.

I am anxious, as I am sure all honorable members are, that the Portland project should succeed. As Minister of State Development and Decentralization, I look upon the Portland harbor scheme as one which will facilitate the rapid development of the western area of Victoria by providing an outlet for its products. I urge the House to give this measure a speedy passage. I believe that the representatives of the Western Province, in particular, will help to place this legislation on the statute-book as soon as possible, as it is urgently needed to enable the Trust to continue to operate and to develop the area adequately.

The Hon. D. L. ARNOTT (Western Province).—On behalf of my party, I have great pleasure in supporting this Bill and congratulate the Government on bringing it forward. I feel sure that it will have a speedy passage, as all parties are convinced of the urgent necessity for pushing on with the development of Portland as a port. I do not think any one party is desirous of claiming credit for the work that has already been accomplished there, and I have no doubt that all honorable members are keen that Portland should play its part in the general development of the State. This measure will place the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners in a position not less favourable than that of the Melbourne and Geelong Commissioners, in that it will enable them to offer cheap sites for industrial purposes.

With the Minister of State Development and Decentralization, I feel that the expansion of this port is the key to the decentralization of industry in the

western part of Victoria. Any jealousy that previously existed between the people interested in the other established ports of Victoria has long since died. We all realize that it is absolutely necessary to develop a strategically located port such as Portland in addition to the ports of Melbourne and Geelong. My only regret is that the State Government should be called upon to provide all the money required for that development, as I believe the Commonwealth Government should play its part. I realize that it has been difficult for State Governments to furnish needed finance. In view of the colossal sums allocated for defence by the Federal Government, I consider that £5,000,000—the sum estimated as being required for the completion of the works—could well be provided from the defence vote of the Commonwealth because, as I have stated previously in the House, I regard the development of the port at Portland as of national importance.

It is not necessary for me to speak at any length on this Bill, as through the efforts of my colleague, Mr. Mack, and the honorable member for Portland in another place, a visit was paid to Portland by members of both Houses. They came away agreeably surprised with the improvements that have been effected and the part that is being played in that development by the Portland Harbor Trust Commissioners. In that connexion, I wish to record my personal appreciation—which I feel is shared by all those who visited Portland—of the remarkably fine work of the chairman of Commissioners of the local harbor Trust, his fellow Commissioners and staff. I cannot refrain from making a suggestion to the Minister in charge of the Bill that he should examine the salary paid to the chairman. Earlier this evening, the House considered a measure which sought to increase the salary of the chairman of Commissioners of the Melbourne Harbor Trust. I do not wish to mention the sum paid to the chairman of the Portland Commissioners for the duties he performs, but I urge the Government to review that remuneration with the view of determining whether it is adequate. Possibly it was not anticipated when the

present salary was fixed that the port would develop to the extent that it has, and so the salary paid to a part-time official may have been regarded as sufficient. However, since that time the expansion of the Trust's activities has made the chairman's job not only a full-time but an over-time one. The efficient management of the Portland harbor authority places the State in the particularly fortunate position that full value is received for any Government money spent.

It is hoped that the amendments now proposed will induce industrialists to establish plants at Portland. I believe that development by oil companies at Geelong was the commencement of Geelong's industrial growth, when what was described as "Sleepy Hollow" started on its transformation. Portland has not acquired any colloquial name as yet; everybody has praised it in the past, but has not done much to help it. The oil companies have already shown great interest in the district and the harbor Trust is hopeful of inducing other important industries to establish works there in the near future. It has become evident right throughout the world that if industries are to be prosperous they must be situated in localities that are within short haulage distance of ports. The time might arise when the prices obtained for our primary products could render essential their shipment from the port nearest to the area in which they are grown. In that event, Portland will have much to offer farmers and graziers. I am certain that the Bill is a genuine attempt by the Government to help the development of Portland and is in the interests of the western part of Victoria as well as the south-eastern portion of South Australia.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—The Country party supports this Bill, which represents just one more step in the logical development of the port of Portland. By this measure, the Portland Harbor Trust will be able to make land available to people who can see far enough into the future to establish industries there. Some time ago I had the good fortune to visit New Zealand and saw some of the small ports

there—farmers' ports, as they are called. Generally speaking, I found that valuable industries were established in the vicinity. At one port a phosphate works was operating and was particularly suited to the locality. I believe that is one type of industry that will be established at Portland. A phosphate works would be a valuable asset and would supply fertilizer to the Western District and part of South Australia. Such an establishment would require a large area of cheap land.

I took the opportunity of visiting the area on a tour arranged by the Government. Whenever I visit Portland, I come away convinced—as Mr. Arnott is, apparently — that we should pay great tribute to the Commissioners of the Portland Harbor Trust. They are doing an excellent job and putting their hearts and souls into the development of the port. I agree with Mr. Arnott that the Commissioners are certainly not overpaid for the amount of work that they do, and I concur in his comments concerning the value of this port. I live in the far north-west and I believe that in the next ten or twenty years there will be a large increase in the population of Victoria. This State, to-day, offers the greatest opportunity to anyone wishing to make his home in Australia. I say that with some knowledge of the other States of Australia. Victoria offers such great opportunities because of the foundation laid by Country party Governments in the past, which has influenced other Governments to follow the same lines. With the increase in population, more development must occur in the Murray valley and the now partially developed areas of the western half of the State. When that occurs, Portland will be at a great advantage. It will be a centre for business; ships will come from overseas and discharge all classes of cargo for the inhabitants within a radius of 200 miles, thereby cutting costs. At the same time, exporters will gain because their produce will not have to be hauled as far as it is now.

I remind the Government, and particularly the Minister of State Development and Decentralization, who is well aware of the possibilities to which I have referred, that there is much more to be

done for Portland than just providing land for industry. Railways and roads must be improved in order to provide cheap access. Our approach to transport must be re-orientated for that reason. In the past 100 years or more, there has been in this State what I describe as a Melbourne complex. I admit that we now have a fine city. However, almost every road and rail line radiates from Melbourne, due, no doubt, to the tremendous influence—political and otherwise—that it has. If Portland is to develop, it must be given adequate facilities. I repeat, the Country party supports the Bill and wishes it a speedy passage.

The Hon. R. W. MACK (Western Province).—I support this Bill, not because Portland happens to be in my province and therefore raises matters of parochial interest, but because I should like to see it developed. I regard the development of Portland as not only of State-wide importance, but also of national importance. It is appropriate that on the very day of our discussion of this Bill, the *Age* should publish a lengthy article on the subject. I was greatly impressed by the interest taken by members of all parties in this House and another place when they visited the area recently. I am sure that every one who went on that tour was impressed with the potentialities of the port and could not help but be amazed at the enthusiasm shown by the Commissioners of the Portland Harbor Trust.

This Bill is merely one step towards giving the port an opportunity to expand its activities. I agree entirely with Mr. Byrnes that that alone is not sufficient. At some stage or other, the Government must ensure that Portland obtains three more facilities—water, light and power, and transport. I understand that these matters are under consideration by the Government at the present time. I consider the development of the area to be the responsibility of all parties, and I am convinced that while Governments may come and go, and while political colours may change, there are, in the legislature, members who are convinced that this project is one of national importance. Irrespective

of which party occupies the Treasury bench, the continued progress of Portland is assured.

I commend the Minister who has charge of the Bill in this House. I have no doubt that the measure represents a further step towards the development of Portland, which, at one stage, was considered to be a port for exports only—a viewpoint with which I did not agree. With such a restriction, the proposition would not be economic. Land must be made available to the Commissioners to permit the establishment of secondary industries so that there will be both import and export traffic. I commend the Bill to the House and trust that it will ensure further progress in what is virtually a national undertaking.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN (Monash Province).—After hearing the views of several ratepayers of Portland, it may be of interest to listen to a stranger to that locality—a person who visited the area for the first time through the courtesy of Mr. Mack, Mr. Arnott and a member in another place. I detected what I thought was a note of complacency in the speech of Mr. Byrnes. He said that a lot had been done for Portland in the past. As a stranger, I say that it is a disgrace that an Administration—particularly one that claims the title of Country party—should let a branch line from Melbourne end at Portland. It is a damning indictment of the neglect of country members that the line was not taken on from Port Fairy. The railway line then could have continued along the coast to South Australia. However, commercial interests in Melbourne triumphed and they were able to exclude Portland from its share of good things that have been distributed in the 140 years of Victorian history. Until recently, Portland was nothing but a fishing village—a pioneer settlement of Victoria. It was a place of historic landmarks and little larger than Queenscliff. Had proper access been provided and encouragement offered, it could now be one of the finest seaports in the south of Australia. Good harbors are scarce on the Australian coast. One realizes that when one enters the Port of Adelaide. One must almost “throw out the line” to ascertain the

depth of water, but that is not the case with Portland and yet Portland is, I believe, 251½ miles by rail from Melbourne, whereas the road distance is 225 miles.

Apart from the historical aspect, I was most impressed by the community approach of the residents of Portland. The work done by the harbor Trust was obvious and splendid. The spirit of co-operation in associations such as the Portland Progress Association struck me forcibly as a sign of the sterling grit and communal effort that these people are prepared to bring to bear on their problems. They were wanting something, but did not sit back like Micawber and wait for it to turn up. They set to work and are doing a magnificent job. It takes a lot of courage to destroy rateable properties and built up non-rateable land elsewhere in the form of a breakwater, as was done at Portland. It was an education in itself to visit a centre so far from the metropolis to see the way in which these citizens faced the task of self-development and hard work in the true Victorian and Australian spirit.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—Country people are used to that.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—In some parts of the country they are lotus eaters. Mr. Swinburne's lot is cast in places where life is much easier than that of the hard-bitten people of Portland.

I am delighted to have visited Portland. We all wish the project there well, and encourage the citizens of that town to take their part in the work of the State. Probably, it is not too much to hope that while the Minister of Transport authorizes the pulling up of rails and sleepers in some parts of Victoria, he will cause them to be laid over the 40-odd miles between Port Fairy and Portland, where survey work for the line has already been carried out. In the past, it has been said, “We cannot do the work.” To-day it is said, “The land is too dear; resumption would be too costly.” If the Minister of Transport puts his usual spirit into transporting metals from one place to another, I do not think that should cause him any worry.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—It has been urged that a railway line should be constructed from Portland to Horsham.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—Some persons consider that it should follow a route through Koroit. Wherever it is situated, the work should be carried out without delay. In my view, this State—for the next 100 years at any rate—will have to rely on a sound system of decentralized rail transport for the carriage of the majority of its goods. We live in times when the motor vehicle has made a magnificent debut, but the roads are still not capable of carrying the heavy traffic of goods that people try to send over them. I trust that the Government will not merely sit back and pat itself on the back, so to speak, for what it has accomplished, but will do a little railway pioneering in the Portland district.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL (North-Western Province).—I support the Bill. Certain honorable members have referred to the need for progress in Victoria, but I wonder how many realize that the State Development Committee was authorized to inquire into the development of the Western District, particularly with reference to the establishment of a port at Portland. I had the privilege of being a member of that committee, which made a particularly good and extensive report. It took a good deal of time in making its inquiries, and I should like to pass on some of the information I gained whilst the problem was being investigated.

I was impressed by statements made by persons in other States regarding the advisability of having a deep-sea port established at Portland. The committee visited two centres in the western part of New South Wales. In the far north-west of that State, more than 80 men attended a meeting, many having travelled more than 100 miles to be present. Farmers in those districts have suffered because of the centralization of their trade. In the main, they are wool producers and sheep graziers, and occupy good land. Spokesmen asked the committee to recommend the provision of facilities to enable them to transport

sheep and other stock, in periods of drought and other hard times, to the Western District of Victoria. They believed it would be their salvation if they could move their sheep to such a locality where there is rainfall sufficient to provide fodder in unfavourable seasons. In turn, residents of the western part of Victoria realize that stock from that part of New South Wales are healthy and do not suffer from diseases such as foot rot.

In South Australia, the need for a port in the south-eastern corner was emphasized, and the Premier of that State has made inquiries as to the practicability of having such a port established. The committee was assured by a number of persons, particularly settlers in the eastern part of South Australia, that if a port were established at Portland, they would support it, and it would then not be worthwhile for the South Australian Government to construct one. If work is proceeded with at Portland, it will feed not only parts of western New South Wales but also the south-eastern part of South Australia.

On what were formerly desert lands in South Australia, great work has been carried out by the Australian Mutual Provident Society, in the application of trace elements, particularly superphosphate, to impoverished soil, and this has resulted in greatly increased production. Much is also being done by the same insurance company in Victoria, and also by our own farmers. There are marvellous possibilities for under-developed lands. I predict a vast development in production, especially from grazing, in what have been regarded as arid areas. Everything points to farmers in those localities sending their products through Portland. The Railway Department seems to have no desire to facilitate transport between Horsham and Portland. Consequently, most produce from the Horsham district at present goes to Geelong and Melbourne.

The State Development Committee visited Western Australia, and soon realized that Albany is situated geographically in similar circumstances to

Portland. There are also trace element deficiencies in some soils there. The Western Australian Railways recommended to the Government that a loan of £375,000 for fifteen years, free of interest, be made to companies to set up a superphosphate works at Albany. It was contemplated that superphosphate could be sent to country districts and other goods carried as back loading, which would pay the railways handsomely. If the Victorian Railways were asked to take similar action, we know what the answer would be. Land near Portland is particularly suitable for superphosphate. Around the town there are thousands of acres of land which was worked at one time, but because it lacks trace elements it was neglected; however, now it is being brought back into production. Farther north, in desert country, trace elements are being used with success. The substance being used predominantly is superphosphate. Portland lends itself to the establishment of a superphosphate works. When the committee went to Western Australia, a prominent representative of a superphosphate works in Victoria accompanied it. All his discussions were along the lines that it would not be payable for this manure to be produced at Portland. However, in Western Australia the production of fertilizer has been undertaken with profitable results.

I commend to the Minister of Transport the report of the State Development Committee, to which I have referred, and suggest that he read the transcript of evidence to ascertain what has been done in other States in helping to develop industries. In fact, all members of Parliament should study that report when Portland is being discussed. Ministers, particularly, should read it and have their officers peruse the evidence. Eventually, I trust that the progress of Portland will be facilitated. It has a marvellous future, and residents of the western part of the State look to it as a future city.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

BOILERS INSPECTION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Boilers Inspection Act. Increasing numbers of boilers are now used in industry, and larger numbers of pressure vessels, which have become classified as boilers, are in operation. In 1940, an Act was passed bringing air and gas pressure vessels under the Boilers Inspection Act. Any metal vessel or other type of vessel which is subjected to a considerable amount of internal pressure now has to be inspected regularly by qualified boiler inspectors. In fact, every vessel which has an internal pressure of more than 30 lb. to the square inch has to be registered. All such registered vessels, which are subjected to this type of pressure, are required to be inspected once a year. There is a considerable difficulty in obtaining inspectors and persons capable of making boilers. Many years ago boilers were manufactured by a rivetting process, whereas they are now made, in the main, by welding methods.

It is estimated that at the present time, 12 per cent. of all steam boilers and 95 per cent. of other pressure vessels are constructed by the electric welding method. This has caused a big demand for electric welders, but because of the limited facilities for operators to obtain certificates of competency in accordance with the requirements of the Boilers Inspection Act, boiler construction companies are unable to obtain sufficient qualified welders.

There are, however, many competent welders available who, because of their age, are not prepared to attend a technical school to enable them to qualify for a certificate of competency. In order to relieve the position, it is proposed to amend the Boilers Inspection Act to provide for the setting up of an examining authority to examine prospective welding operators and issue open certificates authorizing the holder to carry out all classes of welding, or conditional certificates authorizing a

person to operate on certain classes of welding. Similar examining bodies now operate in all other States of Australia.

Clause 2 of the Bill accordingly provides for the constitution of a Board of Reference to conduct examinations of persons desirous of qualifying for certificates of competency as boiler welders. The word "boiler" in the Act, of course, includes steam pressure vessels and air and gas pressure vessels. The Board of Reference will consist of the Chief Inspector of Boilers, who will be chairman, the person for the time being occupying the Chair of Mechanical Engineering in the University of Melbourne, and a person appointed to represent the Australian Institution of Engineers.

The second amendment dealt with in the Bill relates to the appointment of boiler inspectors. Section 6 of the Act at present provides that on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners for engine drivers appointed under the Mines Act, the Minister may grant to any inspecting or consulting engineer or boiler maker, a licence authorizing the holder to test and examine boilers, and the Governor in Council is authorized to appoint such person to be an inspector of boilers under the Act. The practice of using outside licensed boiler inspectors was not satisfactory, however, and was discontinued more than 25 years ago. All boiler inspectors are now appointed by the Public Service Board. The Department is, however, experiencing the greatest difficulty in obtaining sufficient suitably qualified men to enable it to comply with the provision of the Act requiring all boilers to be inspected at least once every year.

There are approximately 26,000 registered boilers and pressure vessels in operation in Victoria. At the end of 1953, there were 3,173 vessels overdue for inspection and at the end of 1954, this figure had increased to 5,763 despite the all-time record number of inspections carried out. While a comparative figure is not available for December, 1955, the number of overdue inspections is known to have increased substantially. Advertisements by the Public Service Board of vacancies for boiler inspectors are not attracting men

with both the academic qualifications required by the Board and the practical experience necessary to enable them to carry out the duties of the position. First appointment to the position of boiler inspector is as an officer of Class "C," Professional Division, and the Public Service Board requires that the applicant shall possess a degree in mechanical engineering, a technical school diploma in mechanical engineering, a Board of Trade (Marine) certificate or equivalent qualifications, and shall have had not less than five years' practical experience in the manufacture and working of boilers and pressure vessels. A sound knowledge of welding is also essential.

Because of the low classification of these positions, they do not attract men with engineering degrees or diplomas and generally applications are from men who hold the Board of Trade certificate or from practical boiler makers possessed of technical qualifications. Holders of Board of Trade certificates recently interviewed had little or no experience in the design and construction of boilers, no practical knowledge of welding, and would not be capable of undertaking the inspection of marine vessels without undergoing further training. Practical boiler makers possessing certain technical qualifications are acceptable to the Department, but the Public Service Board will not accept them for appointment to the Professional Division because they do not hold any diploma or certificate.

It is proposed that the Board of Reference referred to in relation to the previous amendment should also hold examinations of persons desirous of qualifying as boiler inspectors. Section 5 of the Act which at present deals with the appointment of boiler inspectors will be replaced by the provision contained in proposed new section 7 of the principal Act, as set out in clause 2 of the Bill, which provides that subject to the Public Service Act, one or more persons who have passed the Board of Reference examination for boiler inspectors may be appointed to be inspectors of boilers under the Act.

The Hon. A. G. Warner.

The only other amendment contained in the Bill deals with the carrying out of repairs to boilers. Under section 29 of the Act, the owner of a boiler is not required to notify the Department respecting repairs or alterations to a boiler until after the work has been completed. In practice, this has been found to be most unsatisfactory for the reasons that repairs or alterations carried out without prior authority being obtained may not comply with the safety requirements of the Boiler Inspection Branch, and the work might have to be redone; unscrupulous persons can effect makeshift repairs to a boiler or pressure vessel and sell it to some unsuspecting person or firm; and the boiler inspectors should have prior notice of repairs so that they may have an opportunity of examining parts of boilers not normally accessible when the annual inspection is being made.

Apart from these factors, a much more important consideration is that of safety, which should override completely the anticipated advantage arising from any quick and easy method of effecting repairs by men not holding the necessary qualifications. Fatalities have occurred following repairs which were carried out without the approval of the Department. Approval beforehand of the proposed repairs will ensure safety. In order that work in a factory will not be unduly held up, provision has been made for certain minor repairs and the replacement of gauges, valves and other fittings to be effected without giving notice to the Chief Inspector. It is further provided that in cases where notice is required, the Chief Inspector shall within 48 hours of the receipt of any notice, signify his approval or disapproval and if such approval or disapproval is not given within 48 hours, the owner may proceed with the repairs. In view of the fact that the sole purpose of this measure is to safeguard the public, I feel that it will have the whole-hearted support of all honorable members and should be assured of a speedy passage.

On the motion of the Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

POLICE OFFENCES (CONTROL OF RAFFLES) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests), was read a first time.

The House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, May 8, 1956.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald) took the chair at 3.8 p.m., and read the prayer.

MOTOR CARS.

LOCKING DEVICES.

Mr. TODD (Port Melbourne) asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether any approach has been made by the Government to motor-car manufacturers on the matter of the manufacturers themselves installing improved locking devices; if so, what is the attitude of the companies concerned?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answer is—

No approach has been made by the Government to manufacturers of motor-cars on the matter of manufacturers including efficient locking devices in their products. However, the Chief Commissioner of Police reports that he has had discussions with organizations representative of the motor trade and with insurance underwriters on the subject, but so far without result.

I can make available to the honorable member a copy of a memorandum on the Chief Commissioner's discussions, if he would like to peruse it.

ROAD TRAFFIC.

ACCIDENTS AND FATALITIES.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. What was the total number of road accidents recorded during each of the following periods:—

(a) 13th April, 1956, to 16th April, 1956, inclusive;

- (b) 20th April, 1956, to 23rd April, 1956, inclusive; and
 (c) 27th April, 1956, to 30th April, 1956, inclusive?

2. What was the total number of fatalities caused by road accidents during each of the above periods?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

1. The total number of road accidents recorded in each period was—

- (a) 13th April, 1956, to 16th April, 1956, —338.
 (b) 20th April, 1956, to 23rd April, 1956, —344.
 (c) 27th April, 1956, to 30th April, 1956, —228.

2. The total number of fatalities caused by road accidents in each period was—

- (a) 13th April, 1956, to 16th April, 1956 —13.
 (b) 20th April, 1956, to 23rd April, 1956, —5.
 (c) 27th April, 1956, to 30th April, 1956 —7.

CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES.

FINANCE.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Treasurer—

1. Whether his attention has been drawn to the difficulties confronting members and intending members of co-operative housing societies in obtaining finance for home building?

2. Whether the Government will give earnest consideration to the urgent need for additional funds to be made available to enable new co-operative housing societies to be formed?

3. Whether he will give full details of the proposed allocation of the amount of £10,800,000 anticipated to be received from the Commonwealth Government during the current financial year for home building?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), **Mr. Fraser** (Honorary Minister).—The answers are—

1. Yes.

2. The Government has already given consideration to this matter and is negotiating a new housing agreement with the Commonwealth, under which portion of this State's annual loan allocation for housing will be made available to co-operative housing societies.

3. As the housing agreement, to which I have referred, will not come into operation until the 1st July next, no allocation will be made during the current financial year to co-operative housing societies.

MEAT INDUSTRY.

DEAD-MEAT MARKET: INLAND KILLING: NEWMARKET SALEYARDS.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands) asked the Premier—

Whether the Government has received any expert reports during the past six months on—(a) the establishment of a modern dead-meat market in the metropolitan area; (b) the expansion of inland killing activities to supply such a market per medium of refrigerated transport; and (c) the removal of the Newmarket saleyards; if so, whether the Government intends to implement the recommendations contained in these reports and whether he will lay the relevant files on the table of the Library?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), **Mr. Fraser** (Honorary Minister).—The answer is—

The Government has called for reports from the appropriate Departments, and these are now being received.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

RUSSIAN COMFREY: INFORMATION AND EXPERIMENTS.

Mr. MOSS (Murray Valley) asked **Mr. Fraser** (Honorary Minister), for the Minister of Agriculture—

Whether the Department of Agriculture has any data on a plant called *Russian Comfrey*; if so, whether this plant can be grown successfully in Victoria for human consumption and stock fodder?

Mr. FRASER (Honorary Minister).—The Minister of Agriculture has furnished the following answer—

The Department of Agriculture has had no practical experience in the cultivation of *Russian Comfrey*, but has a certain amount of information regarding it, derived mainly from English publications.

It is not known that the plant has any value as food for human consumption. There appears to be satisfactory evidence that under English conditions and in certain circumstances it has a value as stock fodder; and it is believed that it could be propagated successfully in the better rainfall districts of Victoria. *Russian Comfrey* does not normally set seed and is therefore propagated by means of root cuttings.

Owing to the detection of virus disease in some plants grown from imported root stocks, the Commonwealth Health Department, under its plant quarantine powers, has prohibited the importation of this plant except by Government authorities which have the necessary insect-proof plant houses in which to grow it and experienced virus pathologists to keep it under constant supervision.

Since this plant may be of value in Australian agriculture, it is essential that healthy stock should be established from which multiplication of the area in Australia could safely take place.

Russian Comfrey is at present being grown under quarantine conditions by the Department of Agriculture. It is proposed to experiment with plants from this stock if, and when, it is released from quarantine.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

EXPENDITURE ON SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Mr. COOK (Benalla) asked the Minister of Education—

What amounts were spent on—(a) primary; (b) technical; and (c) high school buildings in Benalla, Shepparton, Yarrawonga, and Wangaratta, respectively, during each of the years 1950-51 to 1954-55, and from 1st July, 1955, to date?

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—The answer is—

As at present framed, this question is so wide that a very great deal of work would be required of the staff of the Public Works Department to provide the answers. There are nineteen schools concerned, and many files relating to each of them. The officers referred to are at present working overtime on important duties. It would be appreciated if the honorable member could limit his enquiry to some specific form of expenditure in which he is interested so that the work of providing this information may be brought within reasonable limits.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND INDUSTRY.

CLOTHING WAGES BOARD: ELIGIBILITY OF MEMBER.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

Whether, in view of Mr. D. MacSween's removal from office and suspension from membership by the Clothing Trades Union for ballot irregularities, the Government has considered making any recommendation to the Governor in Council with a view to his removal from the Clothing Wages Board pursuant to sub-section 3 of section 25 of the Labour and Industry Act 1953?

Mr. REID (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answer is—

No. Apart from some press reports, the Government has no information upon which any such action might be founded. Furthermore, it has been stated that an appeal to the Arbitration Court is to be made against the action by the union as reported in the press.

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STATE TIMBER SEASONING WORKS.

INQUIRY: COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Mr. MITCHELL (Benambra) asked the Premier—

If he will lay on the table of the Library a copy of the minutes of evidence taken before the Committee appointed by the Public Service Board to inquire into certain irregularities in connexion with the accounts of the Newport Timber Seasoning Works, together with a copy of the report furnished by the Committee?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), **Mr. Fraser** (Honorary Minister).—The answer is—

The copy of the minutes of evidence referred to by the honorable member, together with the report has been forwarded to the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

Perhaps the honorable member could arrange with the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee to have access to the documents.

SHIRE OF BROADMEADOWS.

RATING POLL.

Mr. DRAKEFORD (Pascoe Vale) asked the Minister of Public Works—

Whether he received a letter from the Council of Land Rating Reform, on behalf of ratepayers of Broadmeadows, regarding the refusal of the Broadmeadows council and its officers to conform to the provisions of the Local Government Act; if so, what action has been taken or is contemplated?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—

Yes. It is understood the council has advertised its intention to hold the poll in August next and the requisite valuation is now in progress.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING SCHEME.

INTERIM DEVELOPMENT ORDER: CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION.

Mr. DRAKEFORD (Pascoe Vale) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. What amount of compensation has been paid by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in respect of the use of the interim development order over the Metropolitan Planning Area?

2. What amount is involved in unsettled claims?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—The following information has been supplied by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works:—

(1) The sum of £24,321 4s. 7d. has been paid in respect of eleven claims.

(2) At the present time, there are seventeen claims outstanding, totalling £86,479 8s. 4d. In respect of two of these claims, totalling £13,039 0s. 0d. amounts have been agreed upon and are in the course of finalization. In two other cases, totalling £50,000, the claims are considered to be grossly excessive. The other thirteen claims amounting in all to £23,440 8s. 4d., are receiving consideration.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—By leave, I move—

That leave of absence until 30th September, 1956, on account of absence abroad, be granted to the Hon. Richard Keith Brose, the member for Rodney.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I second the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS) BILL.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of a Bill "to amend section 374 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1928."

A resolution in accordance with the recommendation was passed in Committee and adopted by the House.

On the motion of **Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary), for **Mr. Bolte** (Premier and Treasurer), the Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HOUSING (SLUM RESEARCH OFFICER) BILL.

Mr. PETTY (Minister of Housing) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the appointment of a slum research officer.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move —

That the consideration of the Notices of Motion, General Business, be postponed until after the Orders of the Day, Government Business.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—In the absence of the Premier, I hesitate to mention the general position of the business of the House, but I understand that it is the intention of the Government to conclude this sessional period within the next four weeks. Already there is a large number of measures on the Notice Paper. The two additional Bills introduced to-day by the Premier and the Minister of Housing, will warrant lengthy debate. If further measures are brought forward, the sessional period will probably not end at the time now suggested. Therefore, I ask the Chief Secretary to confer with the Premier at the earliest possible moment in order that the House may be informed of the business the Government intends to complete before the end of the month. Justice cannot be done if an attempt is made to rush a large number of Bills through the House.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) (*By leave*).—The Government fully appreciates the position and does not desire that legislation be rushed through this Chamber or another place. I am sure that the Premier will be pleased to discuss the Government's programme with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country party later to-day.

The motion was agreed to.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BUILDING REGULATIONS) BILL.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. It might interest the House if I give a brief outline of the history of legislation relating to the uniform building regulations. Honorable members will be aware that at one time there were no standards governing building, either as to form or materials, except within the

confines of those municipalities which had regulations of any kind dealing with this subject. In those days, the effectiveness of the regulations depended largely upon the interest evinced in them by the officers and councillors of the respective municipalities, and what was tolerated in one locality might be forbidden in another. For example, the very basic components in the building of an ordinary house — the stumps — varied from one district to another. One local governing body specified sole plates; some desired none. Certain municipal councils stipulated that the stumps should be 4 in. square, whilst others required them to be 5 in. square. The method in operation was really catch-as-catch-can, and there was a growing demand for proper standardization in the interests of the home builder and of the community at large.

The demand for some uniformity became so insistent that in the year 1940 the Local Government (Building Regulations) Act was passed. It provided for the appointment of a Building Regulations Commission of eight members to draw up a set of uniform regulations to govern building in all cities and towns in Victoria, and in such boroughs and shires or parts thereof as the local council so requested. The chairman and one other member of this Commission were appointed by the Governor in Council, and represented on it also were architects, engineers, master builders, the Municipal Association of Victoria, and the Melbourne City Council. That Commission prepared regulations which eventually came into operation on 1st August, 1945. It really took about five years to reach some basis of agreement upon which to formulate legislation.

In its report, the Commission recommended that a small independent and expert committee, consisting of the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, the Chief Engineer of the Department of Health, and a representative of the Municipal Association be appointed as a permanent committee to revise the regulations and keep them up to date, to decide disputes between parties to a building, and to grant

modifications of the regulations in special cases. Accordingly, the Act was amended to provide for a small committee and the three officers already mentioned, with the addition of the building surveyor of the City of Melbourne, were appointed. With the consolidation of the Local Government Act in 1946, the Local Government (Building Regulations) Act was repealed and its provisions incorporated in the principal Act as Part XLIX., and the present committee of four members has that Part as its charter.

Those of us who had had any practical experience of the application of the legislation, and the regulations made thereunder, realized that there was still room for great improvement, particularly as to flexibility, administration, and the quick adoption of modern practices in respect of design, form of construction, and the materials used. Until a year or so ago, Victoria lagged years behind progressive countries because of inflexibility of application of relevant laws and regulations.

The previous Government appointed a Board of Inquiry of seven members—three of whom, including the chairman, had been members of the original Building Regulations Commission—to enquire into and report upon five matters:—

(1) What suggestions or recommendations by persons or bodies associated with the building industry for amendment of the uniform building regulations have been made to the Building Regulations Committee which have not been adopted by the committee, and which, in the opinion of the Board, should have been adopted, giving reasons therefor?

That term of reference implied that recommendations were not being adopted; finally, it was shown that there was not substantial ground for that contention.

(2) What amendments of the uniform building regulations are, in the opinion of the Board, necessary to give effect to any such suggestions or recommendations?

(3) What other amendments to the uniform building regulations are, in the opinion of the Board, necessary or desirable in the public interest?

(4) What additional steps should be taken to ensure that the results of research into and modern developments in the design

and construction of buildings are from time to time incorporated in the uniform building regulations?

Matters relating to question No. (4) are extremely cogent to the Bill now before the House.

(5) The best means of improving the administration of by-laws and regulations governing the erection of buildings, including any amendments to the Local Government Act or any other Act necessary or desirable for that purpose?

Concerning the inquiry into what might be termed alleged frustrations, due to dilatoriness of the Housing Commission or other bodies in not adopting modern practices, only two were revealed, and both related to the Housing Commission. The Government has considered the recommendations, and the Bill is intended to deal with those matters mentioned in the report of the Board of Inquiry, instituted by the previous Government, on which it is considered new legislation is required. The first—and most important—relates to the constitution of the Building Regulations Committee. As I have stated, the present committee comprises the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department who is chairman; the Chief Engineer of the Department of Health; the building surveyor of the City of Melbourne; and a representative of the Municipal Association of Victoria.

The Government has given careful consideration to the constitution of the new committee, and has followed closely the recommendations of the Board of Inquiry. In clause 2, it is provided that the Building Regulations Committee shall consist of eight members, one of whom shall be the chairman appointed by the Governor in Council; and another a person who for the time being holds the office of Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, or an architect nominated by him. The Chief Architect may at any time revoke any such nomination. It may happen that the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department will be over-burdened with other functions and for that reason the deliberations of the committee may at times be delayed. The Government considers that should an extremely satisfactory and suitable substitute be

available, the committee will function more flexibly if power is given for the Chief Architect to nominate such officer to act for him.

It is provided that one member of the committee shall be the person for the time holding the office of Chief Engineer of the Department of Health, and another a person who for the time being is the building surveyor of the City of Melbourne. It may be asked why the latter officer should be a member of the committee. I should think the reason would be perfectly obvious. The Melbourne City Council has perhaps a greater responsibility than any other body concerning modern practices in architecture and so on, and, as a result, would be likely to have the most competent persons to place at the service of the committee. I notice that the honorable member for Flemington nods his head in assent. As he is a member of Parliament and of the Melbourne City Council, he can appreciate my point. We make no apology for singling out the Melbourne City Council as being the body most likely to be able to contribute great assistance in a certain phase of this work. The ready assent of the council to help in this matter is to be applauded.

There is to be on the committee, also, a member appointed by the Governor in Council from a panel of three names submitted by the executive council of the Municipal Association of Victoria. The Government believes that the Municipal Association is entitled to guard the interests of municipalities generally. Another member will be appointed by the Governor in Council from a panel of three names submitted by the governing body of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects. Again, that institute represents an important section. The seventh member shall be appointed by the Governor in Council from a panel of names submitted by the governing body of the Melbourne Division of the Institution of Engineers (Australia); and the eighth shall be appointed by the Governor in Council from a panel of three names submitted by the executive of the Master Builders' Association of Victoria. The latter organization is not represented on the committee at present. In

Sir Thomas Maltby.

all my administration I find that it is necessary to ensure that we are not overwhelmed by an undue preponderance of persons with only theoretical qualifications. We believe that a master builder—a man with practical knowledge—may assist the more theoretical members of the committee. In my opinion, it is a matter of regret that a member of the Master Builders' Association of Victoria is not a member of the present body.

The composition of the committee proposed in this Bill differs from that suggested by the Board of Inquiry only in that the Government has kept a free hand in the appointment of a chairman; that the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department may act as a member or nominate an architect to act for him, and that the various other parties to be represented are each required to submit a panel of three names from which a representative shall be chosen. I refer honorable members who desire more details on this subject to the 1954-55 report of the Board appointed to inquire into regulations governing the erection of buildings. The chairman of the committee will be appointed for a term not exceeding five years, and other appointed members for a term not exceeding three years. The Government believes that with such a representative committee a more ready channel of communication between the committee and the various sections of the building industry will be provided, and it hopes that the industry will take advantage of the opportunities available to it to bring its problems to the committee's notice. It would be quite profitless if arguments were to be carried on in the newspapers, instead of the problems being considered by the committee. The proposed personnel will provide vested and responsible bodies with direct channels of communication with the committee, by which their representations may be given proper consideration.

The clauses of this measure are fairly simple in character, but for the record I shall explain certain of them. Clause 3 is based on the recommendation of the Board of Inquiry. In paragraph (22) of its report, the Board recommended that the use of Standards Association codes

be permitted immediately they are published. Section 898 of the principal Act provides that any regulation may incorporate by reference any standards prescribed or published by any authority or body. However, it has been necessary to amend the regulations whenever a code has been issued or amended. Clause 3 is designed to permit the Governor in Council to make a regulation incorporating a "standards code" including any amendment that may thereafter be made to it. This provision reminds me of a situation that has existed until recently. There was laid down a specific weight of material, kind of material, and manner of application, and there could be no deviation from it. Although world practice had revealed great improvements in speed, security and cost, they could not be adopted. For example, when lining a ceiling of a more than one-storied building where cement was not used, the construction had to be able to retard fire for one hour. It was laid down that the floor of the upper story must consist of not less than two laminations of one and seven-eighth inch thickness, that the ceiling under it was to be of plaster to a thickness of seven-eighths of an inch attached to a steel mesh, and that columns had to be enclosed in concrete of a certain thickness.

That was an extraordinarily expensive and slow process. In addition, it was extravagant in the use of scarce materials and man power. Overseas materials called perlite and vermiculite may be used in such construction. They are modern and easy to erect, and are able to retard fire for more than one hour. However, they, at the time the relevant regulation was written in Victoria, either did not exist or were not in general use. As members are aware, there is a Standards Association and a code in Australia, and if the larger body deems it proper to accept a certain standard, we think the lesser should not have to investigate the matter again with a consequent loss of time. For that reason, clause 3 proposes that the committee may by an Order in Council adopt modern practice at once.

Clause 4 is extremely important. It is designed to allow a much simpler and quicker method of amending the building regulations than that which now obtains. At present, before a regulation can be made or amended, the Minister is required to cause draft copies to be submitted to any Government Department, to the Municipal Association of Victoria, and to the various councils and public authorities concerned, in order that they may have an opportunity of making representations thereon to the Minister, who is required to consider such within a period of two months. In consequence of this provision, the regulations cannot be amended in a period less than about three months.

It is not considered that in practice the time required to amend the regulations causes any great difficulty, but it is a frequent source of comment and the Government has accepted a recommendation from the Board of Inquiry to the effect that the bulk of the regulations be freed of the requirement for circulation of amendments, so that in future the only ones that will need to be circulated will be—

Paragraph (19)—regulating or limiting the height of buildings;

Paragraph (25)—the proportion of the area of land on which buildings are to be erected that may be covered by buildings, and the provision of open space and light areas about or in connexion with buildings;

Paragraph (26)—prescribing the minimum area, depth and frontage of land on which buildings may be erected;

Paragraph (27)—distance of buildings from boundaries and from other buildings; and

Paragraph (28)—position of buildings in relation to other buildings or to boundaries of the land.

These are matters in which councils are particularly interested and on which it is proper they should be consulted before a regulation is made. I may add that the Municipal Association of Victoria is agreeable to this course.

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Mr. TOWERS.—What will become of the existing building regulations when this measure is placed upon the statute-book?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—The regulations provided for under this Bill will prevail in so far as they supersede those that formerly operated. Clause 5 makes a more satisfactory provision as to the relationship between the uniform building regulations and other regulations and by-laws relating to buildings. Under section 901 of the Local Government Act, the uniform regulations have full force and effect notwithstanding any other by-law or regulation, and any by-law or regulation so far as it is inconsistent with the uniform regulations is of no force or effect. While the regulations apply, it is possible that a municipal by-law fixing a higher standard might also apply. One test of "inconsistency" is to ask whether it is possible to comply with both requirements. If it is, one school of thought holds that there is no inconsistency; in that case individual by-laws could fix higher standards than the uniform regulations, and they would have to be observed.

Mr. CAIN.—A municipality may fix a higher standard than that provided for in the regulations?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Yes, so long as it is not inconsistent with the regulations.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Under this clause, the building regulations will be made applicable.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—As a minimum standard.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—They will become the absolute standard.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—No. That will be so only where a proposal submitted by a municipality is inconsistent with the regulations.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—In those circumstances, the clause is futile.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I shall inquire further into that aspect. Clause 5 makes it clear that the regulations "cover the field" in matters where they apply to the exclusion of by-laws.

A new schedule setting out the duties of the referees in places where the uniform regulations apply is included in the Bill. It will be known as the Thirty-fourth Schedule, and under it certain Acts and sections of Acts relating to referees for the City of Melbourne will be repealed. Melbourne will come under the Thirty-fourth Schedule. Sub-clause (6) of clause 5 provides for the repeal, from a date to be fixed, of an Act for regulating buildings in the City of Melbourne. It is understood that some provisions of this Act are still required, and it is proposed to examine the position with the view of determining whether these can be covered by regulations. If they can, the Act could be repealed, subject to the concurrence of the Melbourne City Council; if not, the repeal will not be made effective.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! In this House, the practice has grown up of Ministers reading considerable portions of the second-reading speeches which they deliver. On this occasion, however, I believe the Minister of Public Works is doing less than justice to himself and to the measure because it is extremely difficult for members to hear his remarks. I ask the honorable gentleman to speak a little louder.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Very well, Mr. Speaker. Clause 6 is merely a machinery provision.

The schedule sets out the powers and duties of the committee to act as referees in disputes relating to buildings, and to grant modifications in special cases. Generally, it is modelled on the existing provisions in the Fifteenth Schedule, but a much wider power to modify the regulations is given to the referees in clause 7 of the schedule to this Bill. Provision is also made for any person to take a copy of any award of the referees on payment of 2s. 6d. Appeal fees and payments to referees are to be determined by the Governor in Council. Many other recommendations of the Board of inquiry involve amendment of the regulations and not the Act, and these

proposals will be brought to the notice of the reconstituted committee in due course.

The Bill is inclined to be somewhat technical in character, but it will prove to be less so if members will refer to the report that gave rise to it. I commend the measure to the House in the firm belief that municipalities will take full advantage of the new provisions with all possible speed and that they will adopt the new constructional methods and improved building materials stipulated. The adoption of that procedure will eventually lead to cheaper structures, thus checking the ever-increasing cost of building homes and industrial premises. I do not claim that the measure is the "last word," but I regard it as a reasonable approach to the problem. Until now, the legislation relating to uniform building regulations has been ineffective because of its inflexibility. The whole purpose of the Bill is to facilitate the speedy adoption of modern practices, wherever they are discovered—and Australia is not far behind in that respect. In the past the application of new methods and inventions has been unduly retarded by legislation and this measure will lead to a speeding up of the processes.

I conclude by reminding the House that whereas hitherto the committee has, to some extent, set standards, the Bill provides that the Standards Association of Australia, which is skilled in this work, will in future undertake such duties.

On the motion of Mr. LOVEGROVE (Carlton), the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, May 16.

FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF MELBOURNE BILL.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This Bill is designed to enable the council of the City of Melbourne to confer the honour of the freedom of the city on persons who have rendered eminent service to Melbourne, and on other distinguished persons. Undoubtedly the

council had in mind the fact that later in the year a number of persons of high standing will visit this city.

The title of "Freeman" or "Honorary Freeman of the City" has not previously had any application in Australia, but has for a very long time been a very important feature of local government life in Great Britain. Melbourne, therefore, will be the first city in Australia empowered to confer this title of honour. In England, until 1835, when the Municipal Corporations Act was passed, every borough had its own rules and customs governing the admission of freemen, though these rules and customs were controlled by the terms of the royal charter by which the borough was incorporated. Generally, admission as freeman depended on birth, apprenticeship to another freeman, or marriage to the daughter of a freeman, while it was possible also to become a freeman by purchase. The names of all freemen were entered on a freemen's roll. The privileges enjoyed by freemen also varied from place to place, though usually they included the right to vote at parliamentary elections for the borough, and exemption from tolls and dues levied for the use of the borough. In some places freemen had the right to pasture their cattle on the common lands owned by the council, or they shared in the profits derived from the use of the common lands.

By the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, any person who was then a freeman of a borough remained a freeman and retained all his former rights and privileges. Furthermore, every person who might under existing usage have been admitted otherwise than by gift or purchase, and every person who, for the time being, was an inhabitant of the borough; or the wife, widow, son or daughter, of a freeman; or the husband of a daughter of a freeman; or bound by deed as an apprentice to a freeman and had served as such apprentice for the whole time for which he was bound, was entitled to be admitted as freemen. When so admitted he was entitled to vote at any parliamentary election for the borough and to acquire the same

Sir Thomas Maltby.

and share and enjoy the benefit of the hereditaments, common lands and public stock of the borough as if the Act had not been passed. However, the Act limited exemptions from tolls and dues levied for the use of the borough to those who were exempted at the time the Act was passed. The Act, therefore, considerably widened the field for admission as freemen, but at the same time restricted the privileges. In 1882, it was finally provided that no freeman could be admitted by gift or purchase.

The Bill now before the House follows very closely the provisions of the English legislation and empowers the Melbourne City Council to admit to the distinction of honorary freeman of the city, any distinguished person and any person who has rendered eminent services to the city.

I assure the House that in its operation this measure will not confer upon the City of Melbourne, or any other municipality, power to withhold benefits, or to grant financial or other privileges. It reserves only the right to confer those social dignities normally conferred upon a visitor, just as in one's own home one vacates his favourite chair for the use of the guest. I commend the Bill for passage.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I am in the mood to suggest that further consideration of this Bill should be adjourned until the next sessional period.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I hope that the Leader of the Opposition does not intend to treat this Bill in a frivolous manner.

Mr. CAIN.—Perish the thought! After hearing the way in which the Minister of Public Works handled it, I cannot believe that he is really serious in his approach to this proposal. I do not think the time of Parliament should be wasted on a measure like this.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I assure the Leader of the Opposition that if more important Bills are likely to be debarred from passage through the consideration

of this proposal, the Government will give preference to those more important items.

Mr. CAIN.—My suggestion is that the debate should be adjourned for a fortnight; if that were done, the Government would not be asked to delay any longer the consideration of the Bill.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday next.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald in the chair)—

Ayes ..	..	..	36
Noes ..	..	..	21

Majority for the motion 15

AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Petty
Mr. Barclay	Mr. Porter
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Reid
Mr. Christie	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Cochrane	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Cook	Mr. Snider
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Stanistreet
Mr. Fraser	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Tanner
Mr. Guye	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Holden	Mr. Turnbull
Sir Herbert Hyland	(Kara Kara)
Sir George Knox	Mr. White
Sir Albert Lind	Mr. Wilcox.
Mr. Loxton	
Sir Thomas Maltby	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Meagher	Mr. MacDonald
Mr. Mibus	(Burwood)
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Wiltshire.

NOES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Ruthven
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Scully
Mr. Connell	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Crick	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Doube	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Drakeford	Mr. Todd
Mr. Floyd	Mr. Towers
Mr. Holland	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Lovegrove	(Brunswick West).
Mr. Macdonald	<i>Tellers:</i>
(Geelong West)	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Ring	Mr. Schintler.

PAIR.

Mr. Manson	Mr. Fennessy.
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MELBOURNE SUBWAYS (BORROWING) BILL.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).
—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of this measure is to increase the borrowing powers of the Melbourne City Council as related to the construction of subways. The Melbourne (Subways) Act of 1941 empowered the council to construct sub-ways with the consent of the Governor in Council, to maintain such sub-ways, and to erect and lease shops and show-cases in them. For the purposes of the Act, the council was authorized to borrow from time to time—in addition to any sums already borrowed or authorized to be borrowed—any sum or sums not exceeding in total £500,000.

The only sub-way so far constructed under the Act is that in Degra-
ves-street, which cost approximately £350,000. Therefore, at present £150,000 can be borrowed for further works of this nature. The council has other traffic works in mind, particularly a pedestrian sub-way at the Swanston-street-Flinders-street intersection, but obviously the amount of borrowing power remaining under the Act is not sufficient to enable a major sub-way project to be undertaken. It will be appreciated that now the general level of costs is very much higher than it was in 1941. For example, one estimate given in 1941 for the construction of the Degra-
ves-street sub-way was £100,000, whereas in fact it cost approximately £350,000. Therefore, an increase in the council's borrowing power for this purpose from £500,000 to £1,500,000 is quite reasonable. Clause 2 of the Bill provides for this increase of £1,000,000. Of course, approval of the Governor in Council must be obtained for any sub-way construction, so that the Minister of Public Works still has control of any such works.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

GAME (DESTRUCTION) BILL.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—
I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Over a period of years approximately 12,000 acres of country in the mountainous parts of Victoria in the 40-60 inch rainfall belt, and at elevations of up to 3,000 feet, have been converted by the Forests Commission into softwood plantations at a cost of more than £300,000. In the six areas under plantation the soil and climatic conditions are so favourable, and the potential growth of the trees is so high that the Commission expect the expenditure to be returned at least tenfold. However, the damage now being caused to these plantations by wallabies and opossums has reached such proportions that some plantations are threatened with complete destruction.

Investigations conducted by the fauna biologist of the Fisheries and Game Department, at the invitation of the Forests Commission, have revealed that the opossum population in Victoria has increased greatly as a result of protection and conservation over a number of years. Concurrently with this increase, the natural habitat of the animal has been reduced by the clearing of bush lands for settlement. This has resulted in substantial colonies of opossums building up in relatively small areas of native bush. The extensive feeding by large numbers of opossums and wallabies has caused defoliation and eventual death to thousands of trees. Indeed the investigations of the Fisheries and Game Department have confirmed the opinion of the Forests Commission that, unless some practical method of control is introduced, it would be folly to proceed with further plantings in high rainfall areas and that past expenditure would have to be written off as a complete loss. The Forests Commission and the Director of Fisheries and Game are both satisfied that the only effective approach to the problem is to permit the poisoning of fauna under supervision. This will necessitate an appropriate amendment of the Game Acts. Under those Acts two types of animals are protected—those which are listed in the Second

Schedule of the Game Act 1928 and known as game, and those included in the Third Schedule of the Act and called native game.

Animals introduced into the country fall within the classification of game and include antelope and deer. Native game include opossums, kangaroos, koala bears, platypuses, wallabies, all of which are indigenous. There are other animals, such as wombats and bush rats, which are native to the State but are neither game nor native game within the meaning of the Act. The animals primarily responsible for the damage are opossums and wallabies, which are protected and bush rats, which are not protected.

Clause 1 is the short title, construction, and citation and clause 2 empowers the Minister to authorize the killing or destruction of game and native game in the manner and subject to whatever conditions and limitations he may impose. The killing or destruction must take place under the direct supervision of an officer of the Public Service or of a statutory corporation, who is so authorized, in writing, by the Minister.

I suggest that the preservation of our native State forests is of such importance that members of all parties in this House will agree with the aim and object of this measure, which I commend to the House.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I suggest an adjournment of two weeks.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—
I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, May 16.

Sir GEORGE KNOX (Scoresby).—
I have very strong views concerning the wholesale destruction of native game. I admit that there are places throughout the State in which it is necessary to destroy these animals by poisoning, but I wish to consider this measure, which will take me more than one week. I ask the Minister to adjourn the debate for two weeks.

Mr. BOLTE.—This measure was debated and passed in the Legislative Council.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—By leave, I withdraw my motion and I now move—

That the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, May 22.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTES ON ACCOUNT.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That a sum not exceeding £23,871,250 be granted to Her Majesty on account for or towards defraying the following services for the year 1956-57:—

Legislative Council—contingencies, &c., £2,785; Legislative Assembly—salaries and contingencies, £8,745; Refreshment Rooms—salaries and contingencies, £4,200; Engineers and Gardeners—salaries and contingencies, £2,070; Parliamentary Printing, £8,750; The Library, Parliament House—salaries, contingencies, &c., £2,315; Victorian Parliamentary Debates—salaries and contingencies, £5,735; The Governor's Office—salaries and contingencies, £5,660; Premier's Office—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £42,940; Patriotic Funds Council—salaries and contingencies, £325; Soil Conservation Authority—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £26,685; Regional Planning and Decentralization Division—salaries and contingencies, £5,955; Agent-General, £6,530; Public Service Board—salaries and contingencies, £13,740; Audit Office—salaries and contingencies, £31,830; Chief Secretary's Office—salaries and contingencies, £16,250; Totalizator Administration, £500; Miscellaneous, £4,000; Pensions, &c., £125; Grants, £10,500; Immigration—salaries and contingencies, £7,000; Board for the Protection of the Aborigines—salaries and contingencies, £2,750; Explosives—salaries and contingencies, £14,900; Gas Regulation—salaries, £2,470; State Accident Insurance Office—salaries and insurance of State employees, £16,500; Motor Car (Third Party) Insurance—salaries, £11,500; Worker's Compensation Board—salaries, £2,250; Fisheries and Game—salaries and contingencies, £27,700; Government Shorthand Writer—salaries and contingencies, £2,800; Government Statist—salaries and contingencies, £36,000; Children's Welfare—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £166,500; Penal and Gaols—salaries and contingencies, £157,500; Police—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £1,237,500; Police Classification Board—salaries and contingencies, £460; Public Library, &c.—salaries and miscellaneous, £63,000; Free

Library Service Board—salaries and contingencies, £44,600; Department of Labour and Industry—salaries and contingencies, £59,180; Education—salaries, £3,760,000; contingencies and miscellaneous, £1,155,000; Works and Buildings, £25,000; Endowments and Grants, £477,000; Teachers' Tribunal—salaries and contingencies, £1,100; Attorney-General—salaries and contingencies, £190,305; Rent Control—salaries and contingencies, £9,900; Public Trustee—salaries and contingencies, £29,765; Courts Administration, &c.—salaries and contingencies, £106,775; Treasury—salaries and contingencies, £21,000; Payment under the provisions of the Commonwealth Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act, £190,000; Miscellaneous, £75,000; Transport, &c., £25,000; Unforeseen expenditure, £750; Payments to Railway Department, £54,000; Miners' Phthisis Allowances, &c., £36,000; Grants, £200,000; Pensions, &c., £10; Exceptional expenditure, £45,000; State Superannuation Board and Pensions Office—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £7,400; Registry of Co-operative Housing Societies and Co-operative Societies—salaries and contingencies, £4,800; Emergency Housing—salaries and contingencies, £2,200; Taxation Office—salaries and contingencies, £60,000; Stamp Duties—salaries and contingencies, £30,000; Government Printer—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £255,410; Lands and Survey, Land Settlement—salaries and contingencies, £189,285; Miscellaneous, £194,435; Soldier Settlement Commission—salaries and contingencies, £46,875; Botanic and Domain Gardens, &c.—salaries and contingencies, £16,995; Works and Buildings, £550; Public Works—salaries, contingencies, and exceptional, £245,000; Works and Buildings, £385,000; Town and Country Planning Board—salaries and contingencies, £4,120; Ports and Harbors—salaries and contingencies, £38,500; Works, &c., £72,000; Mines—salaries and contingencies, £45,000; Miscellaneous, £25,000; Forests—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, &c., £306,175; Payment under the provisions of the Commonwealth Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act, £3,825; State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—salaries, &c., £775,000; Payment under the provisions of the Commonwealth Pay-roll Tax Assessment Act, £25,000; Agriculture—Administrative—salaries, contingencies, miscellaneous, and exceptional, £147,400; salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £72,000; Horticulture—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £54,000; Livestock—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £63,000; Dairying—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £71,000; Health—Administrative—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £1,134,400; General Health—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, &c., £198,800; Tuberculosis—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £333,800; Maternal and Child Hygiene—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous, £195,500; Mental Hygiene—salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous,

£1,018,500; Railways—working expenses, &c., £9,200,000; Railway Construction Branch, £5,000; State Coal Mines—working expenses, £190,000; Ministry of Transport—salaries and contingencies, £1,425. Total, £23,871,250.

In proposing to bring forward a Supply Bill at this stage, I do so in the knowledge that it is impossible to give a detailed statement of the accounts of the Treasury. Those honorable members who have occupied the position that I now hold have found it exceedingly difficult to do so towards the end of a financial year.

Mr. CAIN.—It is not always prudent to give it.

Mr. BOLTE.—That may be so. At this stage, I propose to make some general comments concerning Supply. Honorable members are aware that at the conclusion of the current sittings of Parliament, the House will adjourn until early in the next financial year, and as the period for which Supply has been granted will expire on the 30th June next, it will be necessary to obtain a further appropriation. The amount of supply now asked for, £23,871,250, is sufficient to cover the period July, August and September, 1956.

At this stage I point out that the Government intends to meet Parliament, after the close of this sessional period, on 28th August next. I do not want any member to gain the impression that in asking for Supply until September the Government intends to obtain an additional month's recess. If Supply were obtained only to August, it would be difficult to obtain further Supply in the short period available. Before dealing with the various items in the Supply Bill I desire to state that I have been advised that a recent review of the transactions on account of revenue and expenditure indicates that the deficit of £1,850,000 anticipated when the Budget for the current financial year was introduced will be increased by approximately £1,700,000, attributable to the operations of the Railway Department. Although increased expenditure was incurred in respect of the Education Department, and by the activities of the Department of Agriculture for the destruction of grasshoppers, in my

opinion, prudent administration of the State's finances has substantially offset these increases. I am not, at this stage, able to give a detailed statement of the position. However, I do not want any honorable member to be under the misapprehension that the additional deficit is due entirely to the financial state of the Railway Department. That Department has estimated that it will lose £1,700,000 more this financial year than was originally estimated. Expenditure has increased heavily in other Departments but, by the same token, revenue derived from land tax, stamp duty and other sources has increased, thereby offsetting the deficit to a great extent. Increased expenditure has been brought about largely by salary increases which have been granted by tribunals and courts. The Government has a duty to ensure that increased salaries granted are paid and that at the same time staff is maintained at as high a level as possible.

The first column of the Supply schedule indicates the amount required under each division of the Estimates to meet expenditure for the months of July, August and September, 1956, whilst the second column shows the proportionate amount of the estimated expenditure under each division of the Estimates for the current financial year. From the figures shown in the schedule, it would appear that the Government will incur an additional expenditure of only £130,000 in the next financial year, but that is not the case, as this sum relates to the first three months of the 1956-57 financial year. The expenditure during the next financial year will be several millions higher than it will be this year. The illusion is brought about by the fact that in one quarter of the year all types of expenditure do not occur, and the amount expended in a later quarter of the year may be much higher than that incurred in the first quarter.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Each quarterly period involves different types of expenditure.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is so. The Supply schedule discloses many variations in the amounts required, compared with

the estimated expenditure for a proportionate period of the current financial year. There are many reasons for these variations. Under some divisions, the greater proportion of the expenditure is not charged until the latter half of the year, whilst in other cases the expenditure is heavier in the early part of the financial year.

Supply is not required for certain items of expenditure such as interest, sinking fund, and exchange payments, for which special appropriations have been authorized by Parliament. I shall explain the main items in the schedule under which increased provision is required. For the Chief Secretary's office an additional £2,780 is required to enable the usual grant to the Zoological Board of Victoria to be made early in the financial year. The vote for salaries in the Education Department is £28,500 higher than the 1955-56 proportionate amount shown in the Supply Schedule. The increased provision is due to the large increase in the teaching staff and to meet the cost of awards made by the Teachers Tribunal during the current financial year. An additional amount of £18,750 is sought for payments under the Commonwealth Pay Roll Tax Assessment Act. A larger amount will be required because of awards made during 1955-56. Again, it is a matter of the dog chasing its tail; salaries are increased and pay roll tax goes up accordingly.

In connexion with miners' phthisis allowances, and so forth, £15,625 more than the proportionate sum for the present financial year has been provided. Allowances to miners' phthisis sufferers are made quarterly in advance. For miscellaneous expenditure on lands and survey an extra £5,440 is indicated. The vote is to provide for increases in the basic wage for employees of the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Branch and to meet increased cost of maintenance and running expenses of motor vehicles. An amount larger by £53,750 is required by the Public Works Department for its works programme and contractual commitments.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The position would have been worse had the Government advertised the contracts for the third sections of primary school buildings.

Mr. BOLTE.—The position could have been worse. An additional sum of £40,050 is required for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It is necessary to meet increases in salaries, wages and material costs, and to carry out maintenance works before the commencement of the watering season. Provision is made also to meet a larger advance contribution towards maintenance under the provisions of the River Murray Water Acts.

Mr. CAIN.—The clearing of sand out of irrigation channels has been overlooked.

Mr. BOLTE.—I intended to mention that point. This is the usual time of the year for cleaning sand out of the Commission's channels, and I suggest that the lack of reference to such work is due to the fact that so many good seasons have been experienced in the northern part of Victoria that very little maintenance of channels has been necessary.

In some divisions decreases are shown, the most important being a reduction of £18,935 for the State Accident Insurance Office in connexion with the cost of salaries and the insurance of State employees. The amount required for insurance of State employees is payable during the month of October, 1956. On works and buildings for the Education Department the vote sought is £35,200 less than the proportionate amount of the estimate for 1955-56. The annual allowances to school committees and advisory councils will be paid later in the financial year. On a similar comparison, supply for the Department of Agriculture on account of salaries, contingencies, and miscellaneous and exceptional expenditure will be less by the sum of £66,420. During the current financial year a considerable amount was spent by the Department in controlling fruit fly and grasshoppers. At present

funds are not required for this purpose, and it is hoped that they will not be needed in the future.

I have now indicated the major variations in the amount of Supply required for the months of July, August, and September next from the proportionate amount of the estimated expenditure for the current financial year. These variations are not as a result of Government policy, which will be fully explained when the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the next financial year are introduced.

I do not consider that I have given a full explanation of the Supply schedule, but over the years it has been the practice to make similar comments when seeking parliamentary authority for votes on account. I should have liked to give members more information, but that has not been possible. I trust that the debate on Supply will be used to the utmost extent by all members for the purpose of bringing forward matters of particular importance not only to their own electorates but to the people of Victoria generally. I have no desire to hasten the granting of Supply.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I presume that the Treasurer does not propose to introduce Supplementary Estimates until after the Budget has been presented.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is so.

Mr. CAIN.—In that event, members will be concerned only with the question of Supply. I suggest that the debate might take place next week.

Progress was reported.

POLICE OFFENCES (CONTROL OF RAFFLES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 17) on the motion of **Mr. Rylah** (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—This is a short but extremely important Bill, which proposes amendments of the Police Offences Act relating to the holding of raffles. It is the second measure of its kind presented to the House since the Government came to office approximately twelve months ago.

The first provided for a greater extension of raffles than is proposed in this one. For some reason, the Government did not proceed with the first measure, and on this occasion it has submitted its original proposal in a more or less limited form. If it had been passed into law, the more extensive Bill would have permitted the running of a lottery on everything known and unknown. The present Bill is supposed to confine the running of a lottery to charitable purposes. I do not know what the expression "charities" means; I should think it would cover almost anything.

Mr. RYLAH.—You do not really think that.

Mr. CAIN.—If the Attorney-General sought an interpretation of "charities" he would find that it covered an extensive field. Emanating from a party which in 1953 consisted of so many Puritans, this Bill does not look well. I cannot believe that the same party proclaimed to the world from the house-tops that it was opposed to raffles and gambling of all kinds and would do anything to prevent their extension. Now that the party has attained office it proposes an amendment of the Police Offences Act so that anyone may conduct a raffle. I would point out that in 1953 the Premier, who was then Leader of the Opposition, moved an amendment to the motion for the second reading of the Tattersall Consultations Bill. Of course, that legislation is now on the statute-book and has the blessing of the Government. Tattersall's means heaven-sent financial assistance for the Government and no one would think of wiping it out. It is anticipated that Tattersall's will be responsible this year for revenue amounting to £3,000,000, all of which goes to our hospitals.

Mr. RYLAH.—Last year it was used at the Premiers' conference as an excuse to cut down Victoria's allocation.

Mr. CAIN.—That is not true. A similar statement was made in Horsham by the Minister of Water Supply. The Tasmanian Premier and the Prime Minister might have raised that issue at the Premiers' conference to mislead people, but it did not in any way affect the allocations

made by the Commonwealth to the States which is determined by the formula. It is true that Tasmania received greater assistance from the Commonwealth Grants Commission, but Victoria was not affected.

Mr. BOLTE.—Yes, it was.

Mr. CAIN.—I do not agree that the allocation of finance to Victoria was interfered with in any way because of the operation of Tattersall's in this State. However, we are not discussing that question at present, but I shall return to it. The amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition—the present Premier—in 1953, was as follows:—

That all the words after "That" be omitted with the view of inserting in place thereof the words "this House declines to read this Bill a second time because the House is of the opinion that the promotion and conduct of lotteries and sweepstakes should not be further legalized in Victoria until the views of the electors thereon have been ascertained by referendum."

Of course, that was the view also of the Liberal party on the question of liquor after it had supported 10 p.m. closing and then found itself in difficulty. At a conference, it was decided to adopt the policy of the Labour party, namely the holding of a referendum. The then Leader of the Opposition proceeded to advance reasons why the Tattersall Consultations Bill should be rejected. He pointed out that a number of people in the community were opposed to it and quoted the words of leading churchmen, including the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne. On that occasion, the Premier stated that he agreed entirely with the view frequently expressed by Dr. Mannix, to the effect that it would be the young people who would subscribe to lotteries. Of course the young persons will subscribe; they always do. They subscribe in large measure to Tattersall's. I have never disputed that claim. However, the Government is now bringing down a Bill which, contrary to the views previously voiced by the Premier, will extend the gambling habits of the community.

Mr. RYLAH.—Are you talking about this measure?

Mr. CAIN.—Yes.

Mr. RYLAH.—Do you claim that it will extend raffles?

Mr. CAIN.—Yes, it will.

Mr. RYLAH.—Nonsense. The Bill will control them. You want Rafferty's rules to prevail.

Mr. CAIN.—Does the Attorney-General suggest that previous legislation pertaining to raffles did not extend the opportunity for gambling in the community? Does the honorable gentleman claim that it is not possible to conduct raffles for practically any purpose?

Mr. RYLAH.—The Government is attempting to control raffles.

Mr. CAIN.—No. The intention is to extend the present facilities to include everything.

Mr. MUTTON.—Including baccarat.

Mr. CAIN.—There is special legislation dealing with baccarat. Last year the Government proposed to amend the law so as to provide that a raffle could be conducted for almost any purpose.

Mr. RYLAH.—We wanted only to help football clubs, in which you were interested, as well as worthy organizations.

Mr. CAIN.—The game of football represents one of the most prolific means of raising money. Since the present Government assumed office, admission charges to football matches have risen from 2s. 1d. to 3s. a head.

Mr. RYLAH.—I am talking about small football clubs.

Mr. CAIN.—It is useless for the Attorney-General to try to mislead the House. He asserts that this measure was introduced with the view of helping football clubs. I do not believe it, and neither will any other Opposition member. On this side of the Chamber is a member who was secretary of a League football club for many years.

Mr. BOLTE.—We are not discussing League football.

Mr. CAIN.—My contention is that this Bill has not been brought forward with the idea of helping either city or country football clubs.

Mr. RYLAH.—You would have no interest in small football clubs.

Mr. CAIN.—That is a beauty! When this measure becomes law, practically any organization will be authorized to conduct raffles. After all, football is played for only three or four months each year. It is useless for the Attorney-General to claim that the intention of the Bill is to enable football clubs to raise funds.

Mr. DOUBE.—Is football a charity?

Mr. CAIN.—No. It should stand upon its own feet, so to speak. Government members know that last year their Administration attempted to extend the gambling laws to include anything and everything.

Mr. RYLAH.—That is nonsense.

Mr. CAIN.—I assert, with all the sincerity I possess, that I am not opposed to the reasonable use of gambling facilities for raising funds. I have never opposed that procedure. Over the years, there have been certain restrictions and impediments, which must continue to operate. On a previous occasion, Government members accused the Opposition of “using up” church people; yet the Administration has the audacity to bring forward this measure deliberately, with the object of extending a practice in which it pretends not to believe. That is illustrative of the attitude assumed by the Liberal and Country party, which is pandering to certain people. The Government wants to extend the gambling laws to include all kinds of charities.

Mr. DOUBE.—Including football?

Mr. CAIN.—Yes. I would excuse the Attorney-General if he proposed to include everything but football, but, when he pretends that the measure was brought down with the object of assisting football clubs throughout the country, he is misleading not only the House, but himself also.

Mr. BOLTE.—When you brought down the measure under which Tattersall's was authorized to operate in Victoria, you gave an undertaking that there would be no interference with any other charities in this State.

Mr. CAIN.—Where did I make that promise?

Mr. BOLTE.—In this Chamber.

Mr. CAIN.—Whatever I promised in this House is recorded in *Hansard*. I was perfectly open about the matter. I did not apologize then, and I shall not now do so. However, those who then criticized my actions, accused me of almost every political sin, and asserted that I had been “bought out,” are now prepared to concede that Tattersall's should be fostered. For the reasons I have stated, the Government does not deserve the respect of thinking people in this community. The reasons underlying the transfer of Tattersall's to Victoria are obvious.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! I can readily understand some reference to Tattersall's, but I ask the honorable member not to enter upon a lengthy discourse concerning the merits and demerits of Tattersall's, but rather to restrict his remarks to the subject-matter of the Bill.

Mr. CAIN.—With great respect to you, Mr. Speaker, I claim that this measure is designed to provide competitors for Tattersall's. I cannot discuss the subject of raffles properly without debating the whole issue. Surely, I can allude to an avenue through which the Government is deriving considerable revenue. In fact, a Bill has been introduced to limit the operation of Tattersall's, but, for obvious reasons, I cannot discuss that measure now. The revenue yielded by Tattersall's is used exclusively for charitable purposes. This Bill, however, provides for the extension of the legislation relating to gambling so as to include other raffles and lotteries to be held in Victoria.

Mr. RYLAH.—No. It will have the opposite effect. It will bring those raffles under control.

Mr. CAIN.—It will do nothing of the kind. Under the present law, raffles conducted on behalf of the Australian Red Cross Society and former servicemen's associations are covered. Patriotic bodies have been conducting raffles exclusively for those organizations since 1942. They are the only ones who can do so.

Mr. RYLAH.—Don't be silly.

Mr. CAIN.—The Attorney-General is not doing himself justice.

Mr. RYLAH.—The Attorney-General in your Administration authorized certain raffles.

Mr. CAIN.—I know that the present procedure is to have a committee which advises the Attorney-General, who, in turn, grants permission for the conduct of raffles, but up till now the holding of raffles has been limited to the organizations I have stated. However, this measure will extend the facility to charities of all kinds.

Mr. RYLAH.—Charitable bodies now conduct lotteries.

Mr. CAIN.—The Attorney-General claims that the Government aims at controlling lotteries, but that contention is untrue. It is intended to make certain exclusions, and I do not want that to be done. Previously I was attacked by church men concerning the extension of gambling facilities in this State, and those attacks were justified. Nevertheless, I submitted reasons for my actions. I advert to my previous argument. I wanted to have Tattersall's transferred to Victoria because each year the sum of £5,000,000, approximately, was being invested in lotteries conducted by that organization. Of that sum, 20 per cent. came from New Zealand, and 13 per cent. came from Tasmania. The balance came from the rest of the world, including Australia and, in particular Victoria, which was one of the few States that did not have a State-controlled lottery. Hundreds of thousands of pounds left this State for investment in Tattersall's, when its consultations were conducted in the island State, and the Tasmanian Government was thus enabled to recoup the sum of £1,600,000 annually from that source.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—The Leader of the Opposition is presenting an excellent argument in justification of transferring Tattersall's to Victoria, but I am unable to relate his remarks to this Bill. If the honorable member demonstrates how his observations are germane to the measure, I shall allow him to continue.

Mr. CAIN.—I shall endeavour to do so, to the best of my ability. Because of the large sum of money that was flowing out of this State, a decision was made to bring Tattersall's to Victoria. I believe that, if it was good enough for persons in Victoria to send £2,000,000 out of this State it was good enough that they invest that sum of money here. In other words, there was no reason why well-meaning people, who wanted to purchase tickets in Tattersall's, should thereby contribute to Tasmanian charities. Our view was that the money should be kept in this State, and applied to our own charitable institutions.

The SPEAKER.—I ask the Leader of the Opposition now to return to the Bill.

Mr. CAIN.—If this measure is passed, there will be a loss of money to Tattersall's, because the measure provides for the conduct of raffles on practically anything, known and unknown. Many Australians will "have a flutter" in lotteries conducted for the benefit of local charitable institutions, and so less money will be invested in Tattersall's. The Government realizes that the Tasmanian lottery is competing seriously with that conducted in this State. Accordingly, I predict that the Tasmanian organization will be precluded from advertising over the radio, in the same way as its advertisements have been excluded from the newspapers. The obvious reasons are: First, the Tasmanian venture competes with Tattersall's; secondly, it encourages gambling on a scale previously unheard of in Australia; and, thirdly—this is interesting from the moral viewpoint—the Government believes it is undesirable to have the Tasmanian lottery advertised over every broadcasting station in the land.

From the moral point of view it is felt to be undesirable that advertisements should be broadcast over the air by all commercial radio stations. I hope that I have now convinced you, Mr. Speaker, that I have tied the three proposals together. For the reasons I have outlined, I believe the Government is very unwise in attempting to extend gambling facilities, of which there is already a

sufficiency. I agree with the proposal of the Government to attempt to curtail the activities of Mr. Drysdale. It is preposterous that he should be selling tickets priced at £100 each in an endeavour to obtain £1,250,000 as the gross proceeds of a lottery. That is the biggest business in Australia. He is supported even by the honorable member for Ripponlea who gave permission to advertise the holding of the Olympic Games in Melbourne.

This State is entitled to something better from a Government party whose members, when in Opposition two years ago, prated about their virtues; apparently those Opposition virtues disappeared when that party came to occupy the Government benches. It opposed my Government's proposal to transfer Tattersall's to Victoria; now the ruling party desires to extend the gambling field. If more facilities are provided for gambling more money will be spent in that way. That is why mid-week race-meetings are prohibited in the metropolitan area; they attract people who should be at work and provide them with greater opportunity for spending money that should be used for better purposes.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Utter humbug!

Mr. CAIN.—Judging from his attitude, I suggest that the Minister of Public Works should advocate the restoration of mid-week race-meetings in the metropolitan area, I am aware that in response to a request from the returned servicemen's league, the Government has given permission for one meeting to be held at Moonee Valley in August in order to aid the organization's charities. However, generally speaking, few people inside or outside Parliament, apart from the small number of parties directly interested, would support a restoration of regular mid-week racing in the metropolitan area. I do not include Government party back-benchers in my criticism because they were not members of the Assembly twelve or eighteen months ago when those who comprised the Opposition of the day held themselves up as Puritans and attacked my Government. Suddenly they have lost all their virtues and are taking steps to

extend gambling facilities. I should like to reply to the Attorney-General who, by interjection stated that as a result of the transfer of Tattersall's the Victorian Government received less money from the Commonwealth.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! A discussion of that interjection would be irrelevant to the Bill now being considered.

Mr. CAIN.—I do wish to answer the interjection.

The SPEAKER.—It was quite disorderly of the Attorney-General to have made that interjection, and I will not allow the Leader of the Opposition to answer it.

Mr. CAIN.—If I cannot answer the honorable gentleman now, I take it that he may not express such untruthful views later in the course of the debate on this legislation. So long as you, Mr. Speaker, give us equitable treatment, I shall not mind. I desire to reply to the Attorney-General because I think the matter important. However, if that is not in order, I shall confine myself to the provisions of this Bill and all matters associated therewith. Judging from their expressions in the past, it is difficult to believe that members of the present Government have prepared this Bill. I could understand a person such as myself being blamed as, according to them I was a heretic and in favour of the extension of gambling facilities. I had been "bought" by Tattersall's and was likely to enjoy special advantages. After that type of approach by the then Opposition, we now find them as members of a Government patting Tattersall's on the back and offering protection in every way, except that they produce a Bill such as the present one, which will allow of an extension of gambling in other fields. I take great objection to this measure, as I did to the Bill brought down by the Government last year, because I do not consider that gambling facilities in the State should be extended.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Briswick West).—In the course of his second-reading speech on this Bill the Attorney-General stated that the measure was designed to give the Government proper

and effective control over raffles and that it was not the intention of the Government to extend facilities for promoting raffles. With respect, I point out to the House that this measure will greatly broaden the field of gambling in this State. The Attorney-General did not do himself justice when he attempted to explain the Government's proposals. I should like to run through the legal mechanics of the method by which I consider the field for the conducting of raffles has been widened. Paragraph (b) of sub-section (3) of section 88 of the Police Offences Act 1928 employs these words:—

... to any raffle for any work purely of art . . .

It is a long time since I saw a Buckmaster or a Turner raffled, and I suggest that to some extent, at least, that way of raising money has disappeared. So far as a work of art is concerned, this Bill lengthens from seven to fourteen days the period within which the Attorney-General may prohibit the raffle. However, the provisions of the Police Offences Act 1928 dealing with the conduct of raffles as part of a bazaar are totally repealed, and the Attorney-General proposes to give proper and effective control over such raffles in a very simple way. Sub section (1) of section 2 of the Police Offences (Raffles) Act, 1940, provides, *inter alia*:—

The Attorney-General, upon application made to him in writing in a form approved by the Attorney-General by any person or body or persons desiring to conduct a raffle the net proceeds whereof are intending to be appropriated exclusively to a fund certified to be a patriotic fund under section 22 of the Patriotic Funds Act 1939 . . .

Sub-clause (1) of clause 2 of this Bill adds the following words:—

... or to a fund intended to be appropriated exclusively to charitable purposes . . .

The remaining portion of the sub-section refers to the fund or any part of the fund of the Australian Red Cross Society. A raffle intended exclusively for charitable purposes will have to follow the pattern laid down by the provision. Amongst other things, the Attorney-General will have the right to veto or permit a raffle under various

conditions. However, the honorable gentleman did not take the House into his confidence and explain with great particularity—as I feel he was bound to do—what he considered to be a raffle for charitable purposes. The Leader of the Opposition, putting the matter in the language of a layman, said that it could mean a raffle for anything under the sun. He is quite right.

MR. BLOOMFIELD.—You know that is wrong.

MR. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—No. To the man in the street a raffle for charitable purposes may perhaps be taken to mean simply a raffle for the relief of poverty or sickness, but lawyers in their wisdom have given the expression a much wider meaning.

MR. BLOOMFIELD.—But that meaning does not take in anything under the sun; you know that.

MR. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—I shall quote from Halsbury's *Laws of England*, 3rd Edition, Volume 4, page 213. Paragraph 491 states, *inter alia*—

Four divisions of charity. Trusts for the relief of poverty. Trusts for the advancement of education. Trusts for the advancement of religion. Trusts for other purposes beneficial to the community not appearing under any of the preceding head.

That is from where one obtains this broad field. All types of efforts come under the general heading. After all, charity is desirable in the community, but we must not allow one type of charity to, as it were, dry up the field. There is not an unlimited amount available in the community for subscription to charitable purposes. I agree that it has been necessary to stretch some provisions of the law relating to the conduct of raffles at bazaars. Recently, my wife sold me a raffle ticket at the foot of which was printed the words "This ticket is to be sold only at a bazaar." I could not challenge my wife's right to sell the ticket and tell her what the law on the subject was; I merely mention the incident to point out to the House what is happening in the community as regards raffles.

Some organizations are prepared to breach the law and take a risk, whereas lawful people are unwilling to do so.

The result is that the law-breakers, if one may term them such,—perhaps my wife and I are in the category of law breakers, but we may be among many who are prepared to sell raffle tickets. It is a pity that the bazaar is to disappear, because it is a picturesque occasion. Probably no raffle tickets are sold at such an event in the country, but the vicar is afforded the opportunity of meeting his flock. If this measure becomes law, the colourful bazaar will disappear from the scene, and I am sure many honorable members would not like that to happen. There were many interjections concerning Tattersall's when my Leader was speaking, but whatever Government members may say about that organization, they must admit that it has become the source from which £3,000,000 is raised annually for Victorian hospitals. Having regard to the dire financial situation of Victoria to-day, surely no honorable member would suggest that the legislation relating to Tattersall consultations should be repealed.

Mr. CAIN.—Least of all by this Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is so. Racing of all types provides a considerable amount of revenue for the State. A recent article in the *Herald* stated that the estimated amount of investment with licensed bookmakers is £45,000,000 annually, and from that sum the State receives a 2 per cent. turnover tax. In addition, approximately £9,000,000 is invested annually in the totalizator—again, an excellent source of revenue for this State. If raffle tickets for motor-cars—the price of the tickets varying from £20 to 2s.—are to be sold on every street corner, there will be a diminution of the funds available to members of the race-going community—who contribute beneficially to the Treasury.

When introducing this measure, the Attorney-General should have defined the precise meaning of a raffle for charitable purposes. I have no doubt that he will agree with the pattern that I have attempted to draw. The honorable gentleman should have informed the House also of how he proposes to

regulate raffles. Will the Carlton Football Club be permitted to obtain subscriptions from the public by means of a street raffle, and will the Linton Football Club be given authority to do the same on country roads? If that procedure is to be adopted, cricket clubs and various other sporting organizations, together with hospitals and other institutions, will all be running raffles. The Attorney-General should have given greater consideration to this Bill and indicated clearly how he proposes to control the innumerable raffles, which surely will be conducted not only in the metropolitan area, but also on every road in country districts. A gentleman, who is an ardent supporter of the Government, stated recently that this type of speculation will turn Melbourne into a new Monte Carlo. As this measure reads now, I am inclined to agree with him.

Mr. BOLTE.—Does the honorable member for Brunswick West propose to vote against the Bill?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Of course I do. If the Government intends to regulate raffles, let the Premier inform the House who is to benefit. Is Melbourne to be turned into a modern Monte Carlo, in which raffles for motor-cars will be conducted on every street corner? A man will have no money left to bet with at the races if he spends £10 or £20 on raffle tickets on his way to the racecourse. People will be taking time off from work, not only to go to the races, but also to attend the drawing of the various raffles. Prizes will not stop at motor-cars; hotels may even be offered. I am sure that there are hotels at places such as Wedderburn which could be lucratively disposed of in this way. For the reasons stated by Opposition speakers, we oppose this measure.

Mr. MITCHELL (Benambra).—The Country party supports this Bill and decries the red herrings that have been deliberately drawn across the path by the Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Brunswick West. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition was called to order time and time again for frequently referring to Tattersall's shows how weak, barren, and

thoroughly impotent is the Opposition's case against this measure. I admit that this matter of the small raffle is an extremely difficult one, and I am sure that even the most bigoted members of the Opposition will not deny that at least at one period of my life I gave the problem a great deal of thought, largely because some of their constituents were too jolly mean to "ante up" for charity unless there was a "flutter" attached to it.

However, the fact remains that the Government, as a result of determined and sustained Country party opposition, withdrew the original Bill which it introduced because my party was determined that there should be no extension of gambling facilities, as was proposed in that measure. I point out that there is no such extension envisaged by the provisions of this Bill. To say anything like that is sheer obstinacy, and an effort to beat up a case where none exists. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he has no case against this measure, and all this talk about extension of gambling is nonsense. I notice that the honorable member for Brunswick West, who was in such a hurry to get to a football meeting that he asked to be allowed to speak before me, is still here. I take that as a great tribute to my powers of oratory. It also shows that my case is one of substance.

I have three points to make concerning this Bill. First, it does not extend gambling. Secondly, it puts the ordinary raffle, as we know it, on the same basis and under the same high degree of control as the patriotic fund raffle has always been. Thirdly, under the present system of control of raffles, based on section 88 of the Police Offences Act 1928, there is no really effective power to prosecute people who break the law. Many of the rules and regulations for the control of raffles, which were thought to be good in the past, cannot withstand a sustained legal challenge. The Crown law office had several prosecutions pending, which it wanted to launch against dishonest people who were definitely cheating charities, but it could not do so because under the existing legislation those

people would have escaped the penalties of the law. That is why the Attorney-General was keen to put this eternal and vexatious question of raffles on a sound legal basis. However, he was over-enthusiastic in his first attempt, and the Country party did not approve of that Bill. The present measure meets with the approval of our party.

The honorable member for Brunswick West painted a picture of a bazaar as being a place where lovely girls walk around in crinoline and men in their top hats courteously raise them in happiness and sincerity. That is all rubbish. The story about the bazaar is that it was introduced in an endeavour to regularize raffles and to prevent tickets from being sold on other occasions. A bazaar must comprise four stalls. One night when the "housey-housey" game was at its height, I put on a cricket shirt, pulled my hair down into my eyes, wore an old leather coat and visited the schools. One organization was running a bazaar of four stalls. In one stall there was a moth-eaten doll and in another a box of chocolates which the silver-fish had had a "lash" at and come off second best. That is the type of bazaar that has come into being, which is far different from what was intended. I repeat that the Country party supports the Bill, which has been needed for some time, and we desire to hasten its passage.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—Under the present law in Victoria, raffles are controlled by two Acts of Parliament; one is the Police Offences Act and the other the Patriotic Funds Act. What is proposed in this Bill is an extension of gambling. No matter how much the honorable member for Benambra tries to cover up this point, it is quite obvious that an extension of gambling is intended. I am amazed that the Country party should adopt the attitude indicated by the remarks of the honorable member for Benambra. In 1953 the honorable member for Benambra made a long speech in this House, in the course of which he was called to order at least fifteen times, so violent was his language concerning gambling. Yet, to-night, he states that

the Country party no longer objects to gambling. Apparently, the Country party has come to another arrangement with the Government and is prepared to exchange this Bill for some other benefit that will accrue to it on some other important matter.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Like the Oakleigh swimming pool!

Mr. DOUBE.—Yes. By the provisions of this measure, football clubs and other sporting bodies will be able to enter the field of gambling. Under the existing legislation it is necessary to conduct a bazaar before a raffle can be organized. The honorable member for Benambra stated that people often held fake bazaars. In general, however, bazaars are genuinely conducted, and many worthy charities have never resorted to the methods that he referred to. A few organizations have conducted housey-housey. Most genuine charitable bodies have been limited to the raffling of articles of small value, because the raffles have had to be filled at a bazaar. No such organization has had sufficient man power to conduct a bazaar extending over a long period of time, and most of the people associated with those activities have been too honest to engage in the type of conduct mentioned by the honorable member for Benambra. Consequently, there have been a large number of one-day bazaars, organized by bodies such as mothers' clubs. Because of the shortness of the period of the bazaars, they have been restricted to raffling articles of small value, usually not exceeding £5, such as clocks.

Under the Bill, the need to have a bazaar will disappear, and every organization that purports to aid charity will be enabled to raffle valuable prizes, because the whole State of Victoria will be the field of operations. In future, raffles will not necessarily be conducted for only one day; they may be open for six weeks or eight months. The Government, by introducing the measure, has shown that it intends to give organizations the opportunity to hold raffles for big stakes. It was no exaggeration for the honorable member for Brunswick West to say that, under the terms of the Bill, a hotel could be raffled.

Apparently, the only prizes it will not be possible to offer under the Patriotic Funds Act will be money, shares in companies, and similar stakes.

The Opposition objects to the Bill on the grounds that, as the raffles develop, prizes such as motor-cars, refrigerators, and other articles of great value will be offered. So acute is the housing shortage that one of the best means of selling tickets in a raffle would be to offer a house as a prize. The Government has no plan to provide houses for the people, and it is likely that, in future, on every street corner, people will be seen selling tickets in a raffle with a home as the first prize.

The Premier is greatly interested in publicity—I am now looking for motives. Recently, the honorable gentleman was pushed off the pages of the newspapers by a report of a notable wedding in a small principality, and we learned that in the country to which I refer raffles and lotteries are conducted every day. In fact, that State is almost wholly financed from the results of gambling. The Premier has stated, in effect, "I shall pay any price for publicity in the newspapers," and he is attempting to make Victoria a second Monte Carlo or Monaco. It cannot be denied that football clubs will be allowed to conduct raffles with prizes of great value.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Do you object to that?

Mr. DOUBE.—It is not a question of objecting; I am seeking facts.

Mr. MITCHELL.—The honorable member for Oakleigh spells a word he is using frequently "bizarre."

Mr. DOUBE.—That word aptly describes the honorable member for Benambra. I emphasize that sporting bodies will be enabled to raffle valuable articles. All sporting clubs must be given the same rights as football clubs. As the honorable member for Brunswick West pointed out, "charity," in the legal sense, covers an enormous range of the community's activities. I repeat that the Premier is determined to turn Victoria into a second Monaco—into "the Monte Carlo of the South". I imagine that that is the sort of thing that would

appeal to him. When he visits the United States of America shortly, doubtless he will say to the residents of that country, "Do not go to Europe for your holidays. Go to the Monte Carlo of the South, where you are allowed to gamble 24 hours of the day. You will be able to buy a ticket in a car, a house, or even an hotel."

I am discussing a very serious subject, and I am surprised, as my Leader stated, that there should not be objections from members of the Government party and the Country party. They had the strongest objections, on moral grounds alone, when the Labour party first proposed that Tattersall's sweep consultations should be conducted in this State. Members of those parties stated that, if a lottery were conducted in Victoria with 5s. tickets we would break the "small man." There is no doubt that, under the Bill, it will be possible for items of great value to be raffled at £1, £2, £3, or £5 a ticket, and perhaps even more.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Tattersall's conduct a £5 sweep now.

Mr. DOUBE.—I agree. I cannot understand why the Leader of the Country party, who objected to the transfer of Tattersall's to Victoria in 1953, now sits on a corner bench in this House and states that he will support the Government when it permits cars to be raffled at £5 a ticket.

Mr. CAIN.—Or £20.

Mr. DOUBE.—That is so. Let us have consistency. The Minister of Education was critical of any extension of gambling facilities. Less than two years ago, he stated in this House that any good Government should be able to go through the Budget, use a red pencil on items here and there, and save thousands of pounds so that all charities could be assisted by the State. The honorable gentleman did not use those words, but expressed himself in more eloquent terms. It was his opinion that gambling was not the business of Government, and he voiced it forcibly. Now, he is supporting the extension of gambling facilities. Apparently he has found that the business of government

is not as easy as he thought it was when he was in Opposition. He said, in effect: "You can save millions if your Government is really on the job." Now he humbly supports the Bill, which has been brought in through the back door, so to speak, and states that it will not cause an extension of gambling. Why not be forthright about this matter and tell the members of the House and the people that it will result in an extension of gambling on a big scale?

The measure cannot be conscientiously supported by the House, particularly by members who, when the question of bringing Tattersall's to Victoria was being considered, objected to that proposal on strong moral grounds. I do not consider that there is any need for the Bill. I have not heard of any difficulties about the present position concerning raffles; there has been no outcry. Most charities have been content to obtain a permit under the Police Offences Act and conduct a modest raffle for an item of small value. I am not aware of any great demand from charities for an extension of the legislation to permit the raffling of articles of great value. The Government owes it to Parliament—and particularly to the Opposition—to state clearly what it means to achieve by this Bill.

Mr. CAIN.—The Government owes the community an apology, because its members have masqueraded as Puritans, whereas they are gamblers of the worst type.

Mr. DOUBE.—Exactly. The honorable member for Benambra stated that the Government introduced the measure because it was not possible to "police" bazaars.

Mr. MITCHELL.—Because it could not take legal action.

Mr. DOUBE.—It was alleged that it could not take legal action on the question of what constituted a bazaar. That statement is nonsense. It was obvious that the bazaars referred to by the honorable member were fakes. It would be easy for the Government to define exactly what it meant when it used the term "bazaar," so that raffles of items of small value could still have

been held. Introduction of the Bill is a most extraordinary way of solving the problem. It must result in the extension of gambling throughout the State. All clubs and other organizations will in the future be able to hold "big-money" raffles. As soon as somebody raffles a house, there will be no hope of others raffling articles of small value, and selling tickets at 1s. or 2s. Gambling in this form will increase until we reach the stage that the honorable member for Benambra deplored in 1953, when Victoria will be aptly described as the gambling State of Australia.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I wish to answer two or three accusations that have been levelled against the Government. The Leader of the Opposition claimed that the party of which I am a member opposed, on moral grounds, the operation of Tattersall's in Victoria.

Mr. DOUBE.—Of course, you did.

Mr. BOLTE.—That statement is only a half-truth. The Leader of the Opposition quoted statements from a speech I made in this House when the subject of Tattersall's was debated. I did not oppose the transfer of that organization to Victoria on moral grounds. The Opposition treats the truth so lightly that its members do not tell the whole story; they merely pick out a line or two here and there from a speech made previously and quote statements that seem to support their argument. I will not be bothered in going through all the rubbish in *Hansard* on this subject. Certain Opposition members make speeches by reading out statements made by others.

When the Leader of the Opposition was Premier he was challenged by the then Opposition on the question of bringing into Victoria Tattersall's sweep consultations—a private enterprise—and he stated that a percentage of that money received would be diverted to hospitals. I was a bit suspicious that when a licence was granted to Tattersall's, all other charitable raffles might be debarred. The Leader of the Opposition assured me that he would not

interfere with charitable raffles, as such, and thus cause everything to be channelled into Tattersall's. To-day we find the political party that was responsible for bringing Tattersall's to Victoria—and it is proud of it—trying to make out that it is opposing this Bill on moral grounds. I say to members: Have you ever heard so much rubbish? The passing of the Bill will not increase the number of raffles, as such, held in the State. It will merely place them under reasonable, sensible control. In future, it will not be necessary for a charitable body to go through the farce of having a bazaar. The only true bazaars held to-day are conducted normally by good, hard workers, particularly in country districts, for hospitals, mothers' clubs, schools, and similar causes.

Mr. SUTTON.—They are held in metropolitan districts, too.

Mr. BOLTE.—More are held in the country. By holding one big raffle a year they could perhaps raise more money than they do now by running 20 or 30 tinpot raffles with peas in a bottle, and so on. The Labour party proposes, on moral grounds, to prevent people from doing such a thing. I know whose policy is more popular in country districts.

I sympathize with the Opposition, because it has only one country member left in the party. As the Deputy Leader of the Country party stated recently, there is not in the Upper House one country member who holds a responsible office in the organization. That shows what that party thinks about country interests. It should not confine everything to the city.

Mr. DOUBE.—Get back to the question of gambling.

Mr. BOLTE.—The honorable member for Oakleigh should get back on his moral grounds and argue as he did in 1953; then he would not be talking with his tongue in his cheek. Ridiculous statements have been made by members of the Opposition, and I want to hear no more in similar vein.

The sitting was suspended at 6 p.m. until 7.17 p.m.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—Speeches by supporters of this Bill have been mainly notable, or sufferable, for two things. The first of these is a brazen admission of snobbishness on the part of the honorable member for Benambra who, before he left the Melbourne Club to visit a working-class district, changed his shirt and donned the clothes of a hard-working man—"a horny-handed ton of soil," as the late Dr. Spooner described him. For these false pretences, the honorable member should have been required to wear a hair shirt of repentance.

The second of the two things for which the debate has been notable was the engaging frankness of the Premier in describing his previous speeches as rubbish. But why assign a time limit to them? We, in all charity, refrain from doing so. Despite some defects, this Bill represents an improvement upon that brought into another place last October and afterwards allowed, quietly, smoothly, and discreetly to disappear from the Notice Paper. That Bill gave the green light to conscienceless urgers as well as to worthy people to organize and hold raffles—the first class to benefit itself, the second class to benefit laudable causes for which it works without reward, except the warming feeling that it is contributing to the common good.

There is nothing biliously sanctimonious about the present Bill. It takes raffles for granted, and that is a commonsense if not idealist policy. The structure of public assistance in Victoria is such that the raffle, big or small, has become an almost essential factor of every scheme for assisting hospitals and other institutions. That that is so is perhaps the severest commentary that could be offered on social consciousness in the second half of the 20th century. Nevertheless, it can be said of the raffle that it affords people, though often in jarring form, one of the few opportunities available to them to make voluntary donations to the pool of welfare finance.

I feel compelled to say how deeply affected I was by the indignation with which the Premier repudiated any moral objection to the introduction of Tattersall's into this State. He cannot stand

absolved from the statement that was made by the honorable member for Kew, then and now his deputy, and now the Attorney-General. That honorable gentleman said—

We are considering a moral issue on which there are strong feelings in a large section of the community.

I applaud that statement, and I am perfectly certain that consistency is not the least inconsistent of the honorable gentleman's characteristics.

It is amazing to note the extent to which money is raised by raffles. I understand the gross totals for the year 1954 amounted to £1,049,566; that included the proceeds from "Housey." There were small raffles conducted for which permits were neither sought nor secured. It is desirable, when dealing with raffles, that we should look closely at the social aspects and not be too readily satisfied with the glib assurance that there is nothing morally wrong—for, of course, there is not—in the raffle as such, that it is abuse and not use that calls for disapprobation. We should also consider the kindred fact that, when people pay £1 or £5 each for a ticket in a raffle for a motor-car, they are rarely motivated solely or mainly by a desire to assist the end for which the raffle is held; their ambition is to win the motor-car. Hence, there is in their attitude none of the quality of that charity of which St. Paul speaks in one of his Epistles. Their attitude is more after the manner of the so-called "consecrated service" that backslapping Babbitts prate about.

Despite its dubious sociological background and the inclination that it undoubtedly lends to gambling and gaming on a wider scale, the raffle seems to be the most effective means that there is for raising money for purposes of charity. That is a pity, but it is more than a pity to close one's eyes to the truth. This matter has been assailed lately by the Reverend Dr. A. H. Wood, whose voice was raised loudly and eloquently not long ago for the rejection of the proposal for the later closing of hotels, but who now believes that liquor is not the only sociological evil that defaces this fair country. He lately

said that gambling had increased more than four times since the war and that it had become Australia's greatest social disease. In Sydney the other day, the lottery as an institution was arraigned by General Kitching, of the Salvation Army, who found no moral or other use for it.

Strangely and interestingly enough, the phrase used by the Reverend Dr. Wood—as to gambling having become Australia's greatest social disease—has been taken over by a newspaper published by a church body in Melbourne. This publication stated—

The gambling instinct and the urge for easy money has received perhaps its greatest stimulus since the war through the promotion and fantastic growth of lotteries.

The newspaper article proceeded—

There is of course nothing intrinsically wrong in a mild "flutter" on a horse or a 5s. ticket in a lottery, and gambling has always been a national weakness, with its origins deep in our history from the days of the "Gold Rushes". But the situation is clearly getting out of hand.

That is a very impressive statement but I notice in another section of the same paper that there is an advertisement for a raffle for a motor-car valued at more than £1,000.

The Opposition desires to be fair to the Government. It has experienced no great share of fairness from the Government but so impregnated are its members with the spirit of charity that they wish to be fair to the Government. All we want it to do is to take the advice of the authorities and to pin down the raffles so that there shall not be useless, senseless, dangerous dissipation of funds that should be contributing to a worthy end. We want the word "charity" defined. There has been a strange confusion between the words "gambling" and "gaming". Tattersall's deals with gaming. One may go to a racecourse and gamble. A bet is a gamble but an investment in a raffle is gaming. Lotteries deal with and have as their subject gaming, and the Government, by this Bill, is prepared to arrange for and endorse an extension of gaming.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond).—So far, my impression of the debate is that the Leader of the Opposition has set out to

defend Tattersall's. It has been surprising in a debate such as this—although I feel that Tattersall's itself is just a gigantic raffle—to witness the spirited defence of private enterprise by those in this House who claim to be advocates of Socialism. I was surprised indeed that there should have been so animated a defence of a private enterprise which has come to this State, making fantastic profits for a very small charge indeed.

Mr. WHITE.—You supported its coming here. You were a Minister in the Government at the time.

Mr. SCULLY.—I would remind the honorable member that it has been stated by the Leader of the Opposition that he conducted the negotiations which led to the establishment of Tattersall's in this State. He was quite frank about that. No other member of the then Government had any say in bringing Tattersall's here. It would be interesting, in view of the allegations that have been made in regard to improper methods in bringing Tattersall's to Victoria, to sound a question whether or not a Royal Commission should be appointed into the circumstances in which Tattersall's was established in this State.

THE SPEAKER (The Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—I suggest that the honorable member has referred quite sufficiently to Tattersall's.

Mr. SCULLY.—I have merely expressed my surprise that such a defence of a private enterprise should have been put up by the Opposition party in this House. That enterprise has been given a monopoly and it is making such fantastic profits that it is altogether amazing that it should be defended by people who claim to be the representatives of the Socialists in this community. I am not particularly enamoured of the contents of this Bill. At first glance, it appears quite innocuous, but there are a number of aspects that should be further explained by the Government. There are two types of raffles; one is recognized as a major raffle, while the other could be described as a minor raffle. In the past, raffles to raise money for patriotic funds and for the Red

Cross Society have come under a category different from that in which are included raffles conducted by people who voluntarily raise money for charitable organizations, like the Royal Children's Hospital, the Women's Hospital, and other institutions. I have no objection to helping people who are prepared to work voluntarily on behalf of charitable movements. However, I agree that it is desirable that certain precautions be taken to ensure that raffles are run honestly and cleanly. Raffles of the type under consideration are slightly different from patriotic fund raffles in that before permission to have a raffle is granted, certain conditions must be complied with.

Generally speaking, before organizing a major raffle—one for which the prizes exceed £250—certain information must be supplied. For example, a copy of the proposed ticket and any advertising in connexion with the raffle must be tendered with the application, and the following information must also be included: The name of the fund to benefit, description and value of prizes, number and value of tickets to be issued, statement to the effect that tickets will be sold only at a bazaar, the location of the bazaar, and the dates on which it will be held. The time and date of the drawing of the raffle, which is to be held at a bazaar, must also be supplied, and if the bazaar exceeds one day, the method of publishing the result must be stipulated. Furthermore, it is necessary to indicate what methods will be adopted for the sale of tickets, and if payment is to be made to ticket sellers the relevant information must be furnished. The estimated cost of printing, and so on, must be provided. It is further prescribed that the minimum value of the tickets sold must not be less than twice the value of the prizes, plus the cost of conducting the raffle, nor must the maximum value of tickets exceed six times the value of the prize or prizes. It is also necessary that all tickets must be sold at a bazaar. On the application form a bazaar is described as a sale consisting of not less than four stalls. In the past, in order to comply with this provision, functions have been known to consist of four stalls, but they

have not been genuine bazaars. The Bill is intended to eliminate this subterfuge and to place raffles on the same basis as patriotic fund raffles. On the face of it, that is a sound provision if the people concerned work for bona fide charitable organizations. However, I should like to ask if it is true that only one raffle may be conducted at a time. If that policy were adopted, many institutions would be deprived of an opportunity of raising funds. These institutions must be maintained, and they derive a considerable amount of finance from this source.

Furthermore, I should like to ask who is to define a "charitable" purpose. Are raffles to be classified into various categories? If so, who will classify them, and is it possible that some organizations will be eliminated and refused permission to conduct raffles because they do not fall within the prescribed classification. If that is to be the case, it could be said to the Children's Hospital, "You do not come within the classification; we do not regard you as a charitable organization." I could not find anything in the Minister's second-reading speech to clarify that aspect. Whilst supporting the principle that raffles should be cleanly and honestly run, I believe the Government should offer some explanation of the points I have raised.

I direct my remarks now to what could be regarded as minor raffles. I understood that it was intended to provide an opportunity to small organizations, such as football clubs and the like, to raise finance by conducting raffles, but on studying the Bill I noticed that it is intended to repeal paragraph (c) of sub-section (3) of section 88 of the Police Offences Act. If that is done, it will preclude a small organization from conducting a bazaar. What will then be the position of such organizations? For instance, if the Carey Baptist Grammar School wished to organize a small bazaar with the intention of raising finance, would it be permitted to do so, or would it be automatically excluded under the provisions of the Bill?

Mr. BOLTE.—The school must obtain permission to do so.

Mr. SCULLY.—It has always been necessary to obtain such permission, but the Bill proposes to repeal the paragraph of the Act enabling that to be done.

Mr. BOLTE.—An organization would still be eligible to apply for permission to conduct a raffle.

Mr. SCULLY.—It would be tragic if these worthy organizations were not permitted to raise finance by this method. Furthermore, as I understand it, any authority given will apply to one "spin" only, which must take place at a bazaar. If clubs and church organizations are to be permitted only one "spin," when the success of such functions depends largely on the operation of a number of small spinning wheels, great hardship will be experienced. I ask the Government for clarification on that point. A number of opportunity clubs in the suburban area—there is one in Richmond—have raised considerable sums of money, enabling first-class club-rooms to be provided for the children in industrial areas, and their source of finance may be eliminated if this measure becomes law. Much of the finance for the provision of modern facilities has been raised at functions such as I have described. Is it a fact that charitable organizations must be registered with the Hospitals and Charities Commission? I understand that such bodies will still be able to obtain permission, on application, to conduct raffles.

Mr BOLTE.—That is so.

Mr. SCULLY.—I agree, but every precaution should be taken to ensure there are no irregularities in the conduct of raffles. I consider that more information on this measure should have been given to the House. Honorable members are left with the impression that preference will be given to organizations running major raffles at the expense of those wishing to conduct smaller ones. If the Government desires to clamp down on the indiscriminate or irresponsible holding of raffles, I suggest this is not the right way to achieve its objective. As was pointed out earlier, this could lead to an extension of gambling. If unlimited permission were granted, of course that could happen, but it should

not be possible under the conditions laid down. I should like the Government to indicate what the full procedure will be, if the Bill is passed. Is it the Government's intention to place the conduct of all raffles in the hands of the Discharged Servicemen's Board, which body has been handling them up to date?

It is rumoured that permission will be granted for only one raffle to be conducted at a time. If 40 organizations wish to run a raffle and each in turn is to be given a specified period in which to do so, it will be a long time before the last one is able to raise finance by this means. If such organizations prove their bona fides to the Board, I see no reason why more than one of them should not be permitted to run raffles concurrently. That point should be clarified because any such restriction may react to the detriment of some organizations.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale), the debate was adjourned until later this day.

CANCER INSTITUTE (LOAN MONEYS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 2) on the motion of Mr. Porter (Honorary Minister) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—This is a Bill to authorize the Government to raise further funds for the purposes of the Cancer Institute. Before that Institute was set up in 1949, legislative authority was granted for the Government to raise a loan of £500,000 for its work. In 1953 the amount of loan funds authorized was increased to £1,000,000. The measure now before the House will authorize a further increase of expenditure up to £1,500,000.

The work being done by the Cancer Institute is of vital importance to the community. The latest information I have on the matter indicates that cancer or—as it is termed in this extract of Victorian Statistics — malignant neoplasms, is our second greatest killer. Diseases of the heart still lead with a total of 7,409 cases yearly as against 3,366 cases of cancer. Unfortunately,

the statistics also indicate that the death rate due to cancer is increasing year by year. It is time that the Commonwealth Government granted further assistance to Victoria for cancer research. Most of us, particularly those who smoke, have been perturbed to read in the press that apparently there is some connexion between smoking and cancer, particularly of the lung. In 1950 the Commonwealth Government obtained revenue totalling £20,829,000 from tobacco and manufactures thereof. Probably the revenue is now nearer £40,000,000. Therefore, it is only reasonable that that Government should contribute to the expenses of the Peter MacCallum Clinic and to cancer research generally. Other countries are taking a very serious view of the disease and much research is proceeding. As Victoria is short of funds, I urge the Government to approach the Federal Government for financial assistance to enable the important task of cancer research to be intensified.

The activities being carried on at the Peter MacCallum Clinic are of great value, and they are extending greatly. I think between 40,000 and 50,000 outpatients are treated by the institute yearly. That is approximately one third of the number of outpatients treated by a large general hospital such as the Royal Melbourne Hospital. In addition, the Cancer Institute Board has established clinics throughout Victoria. I understand that about fourteen or fifteen cancer clinics operate in the State—at Gippsland, in the Western District, and in other parts. One important function of the Institute is its home visit service. Some twelve or fifteen nurses visit the homes of persons suffering from various stages of the disease to attend to dressings and so on. That service is of great benefit to elderly people and those who are unable to travel. It also means that sufferers from the disease are treated economically. In addition, the Institute provides free transport in appropriate cases. Generally speaking, it provides one of the best hospital services in the State. I suppose it is a good example of socialized medicine. I do not think the Institute has any source of income other

than what it receives from the Government, apart perhaps from bequests made to it from time to time. I have never noticed people selling buttons, running raffles, or otherwise collecting in the streets on its behalf. Indeed one wonders whether the £1,500,000 envisaged by the Government will be sufficient, especially in view of the growing need for research and the increase in the incidence of certain types of cancer.

The Honorary Minister (Mr. Porter) mentioned in his second-reading speech that £66,000 had been spent on a 4,000,000 electron-volt linear accelerator. I am prompted to mention that, following two accidents which have occurred in Victoria, a number of people are worried at the way some radio-active materials are being handled. In one particular case—which I shall not discuss at length because I understand court proceedings are pending—a workman at Yallourn placed in his pocket a radio-active substance, and as a result he has been in hospital for four or five months. Last week it was reported in the press that in New South Wales a young child had picked up a capsule of cobalt 60, an isotope produced in atomic piles—a most deadly substance. The child is in hospital and a serious deterioration in his blood count has taken place. The *Age* reported to-day that a second child had been similarly affected. I am not aware whether there are any regulations in this State dealing with the proper handling of these materials. One must not imagine for one moment that these substances are handled only in hospitals. That is not so. They are used in metal work for the testing of welding, and also in certain types of paint.

Many years ago the International Labour Organization drew up a model code for the handling of these materials. It is regrettable that the findings of the organization have not yet been implemented in Victoria. It was pointed out that because these materials were particularly dangerous it was highly desirable for regulations to be made governing their use. At the moment, the isotopes are imported from overseas through the Commonwealth laboratories and are then hired

out or loaned into the various fields. We can understand their use in hospitals where precautions are taken, but isotopes are also hired to industry, particularly the metal trades, for testing purposes. As far as I am aware, there are no regulations in this State governing their proper use. I understand that regulations have been formulated in New South Wales and South Australia.

It is only proper that when dealing with the question of the installation of the linear accelerator at the Peter MacCallum Clinic we should bring to the notice of the House the grave fears held by many people. Radio-active materials can have a most damaging effect upon a person. Figures of fatalities that have occurred over the years are given in the report. In the main, they have resulted from the use of radio-active materials by persons completely inexperienced in handling them, and from inadequate protection. Although only two or three accidents have occurred in Australia, there must be no more. The Opposition hopes that the Government will realize the necessity of conferring with the Commonwealth and other people who have anything to do with the importation of isotopes into Australia, particularly when they can be extremely dangerous in unskilled hands. We ask the Government to give serious consideration to the taking of steps to protect the community. We view with alarm a position whereby a child can pick up a capsule, and also the fact that workers in industry are apparently allowed to use these materials without any regulations existing for their safeguard. I ask the Honorary Minister (Mr. Porter) to refer my submissions to Cabinet and to ensure that something is done.

The Opposition offers no objection to the Bill. Our only fear is that it does not provide sufficient for the needs of the Peter MacCallum Clinic. Unless we are prepared to spend money and can coax the Commonwealth to grant additional assistance, we will not be able to combat this dread scourge. I use that phrase because figures in the Commonwealth *Year Book* illustrate that over

Mr. Doube.

the years there has been an alarming increase in the number of cancer cases. It is the second largest killer of people in this country. The Government must realize that every possible action must be taken to ensure not only early diagnosis of cancer but also that facilities are provided for its treatment.

Mr. MITCHELL (Benambra).—The Country party supports this Bill, but with the initial comment that the whole question has been approached with a particular lack of dynamism and enthusiasm. That very deadly enemy, cancer, is still one of the unsolved mysteries of medicine. We do not know what starts this killer, or how to cure it. Figures show that one in ten people die of cancer—die under circumstances of acute and horrible agony. Due to the iniquitous two for one electoral system, there are 66 members in this Chamber, and six of us now have our death sentences—sentences of agony. There are approximately 50 or 60 people in the public gallery, and six or seven of them will die horribly. I did not completely view with favour the ban on heroin because in the last stages of incredible pain and devastating agony caused by cancer, the only relief comes from heroin.

We are up against a terrible hydra-headed disease. I have stated in this House previously that there are various forms of cancer. We know of the cobalt workers' cancer, that curse of the cobalt workers in Schneeberg in the Joachimsthal valley in Germany, where because of the affection of cobalt on their skins the workers contract cancer of the bladder. There is kang cancer, from which the natives of Tibet suffer in the buttocks as a result of sleeping over dung fires. In Kashmir, there is kangri cancer of the stomach, caused by the natives carrying braziers under their heavy winter cloaks. The disease is so hydra-headed that it is frightening. It must be tackled with far more resoluteness and dynamic realism than has yet been displayed.

I should now like to comment on certain statements made by the Honorary Minister (Mr. Porter) in his explanatory speech. As the honorable member for Oakleigh stated, the Peter MacCallum

Clinic is not being provided with sufficient money. The Minister has said that the institute does not receive assistance from the Hospitals and Charities Fund, although to some extent it may seek assistance. I should like the position clarified. This vital enemy—cancer—is still triumphant and unchecked. Why is not every possible avenue being explored to obtain money? If finance can be obtained from the Hospitals and Charities Commission, why is that step not being taken?

When a surgeon opens up a cancer patient he sees one of two things. If he sees just a revolting and ominous "goosey" mass, he probably shakes his head and sews up the patient. On the other hand, he may observe an arrogant grey-white mass, growing and extending in its triumph of extinguishing human life. Certain of our cells that give us life and happiness in this Christian world suddenly go mad and inexplicably and devastatingly grow and grow, throttling our breath, rotting our stomachs and intestines, and smashing our bones. Cancer patients suffer the pain of expanding bones caused by a sarcoma, the cells of which have come down from a sarcomatous growth into the very centre of the bone, splitting it apart. We do not know why that happens, but we should give those who are trying to find out a little more financial encouragement.

The Peter MacCallum Clinic has done a wonderful job. It is hard to differentiate, but one must pay a tribute to that grand man, the chairman, Mr. Harold Stokes, a man of goodwill who is determined, no matter at what cost to his own time or pocket, to help his fellowmen. There has been domestic trouble at the institute. Although Dr. Kaye Scott is a brilliant man, we are forced to say that he is not an easy person to work with. Things have undoubtedly been better since Dr. Holman took over. In spite of domestic troubles, the staff of the institute have always remained cheerful. A person attending there under death sentence knows he is among friends; he receives cheery smiles, and has a feeling that he is not fighting alone, but that a

gallant band is fighting with and for him. I should like to pay a tribute to the nurses, the doctors, and Mr. Cameron—the manager and secretary—for what they are doing in a very desperate situation.

The question of cancer detection has not been mentioned. As I have said, detection is not easy, because there are many forms of cancer—carcinoma, sarcoma, and endothelioma—but it can be detected. Those of us who read American papers notice those publications carry advice to every man, woman, and child to undergo a check to ascertain if they have cancer. If caught in the early stages, a number of cases of cancer can be cured. Why has not our press conducted a similar campaign? Why have our papers boasted that rotten, degenerate, sadistic mongrel—Kerr? Why have not they tackled the problem of cancer and taken on something real? Instead of publishing snivelling drivel about Kerr they should give us something real. It is the editors of *Truth* and the *Argus* who are smashing the *Argus* with their drivel. Kerr should be left where he deserves to be, and all papers should combine in a campaign to overcome the dread disease of cancer.

There is not yet sufficient accommodation at the Peter MacCallum Clinic. There, it is not a case of machines waiting for men, but of men waiting three, four, and five hours for machines. I suggest that money should be granted immediately for the provision of a cancer-detection centre at the institute. Although it has not proved entirely successful, such a centre has been established in Hobart. I am prepared to be the first person to volunteer to be examined. Any other member can follow me. However, I should say that other members are fearful of the truth. I suggest it would be better to be faced with the truth now and be cured than to die a horrible death. I am sure that, when honorable members and other people who may be listening think the matter over, they, too, will seek examination. To-morrow, I shall telephone Mr. Cameron and ask that my name be taken against the time that a detection clinic is established.

In my opinion, undue emphasis is placed on the radio-active side of the work of the Peter MacCallum Clinic. With all due respect to those who are pressing for the installation of the £66,000 linear accelerator, there is only one real way to deal with cancer—that is, cut it out. I consider that not sufficient attention is given to surgery at the institute.

Mr. DOUBE.—What nonsense!

Mr. MITCHELL.—It is not. I know that the honorable member for Oakleigh is sincere, but I contend that not sufficient account of surgery is taken at the Peter MacCallum Clinic. The responsible people are mesmerized with radium and the radar principle that lies behind the accelerator. In my opinion, in addition to the detection of cancer, more attention should be paid to surgery, because the enemy is multi-headed. In the same way as one cannot catch all fish with the one bait, all cancers cannot be cured by the one method.

Mr. DOUBE.—That is a ridiculous criticism for a layman to make.

Mr. MITCHELL.—A layman is entitled to study a subject and see it in its true perspective. Sometimes he can see it in a truer light than one who is right up against the problem and is mesmerized with his own opinions. I studied this problem before the honorable member for Oakleigh became a member of this House, and I shall be studying it long after he has departed. I speak with absolute conviction and the confidence of deep study. I shall keep on studying it and fighting whatever snivelling drivel is advanced by occupants of the Opposition or other benches.

Another avenue in which the Cancer Institute Board has failed is that one part of Victoria, at least, has been deprived of the service of residing consultants. About 4,500 country people have taken advantage of the consultative service. Visits are made to Sale, Yallourn, Bairnsdale, Warragul, Colac, Warrnambool, Hamilton, Ballarat, Ararat, Stawell, Swan Hill, Echuca and Kerang, but, for some obscure reason, no service to the north-east is provided. Why, I ask the Minister, has the north-east been omitted? Have

we not proper facilities at Wangaratta or Wodonga? Why must persons who live in Corryong or Tallangatta travel to Melbourne for advice and treatment? At least one of the centres that I have mentioned should exchange a visit with, say, Wangaratta, and afford those who live in the north-eastern part of Victoria a chance of obtaining expert advice and being treated without having to make a long and expensive trip to Melbourne.

I recall that one of my friends in the north-east, a healthy bushman, consulted a local doctor concerning a pain in his stomach. The doctor knew that the patient had been thrown from his horse a couple of months previously, and he thought that the man might have suffered a cracked rib. Accordingly, he was sent to Albury for examination, which revealed nothing. The man then proceeded to Melbourne where, for a while nothing amiss could be discovered. Later it was ascertained that he was suffering from cancer of the lungs. The discovery was made too late for effective treatment and, in the meantime, cancer had spread through his body. Some sarcomas pass off cancer cells into the blood stream and pulsate like malignant toads. They cause the bones to become misshapen and split. Ultimately, the patient I mentioned died in agony. I hope I never see anyone else suffer as he did. Accordingly, I ask the Honorary Minister in charge of this Bill to take a note of my remarks, and to ensure that the north-east will not be left out of the scheme any longer.

Earlier, I touched lightly on reasons why the Peter MacCallum Clinic requires additional money. I should like to tell the House and, incidentally, the people of Victoria also, that the Institute will need far more money in the future because it will incur further building costs on sites not far from the clinic. The Institute's budget for the current year is £499,020, from which sum will be provided, among other things, the amenity of a visiting nursing service for persons who cannot make the journey to the Melbourne clinic. A

cheerful nurse visits the patients concerned, applies dressings, and administers comfort. During the year ended 30th June last no fewer than 17,190 such visits of mercy were made. On the average, there are on the books at one time 100 patients who need such visits. In-patients are catered for adequately. There are 32 beds and the average attendance is 24. A building is being erected which will accommodate 110 beds. As was proved in England, provision must be made in a cancer clinic for persons who, while possibly suffering from cancer, also have another complaint. During the year ended 30th June, 1955, 13,800 out-patients attended the clinic. During the same period, 24,000 out-patients attended the radiotherapy department, where 75,000 separate treatments were given.

Moreover, there is an ambulance service, which brings patients to the clinic and takes them home again. The hospital at Heidelberg provides 12 beds for people who cannot find accommodation elsewhere in Melbourne. Also, there is, as the honorable member for Oakleigh correctly stated, a multi-electrical accelerator which alone cost £66,000, and the various fittings will cost in the region of £99,000. Expenditure will not stop at that point because the walls to surround the equipment must be from 2 feet to 5 feet thick and the amount of space required is enormous. That plant works on the radar principle and treats deep-seated tumours without burning the skin. I have given some idea of the vast and wonderful work of the Cancer Institute Board, and I sincerely trust that, within a reasonable time, the Government will grant it additional financial assistance.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Application of loan fund).

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—Under the principal Act, the Cancer Institute Board may be called upon by the Minister to furnish a report, but no provision is made in the legislation

to the effect that a report must be furnished annually. I point out that the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the Mental Hygiene Authority, as well as other State undertakings, are required to furnish reports annually, and in view of the widespread interest in cancer and the necessity to publicize the Peter MacCallum Clinic consideration should be given to including in this Bill a provision under which it will become mandatory for the Board to furnish an annual report. As I stated previously, the clinic is financed almost entirely from governmental sources and, moreover, members are exceedingly interested in the work of combating cancer. Accordingly, I am of the opinion that an annual report from the Cancer Institute Board should be tabled in this Chamber.

The honorable member for Benambra criticized the methods of treatment adopted at the clinic. He asserted that sufficient surgery was not practised. As I said, by way of interjection, it is presumptuous for the honorable member to claim that the Peter MacCallum Clinic is not doing enough in this or that regard. The leading medical brains of the community are represented on the Board of the Cancer Institute.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—Do you not agree with the honorable member for Benambra?

Mr. DOUBE.—I disagree with him on this particular point.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—He appealed for additional financial help for the Board.

Mr. DOUBE.—I support the honorable member on that point, but I contend that it is wrong for a member of Parliament to undermine public confidence in the Peter MacCallum Clinic.

Mr. WHITE.—You learned a lot from what was said by the honorable member for Benambra.

Mr. DOUBE.—I concede that, for a layman, the honorable member for Benambra knows much about the problems associated with cancer, but that does not alter the fact that a lay person should not use this Parliament to chide medical practitioners who are expert in their particular field. Even

the honorable member, who has a grossly inflated ego, would not assert that he knows more about the subject than does Dr. Kaye Scott or Dr. W. P. Holman, both of whom are responsible for the conduct of the clinic. We need to play up public confidence in that establishment.

Mr. MITCHELL (Benambra).—I concur most heartily in the suggestion for the submission of an annual report by the Cancer Institute Board. Such a document would assist members to follow the progress of the clinic. I do not know whether an amendment to the Bill is required for this purpose, but perhaps the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill will examine that aspect and, if necessary, have an amendment submitted in another place.

In the matter of cancer research, it is not so much a matter of undermining public confidence, but rather of being frank and facing difficulties honestly. As a cat may look at a king, so a layman may look at a doctor and criticize him. After all, we foot the bill, and there is an old adage to the effect that he who pays the piper calls the tune. It is competent for members of this House to discuss relevant matters. I am eager that additional money shall be made available to the Board so that more accommodation for surgery can be provided at the clinic. Electrical treatment is not the only way of dealing with cancer, and my view is that more funds should be released.

Mr. DOUBE.—You criticized the treatment provided by the clinic.

Mr. MITCHELL.—No. I pointed out, not by way of criticism, certain deficiencies that pertained. More money should be provided to make available additional facilities for the public.

Mr. DOUBE.—In other words, you were not critical of the clinic's methods of treatment?

Mr. MITCHELL.—No, I was not.

Mr. DOUBE.—You should have made yourself clear in the first place.

Mr. MITCHELL.—If the honorable member had listened intently and intelligently, he would have comprehended what I said. As regards laymen, I might

mention that the Australian Imperial Forces consisted of laymen who adopted the motto, "Audacity, always audacity."

Mr. DOUBE.—That is a ridiculous analogy.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I take this opportunity of thanking members for their assistance in the passage of this small but important measure. The additional money sought will be used to provide extra ward accommodation and also more space for various ancillary sections of the clinic that are now occupying parts of the nurses' home and areas that could be used for the treatment of patients. I assure the honorable members for Oakleigh and Benambra that their suggestions for the submission of an annual report by the Board and for the protection of persons generally against the effects of radioactive isotopes will be submitted to the appropriate Minister.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

POLICE OFFENCES (CONTROL OF RAFFLES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from earlier this day) on the motion of Mr. Rylah (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—I welcome the opportunity of continuing this debate. The discussions that have taken place among members of the House since the debate was adjourned earlier this day have assisted me to frame my remarks on a basis different from that which I originally intended to adopt. It is obvious from what has been said by honorable members on other measures that everybody appreciates greatly the need for the provision of more money for the Hospitals and Charities Commission, either directly or indirectly, to enable it to carry on its work. All honorable members, whether on the Government or Opposition side of the House, must be quite satisfied that the revenue obtained from Tattersall's has formed a substantial portion of the revenue of the hospitals

in this State. I do not think there is any need for me to pursue that angle, but I am perturbed when Government members apparently endeavour to maintain their Puritanical attitude, as they always do when measures involving some gambling or gaming are before Parliament. Government speakers have attempted to interpret the present measure as one seeking to regulate raffles, whilst other speakers have pointed out that they consider it will lessen control and throw the door wide open for everyone to conduct raffles irrespective of the object for which the raffle is conducted. I do not read into the Bill the idea that if it is passed one will be able to conduct a raffle for the purpose of assisting a football club.

Mr. RYLAH.—I agree with that.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—But when the Premier and Treasurer, and legally qualified men associated with the Government, ask members of the Opposition—the despised people of politics in this country—do they not wish to help the local football club, what can one think? The honorable member for Benambra, though not very generous on some occasions, is always capable and able to see the issue involved. Does he not agree that persons organizing the running of an Australian Rules football club would know how to look after their affairs in that regard without recourse to law or breaking the law? I think most honorable members know my background, and without attempting to hold myself up as a Puritan, I can say that since the transfer of Tattersall's to Victoria became effective I have never purchased a ticket.

Mr. CAIN.—Neither have I.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Some people might say that I am "lousy"; they might be right. However, I have adopted that attitude because I would not like to win the first prize in a Tattersall consultation. Nobody in a public position would care to do so if he had experience of the demands made on such winners.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I would take a chance on winning the £100,000 prize any "tick of the clock."

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Of course, the Leader of the Country party would; he would take a chance on anything. Members of the Opposition have been worried about what is happening in connexion with this Bill. I am pleased to see that the Attorney-General has returned to the Chamber. Since dinner he has been leaving the handling of the Bill to the Honorary Ministers and to the Government back benchers. The Government is receiving no assistance from the Country party, and from the Attorney-General's attitude, I gained the impression that he was not so keen about the measure himself. I do not think he personally is particularly enthusiastic about it.

Mr. RYLAH.—I will make clear what I have to say on the Bill.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The Attorney-General is generally forthright in airing his views. I have been wondering where he has been since the dinner adjournment, and I point out to him that the Minister of Education was not in the Chamber to take his place while he was absent. I am anxious to know what is likely to be the position concerning raffles if this Bill is passed. Particularly when the "housey-housey" was in vogue, I have had a great deal of experience in obtaining permits for charitable organizations to conduct raffles and bazaars. It has been necessary to approach the members of the Discharged Servicemen's Board to prove that the organization concerned was endeavouring to raise money for charitable purposes and that the money raised was distributed in the manner intended. The honorable member for Richmond pointed out to the House what has to be done in connexion with the holding of a raffle. He seemed to be worried about some people being recognized in this particular legislation. What he was really worried about was that some people might not be recognized. However, I do not intend to debate that issue.

The point has been raised that it will not be necessary under the proposed new law to conduct a bazaar in order to run a raffle. An honorable member facetiously asked how does one go

about conducting a bazaar. A vital point is that all major raffles—those offering motor-cars, buildings, and hotels as prizes—are to be classified in one category. Minor raffles, supposedly those offering a first prize of under £200, will be conducted all over the State of Victoria. When the issue concerning the transfer of Tattersall's was debated in this House, honorable members on both sides of the Chamber spoke against the system of selling lottery tickets in the streets, as is done in Western Australia, New South Wales, and Queensland, where numbers of kiosks sell lottery tickets as their main business. I consider that the raffle system to be permitted under this Bill will bring that state of affairs into being here, if it is not already in existence. Numbers of doorways in the city streets are occupied by persons selling tickets in raffles for motor-cars and other prizes.

The hospitals and other charitable institutions cannot do without the money that is raised from raffles, because the Hospitals and Charities Commission is gravely short of funds at the present time. Within the last few weeks I quoted a case of a hospital with which I am associated that could not pay its accounts because funds were not available. Other hospitals throughout the State were in a similar position, but I understand that the Government has acted rightly and has made money available to them. The Attorney-General, by interjection, indicated that he intends to speak further on this measure, and when he does so I should like him to explain what will be the exact position, if this Bill is passed, so far as the holding of raffles is concerned. The honorable member for Brunswick West indicated how broadly the wording of the Bill could be interpreted. I listened patiently to the interpretations of the law given by him, based on decisions of the Privy Council and other legal tribunals. The interpretations set out by the honorable member for Brunswick West were not disagreed with greatly by the Minister of Education, and they were so broad that almost any organization, including a football club, could be covered by the word "charity."

Mr. Shepherd.

One honorable member raised the point that a number of raffles are run at and in association with bazaars. I have been reliably informed that at a well-conducted bazaar last Friday without any raffles, guessing competitions, or other gambling devices, the sum of £409 was raised. But all bazaars are not as genuine as that one was. Some are a mixture of active and progressive stalls, together with spinning wheels and other means of gambling. I am positive that this Bill will loosen the control over gambling, not so far as the major raffles are concerned, but as regards minor ones. I am talking candidly because I believe the implications of the Bill must be analysed and clarified. We all know that the persons responsible for the granting of permits for raffles grant certain organizations approval to conduct minor raffles extending over a period of a month. At the end of each month the organization has to furnish full details of the number of raffles held and where the money was expended. If the funds are not distributed to a youth club, a hospital or some other charitable institution, then the permit is reviewed. I know, too, that it is not the intention of the Government to interfere with similar raffles carried on by mothers' clubs for the provision of all those ancillary items required in our State schools. Regulations state that gambling cannot be carried on within the school confines for the purpose of raising funds, but the mothers' clubs are able to conduct their raffles elsewhere and not break the law. I want to be clear on that matter, because the Opposition is of the opinion that this measure does not arouse in Government supporters the gusto and genuineness that is usually associated with a Bill that a Government wishes to have passed. I believe that the Bill was introduced because certain organizations were jealous of those bodies classified under the Patriotic Funds Act.

Mr. RYLAH.—That is not the case.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—This measure will be satisfactory to any of those people who objected along those lines. I wish to hear what Government members have to say concerning this matter. However,

I do not want to hear them claim in eighteen months' time, "We did not say anything about raffles." The great majority of Government members have not joined in this debate, so it is not possible to determine whether they support the measure. Are they going to tell their constituents, "We have just controlled raffles, but not expanded them in any way." The provisions of this measure are being given publicity throughout Victoria. At the present time, thousands of people are of the opinion that a motor-car can be raffled only for a returned soldiers' association, a patriotic organization or a charitable body. They do not know the broad interpretation of the word "charitable." If this measure is passed, educational and denominational bodies will want to take advantage of its provisions. I am not sure that it is good policy to broaden the law concerning raffles. At present, if a person desires to raffle a motor-car for a hospital he is told, when he organizes his bazaar, that he cannot obtain a permit for a raffle because another organization is running one at that time. When more and more applications for permits come in, the year will not be long enough and many organizations will be disappointed. I am sure that both Opposition and Government members would appreciate a clarifying statement by the Attorney-General.

If it is proposed to make major alterations to the present law, I think this measure should be held in abeyance until it is analysed further. If the Attorney-General can assure me that this Bill will permit of more thorough regulation of the conduct and promotion of raffles, I might be persuaded to agree to it. If there is a tighter control of the larger raffles that are conducted all over the State, with a certain number of tickets as a minimum and a maximum, then there might be some good in the Bill. However, if the position of the "little people" is jeopardized, or if they are placed in a position in which they are unintentionally breaking the law in doing their best for charitable and patriotic purposes, then I consider that the debate should be adjourned until the matter is further

analysed. It is my desire to interest all members in this measure because very often the second-reading notes on Bills are prepared by people who have a point of view that is different from that of a Government or an Opposition. In many cases, departmentally prepared second-reading speeches do not convey to members exactly what is intended. I should like to hear the personal and enthusiastic opinion of the Attorney-General, if he has one, concerning this measure.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—The reason why I speak, at this late stage in this debate, is that the Attorney-General has promised to give the House an explanation of this measure, and there are one or two matters to which I should like to direct his attention. At one stage, I was somewhat diffident about mentioning that I did not clearly understand the provisions of the Bill, but as my Deputy Leader and other members have expressed doubts also, I can overcome my diffidence. As a comparative newcomer to this House, I am sure I can be excused for not knowing what this Bill means.

The first point which I submit to the Attorney-General is that, although Opposition members intend to vote against the measure, we do not want to be accused of voting against football clubs that desire to raise money by conducting raffles. Again, we do not want to be accused of preventing mothers clubs or other worthy organizations from running two-shilling raffles. We want to be placed in the category of those who are inquiring into what is wrong with the existing legislation. If an organization wishes to run a raffle, under the present law it must apply to the Attorney-General for a permit and then to its local council for authority to conduct the raffle in the street. Before it grants its approval the council merely asks the organization if it has obtained the permission of the Attorney-General.

There has been much discussion concerning the erection of four stalls and calling it a bazaar, and reference has been made to moth-eaten teddy-bears in one stall, and "Barmah King" in another. If an organization desires to run a raffle, let it erect four stalls.

Opposition members are of the opinion that there is nothing wrong with the existing procedure. Mention has been made of the fact that, under the 1928 Act, offenders against the law cannot be successfully prosecuted. However, I understand that, under the 1940 Act, that weakness does not exist. This House has a large legislative programme ahead of it and the Premier wishes to depart for overseas, yet we are worrying about a state of affairs that does not concern anyone. Frequent reference has been made to Tattersall's. When legislation was introduced to allow that organization to function, the prevailing opposition to the proposal was that people would be sitting in every street doorway selling tickets. At present, raffle tickets are sold in almost every second doorway, and if this measure is passed, they will be sold in every doorway. Football clubs were mentioned by interjection. The Leader of the Opposition said that I knew something about those bodies and the Attorney-General replied that I would not know anything about junior clubs. I point out that as well as junior football administrators, there are junior Attorneys-General. The present Attorney-General has reached the top now and a lot of us at the top in football administration started at the bottom. Football clubs have been running raffles for years and will continue to do so whether this measure becomes law or not.

The Opposition wants to let the public know that it is not against the little man and his raffle. If we vote against this Bill that does not mean that we want to stop them from running their raffles. Opportunity clubs and other such organizations have to exist, and they do no harm by conducting small raffles. They sell tickets among their members and run their organizations well. If motor-cars are going to be raffled every Saturday by paid organizers, and the Government is attempting to curtail the practice, then that is a different matter. I understood that the system of obtaining the permission of the Attorney-General had already curtailed that practice. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition expressed doubts concerning

Mr. Floyd.

that matter. If Opposition members have influenced the Attorney-General to make an explanation of the Bill, then we will have achieved something. That is my opinion as a member of the Opposition—the Australian Labour party and not the left wing socialist party. I feel very strongly about this measure. If there is something in it with which I am not conversant, then I would be delighted to know what it is. As I understand it from my reading of the second-reading speech and from listening to the interpretations of other members, I am convinced that it should never be placed on the statute-book. If the Attorney-General can enlighten the House further on this matter and convince me that the measure is necessary, then I will be pleased to endeavour to influence my colleagues to vote for it. I consider that the honorable gentleman exhausted all his facts in his second-reading speech, but if he can further enlighten me I most certainly will reconsider my decision.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Control of raffles for charitable funds).

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—This Bill consists of two clauses and now is the time for the Attorney-General to answer some of the arguments advanced by Opposition members.

Mr. RYLAH.—I was about to rise when you obtained the call.

Mr. CAIN.—Very well, I will sit down.

Mr. RYLAH (Attorney-General).—I am extremely disappointed that so many members of this Chamber do not appear to have read what I regard as an honest and comprehensive second-reading speech. The intention of this Bill is clearly set out in simple language in that speech. The notes were prepared by departmental officers and carefully vetted by me, and I consider that my second-reading speech expressed very carefully and clearly the Government's objective. We have no other intention

or sinister motive. The reasons for this measure are clearly set out at page 2492 of *Hansard*. To suggest that the Government is endeavouring to extend the scope of raffles is, to my mind, perfectly unreasonable. The law, as it stands, with regard to existing raffles, is unchanged, but it is proposed to make two amendments to the Police Offences Act. The first is that raffles are to be brought under control in the same manner as the Patriotic Funds Council raffles are controlled, and the second is what the honorable member for Williamstown very adequately described concerning the abolition of a bazaar. I propose to deliver to the Leaders of the various parties to-morrow a number of copies of the application form which is used in connection with patriotic fund raffles.

Mr. CAIN.—Why to-morrow?

Mr. RYLAH.—For the very good reason that when the previous Bill was before the House, I requested the Department to prepare some twenty copies of this form and they were circulated and apparently lost. Perhaps our colleagues in another place put them away in a pigeon hole and forgot them. The form is here for anyone to examine. It clearly sets out the style of application and the conditions. If honorable members will examine this, not in the heat of debate but in the light of logic, they will understand what the Government is striving to do to bring raffles under proper control.

Mr. CAIN.—But the Bill will extend them.

Mr. RYLAH.—It will not. Its passage will merely bring under effective control what we believe is now ineffectively controlled. It is proposed that raffles now permitted by section 88 of the Act should conform to rules of the Patriotic Funds Council, so that they can be properly supervised. The only extension—if imagination is stretched to its greatest limits—is that the Government intends to eliminate the farce of holding a bazaar. That is all the Government seeks to do. I regret that there has been misunderstanding regarding the matter;

I thought I cleared up this question when I made my second-reading speech on the question of controlling raffles.

Any Attorney-General is subjected to constant pressure on the question of extending raffles. Very strict rules have been laid down for the Department in handling this matter; in fact, they were prescribed by previous Attorneys-General one of whom spoke to the Bill to-night. Those rules have been followed in every possible particular by me, as Attorney-General; I am merely doing the same as my predecessor. Control is vested in the Board, which naturally submits to the Attorney-General any suggested variations of conditions, and I think I can say that on all occasions I have refused them. There are constant requests that the Government should allow bigger, brighter, and better cars to be raffled, and I have refused them. Strict control must be exercised, and that is why I seek approval of the Bill.

Mr. DOUBE.—Do you not think the definition of “charities” is too wide?

Mr. RYLAH.—That may be so, but the Government merely proposes to delete from section 88 of the Police Offences Act certain words which the last Labour Government used—and presumably was satisfied with—and transfer them to the Police Offences (Raffles) Act 1940. Conditions as to whether a raffle is charitable or not will remain the same.

Mr. DOUBE.—You spoke about sporting clubs.

Mr. RYLAH.—I did so because the Leader of the Opposition brought in the red herring of the Bill relating to a similar subject which was introduced last year.

Mr. DOUBE.—You snapped up the bait then?

Mr. RYLAH.—I did so deliberately because of the extravagant statements made by the Leader of the Opposition. I think he made them quite innocently, and did not mean what he said. However, we are debating the Bill now before the House, not the 1955 measure on a similar subject. The present Bill does

exactly what I said and no more; to suggest that it has wider implications is a travesty of the situation.

Mr. CAIN.—Do you contend that there will not be more raffles in the future than in the past?

Mr. RYLAH.—I believe there will be fewer.

Mr. CAIN.—I do not agree.

Mr. RYLAH.—This is a matter of opinion. I do not say that legally there will be fewer, but if the conduct of raffles can be placed under proper control there will be not so many in future. I defy anyone to say that the Government of which I am a member has extended or intends to extend the scope of raffles in any way. Surely that fact is self evident when words in the Police Offences Act 1928 are simply to be transferred to the 1940 Act.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—One would almost be convinced by the Attorney-General were it not for his record. It is no use his telling us now, in the virtuous way in which he has spoken to-night, that the passage of the Bill will not cause more raffles to be conducted. Last year, he caused a measure to be introduced into the Legislative Council, and it contained more drastic provisions than this one.

Mr. RYLAH.—It was designed to help the small sporting clubs in the country, and you "knocked" it.

Mr. CAIN.—It does not matter whether it was to help such sporting clubs—I do not believe a word of that. In my view no pressure has ever been placed on any Government by football clubs in the country. Such pressure was never exerted on me, and I know something about the pressure exercised in politics.

Mr. RYLAH.—Where do you suggest the pressure comes from?

Mr. CAIN.—From persons other than those interested in football clubs. Do not blame the latter. The Attorney-General knows whence the pressure comes.

Mr. RYLAH.—Well, say it.

Mr. CAIN.—It comes from persons other than those concerned with football clubs.

Mr. RYLAH.—Who are they?

Mr. CAIN.—From a number of persons in the community who are anxious to use raffles for everything.

Mr. RYLAH.—Who are they?

Mr. CAIN.—They are certainly not the people who live in the electorate represented by the Attorney-General, because he is pledged to a policy opposed to the extension of raffles and gambling. The honorable gentleman disclosed that fact last year or the year before. There is no occasion for my friends opposite to become excited on this subject. They know that the presentation of the Bill is an attempt to extend gambling activities in the State.

Mr. RYLAH.—Do not talk such nonsense.

Mr. CAIN.—I am not talking rubbish.

Mr. RYLAH.—There is not a single fact to support your statements.

Mr. CAIN.—In twelve months' time, if I ask a question in the House, I shall receive an answer from the Attorney-General that the number of raffles conducted has increased.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—That is not a fact, but a forecast.

Mr. CAIN.—Since the end of the war, there has been continual pressure to have the ability to conduct raffles extended, from the point of view of those groups who now organize them—the Red Cross and servicemen's associations. I am not complaining about it, but the argument put has been to this effect: Why not extend this licence to all charities? Why go through the farce of having stalls? Why have the farce in country districts of having a horse race on which to bet? I do not mind the Bill, but I hate the sources from which it sprang.

When the Bill to authorize Tattersall sweep consultations to operate in Victoria was before Parliament, those to whom I refer pretended that they would not think of gambling. They abused and criticized me and the Government

which I led. Now, they are attempting to create a competitor to Tattersall's by authorizing the conduct of unlimited raffles. This is gaming. The reasons why the privilege to conduct raffles was granted during the war to two societies was because they were engaged in helping the Red Cross and the servicemen's associations. The right was restricted to those organizations deliberately because, as far as humanly possible, it was desired to prevent the extension of gambling in the community. That is our desire at present also.

I am not a prude or a Puritan, but Government members, including the Attorney-General, have spoken about their Puritanism. I direct attention to the speeches they made when the Bill relating to Tattersall's was being debated, including that of the Minister of Education. They would not have anything to do with the measure. The Premier said, "Let us adjourn the debate and have a referendum on the question." Why not adjourn the debate on this Bill and conduct a referendum on it? We could then see whether the constituents favoured an extension of gambling.

Mr. RYLAH.—I can see that you do not want to have raffles properly controlled.

Mr. CAIN.—I do not wish to have an unlimited number of raffles conducted in the community.

Mr. RYLAH.—Neither does the Government.

Mr. CAIN.—I do not want two lotteries to operate.

Mr. RYLAH.—Why do you object to proper control as provided by the Bill?

Mr. CAIN.—I do not object to proper control. That is not the object of the measure. Last year, the Attorney-General was responsible for the introduction of another Bill on this subject. It was admitted to-day that the Country party opposed the Bill last year because it was too far-reaching. A statement to this effect was made by the lawyer member of the Country party. However, its members intend to vote for the present measure. That is a clear indication of what were the intentions of the Government last year. I do not know

why the Attorney-General caused the Bill to be introduced into the Upper House. I suppose he was ashamed to bring it into the Assembly.

I am not satisfied that the Government is endeavouring to control raffles, but consider that the passing of the Bill will result in the number conducted being increased. I admit that the raffles will be brought under the same conditions as those conducted by the organizations previously referred to. The legion of ex-servicemen, the returned soldiers' league, and the Red Cross are allotted times in which to conduct raffles. Surely, the Attorney-General does not seriously contend that he will not receive hundreds of applications from charitable bodies throughout the State to conduct raffles. Why does he tell the public that there will be no increase? He knows that there will be. That is my considered view. If he does not know it now, he will in six months' time. The Government has not done itself justice. I have never been a Puritan in politics.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—That is true.

Mr. CAIN.—I never pretended to be one, and I never pretended when I brought Tattersall's to Victoria. When I think of the speeches delivered here on that Bill by the old men now on the Treasury bench and consider their present attitude, I doubt the sincerity of their utterances a year ago. Now that Victoria is receiving £3,000,000 a year from Tattersall's, that organization has the blessing of the Puritans. The Government now says, in effect, "Do not touch Tattersall's. Do not let the chap from Tasmania compete with it. Stop him." I am inclined to agree with that point of view. But when I look at their past record, I consider that their conduct was insincere when they fought from the Opposition side of the House eighteen months ago.

The Government, whose members opposed Tattersall's, decided when it had been in office for three months, to bring down a certain Bill. That was rejected by the Upper House, because members of the Country party refused to vote for it. That is the test of this Government. Before any action is taken, the Attorney-General goes to

members of the Country party and asks, "Is this all right?" In reply to the Minister of Education, who has just interjected, I say that I would prefer the Government to be run by persons who know where they stand, and I would prefer him to leave the Ministry and for three or four Country party members to be invited to join a composite Government. I do not propose to support the Bill, because I consider that it will lead to an increase in gambling in the community.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—I do not charge the Government with insincerity, but I think, to use a word that appeared in a leading article in the *Argus* to-day, that its inconsistency is patently obvious. The Attorney-General claims that he does not wish to extend gambling facilities. I submit that he ought to call them gaming facilities, but I suppose it does not matter very much. There is a wealth of legal talent on the Government side of the House, and those members ought to be able to excogitate a term for anything contained in the Bill. I find it hard to appreciate the following statement made by the Attorney-General in moving the second reading of the Bill—

The necessity for a bazaar operates most unfairly against many worthy people in country districts who wish to promote raffles to assist various charitable organizations.

The Attorney-General informed the House a few moments ago that a Bill introduced into the other House last year was designed to help small sporting clubs in the country. The honorable member for Benambra stated to-night that, under pressure from the Country party, that measure was withdrawn. I do not doubt the personal sincerity of Government members, but have some doubts about its political expression. We do not think the Minister in charge of the Bill has fairly estimated the intelligence of members on our side of the House. We think he over-estimated our intelligence when he expected us to understand something that he himself does not understand; or, if he does comprehend the Bill, he has chosen singularly maladroit words with which to express himself. I am not sure that the

Government wants an extension of facilities for raffles, but I am ruefully sure that that will be the upshot of this measure.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—We know that a number of members supporting the Government are not in favour of this proposal. We have all been very disappointed with the Ministerial explanations that have been furnished to-day. The Attorney-General still claims that raffles will not be extended by the legislation, but it is obvious that they will be. A raffle hitherto could only be conducted so long as those running it held a bazaar. This Bill will take away that encumbrance and it is obvious that there will be more raffles.

It is true that there has always been a lot of work connected with the running of a bazaar, but now the Government is removing that trouble. It is doing away with the barrier to a raffle. How many charities are there in Victoria? Honorable members may be interested to learn that the total number registered with the Hospitals and Charities Commission is 272. All the people associated with those registered organizations will be surely entitled, with the passing of this measure, to consider themselves as included in its scope. They will be entitled to say, "We are a charity recognized by the Hospitals and Charities Commission."

There is no exaggeration in the expressed view that tickets for articles of considerable value will be offered at every street corner. The whole object of the Bill is to take raffles out of the bazaar and put them into the street. Hitherto, no organization could maintain a bazaar for longer than one day. Every charitable organization has found itself in the greatest difficulty in carrying on a bazaar over a period of more than two hours in a day. Since this Bill will remove the conduct of a raffle from a bazaar and will take it anywhere else in the community, it is illogical to say that it will not have the effect of extending the numbers of raffles. There is now to be no limit except the blessing of the Attorney-General, and in that matter we can foresee what will be his difficulties.

As the honorable member for Brunswick West has said, charity in the legal sense covers a great number of organizations. The Government would be well advised if it inserted in this legislation a definition of those activities which it intends to help. There have been references to raffles conducted in connexion with a football club. Is not the provident fund of a football club a charity? I repeat that this legislation must be classified as providing an extension of raffles. If the Government wants to limit them as it claims, it should insert in the Bill a definition of "charity" or "charitable organization." In fact, it would be a good idea if the Bill were withdrawn so that the Attorney-General could reconsider the whole matter and examine the position particularly of those organizations which he desires to assist. If another Bill could be brought down containing a clear definition of the word "charity" and the phrase "charitable purpose," it would get a much better response from the House.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond). — Let us assume that in the case of a specific organization every legal requirement has been complied with and that permission has been officially granted to conduct a raffle. I understand that at present only one State-wide raffle is permitted at a time. Is it the intention of the Government to continue that restriction after the passing of this legislation? Suppose there are 30 or 40 organizations, each of which has complied with the requirements of the Act and has applied for permission to conduct a raffle. Is each to be called upon to take its turn so that no two raffles can be carried on at the same time? Assume that the opportunity clubs, which have a thriving organization in my electorate, are desirous of running a raffle. If that organization is one among 40 other institutions of the kind and the present restrictions are continued, the club might never have an opportunity to conduct a raffle. If each organization in rotation had to wait for two months—that being the period for the holding of one raffle—each might have to wait over a period of 80 months before its turn came around. I agree

with the view that the Bill should contain a definition of "charitable organization."

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition). — rose to speak.

THE ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Rafferty).—The honorable member has already spoken twice on the clause but, if there is no objection, he may continue.

Mr. CAIN. — The Attorney-General has been sparing in providing information for the enlightenment of honorable members. He might well have given particulars as to the number of raffles that have been held annually over the past few years. I should have been glad of that information, but since it was not forthcoming from the Minister I personally saw the departmental officer concerned, who is in possession of a list of the raffles conducted in the course of the last twelve months, and he has given me the figures. The trouble is that the Government is dealing with this question with kid gloves. Yet it was one deemed by it to be of sufficient importance to warrant the introduction of a Bill last year and again this year.

The Opposition is being treated today in this scant fashion by the Government because the Country party has made up its mind to vote for the Bill. The Government takes the line that it does not matter about the Labour party. It says, in effect, "They are only twenty-three in number in this House and we can easily roll them over". I had a different attitude towards the Liberal party when its members numbered only eleven in this House. I had respect for them and for their desire for information at all times. A Government that does not pay respect to the Opposition should at least pay respect to its own back-bench supporters. In the present instance those honorable members are probably more perturbed about the Bill than are the members of the Opposition and surely they, at all events, are entitled to the relevant facts. A party must soon come to an end when its members are suspicious of one another. I believe that the House was entitled to be told all the facts about this Bill. In support of patriotic funds

last year, there were 1,000 raffles in Victoria.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—That is, 1,000 known to the authorities.

Mr. CAIN.—The number registered or approved by the Attorney-General was 1,000.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—There would have been considerably more than 1,000.

Mr. CAIN.—The honorable member for Gippsland South knows a good deal more about bush law than I. I am merely quoting the official figures. Additionally, there were 4,000 charitable raffles making, in round figures, a total of 5,000 for the year. That information should have been made available to this House. Possibly, however, the Government is a little ashamed of this Bill. Most of the people opposed to it are natural supporters of the Government, which has tried to sneak this measure through in the dead of night.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—Shades of the Land Settlement Act.

Mr. CAIN.—I have strong objections. in connexion with legislation of this kind, to all the facts not being given. I did not refrain from giving all the facts when the land settlement legislation was before the House, nor did I refrain from expressing my views on it.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD. — You expressed views during the course of this Parliament, but you held somewhat contrary opinions in the last Parliament.

Mr. CAIN.— I was honest enough to change my mind. The honorable gentleman acted similarly when expressing his opinion of Tattersall's in the last Parliament, but he has changed his opinion now. He has been caught up now in this gambling Government which eighteen months ago raised its hands in horror at the proposal to introduce Tattersall's into Victoria. It wanted a referendum to be conducted on the question, but now, the same Government and the same group of Puritans, including the Minister of Education, representing one of the constituencies where this legislation is not very popular, has adopted an entirely different attitude. The Attorney-General will not dare mention this matter in his own constituency; he feels that it is not quite in order, and he is right. No mention was made of this

proposal during the Camberwell by-election. I do not think it is fair and reasonable to proceed with a Bill in this House unless honorable members are given all the relevant facts. Government members have turned two or three somersaults and now they hope to land on their feet.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—I cannot resist the persistent invitation given to me by Opposition members to join in the debate. One of the first things said about members on the Government side of the House who were present during the last Parliament—very few of them are in that category—was that they somersaulted. To anyone who knows the facts, statements about "somersaulting", emanating from the Leader of the Opposition, are characteristic nonsense. What we opposed at that time was the reduction of this State as a Sovereign State of the British Commonwealth to what the honorable member for Oakleigh described as a sort of Monte Carlo. We strongly opposed the idea of a British community being reduced to the position of having to finance its fundamental obligations by means of lotteries. I am still of that opinion, but owing to a succession of Governments led by the Leader of the Opposition, we now have no immediate alternative but to continue the state of affairs he initiated. I think the introduction of a lottery was wrong and I shall continue to think so. However, the Government is committed by a contract between Her Majesty's Government and George Adams, and I would not favour a withdrawal from that contract because it would be dishonorable to act in that manner. Furthermore, owing to the uniform taxation formula, it would be impracticable to discontinue the contract. I have nothing to apologize for. The details of this measure and its implications have been fully explained by the Attorney-General, not once, but several times. In his speech the Leader of the Opposition asked to be furnished with certain statistics, which he claimed should be disclosed to the House. As far as I know, he did not ask the Premier or the Attorney-General for that information, but obtained it himself and disclosed it to the House.

The Government desires to obviate the need for the absurd subterfuges adopted in the past in connexion with bazaars. Surely, it should not be necessary for members to "close their eyes" to the fact that numerous illicit minor raffles are being conducted to aid genuine charities. The honorable member for Oakleigh, in his characteristic style, uttered a good deal of twaddle, about Victoria becoming a second Monte Carlo. I doubt whether any member believes that there is one breath of sincerity, or one syllable of truth, in such statements; a member may go away and swim in his own pool, but he could not be accused of the extraordinary folly of believing one word of the Monte Carlo business. This measure provided the Leader of the Opposition with an opportunity of telling the House what a magnificent statesman and fanatical opponent of gambling he was when he introduced Tattersall's into Victoria. He claims that those who opposed the financing of his Administration by means of lotteries and who now seek to regulate minor raffles in the interests of charities, are completely inconsistent and have somersaulted. I suggest that the real moral to be drawn from the debate is that the Leader of the Opposition, who might, with some justice, be described as an elder statesman of Victoria, took it upon himself during his period of office to introduce as a major means of the financing of this State, a lottery which now produces £3,000,000 annually for State funds.

Mr. CAIN.—Towards the charitable funds of the State.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—At the same time, the measure took from the citizens of this State something like £12,000,000 of annual income. After introducing such a system, he has the amazing audacity—I will give him credit for displaying audacity, not mere courage—to say that he is opposed to a system of controlling minor raffles for charitable purposes. It is the greatest political audacity shown in this Chamber for many a day.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—I think the Minister of Education is holding the wrong portfolio because he

does not seem to possess the balance required to administer that Department. I thank the Attorney-General for his explanation. As most honorable members are aware, the operators of Tattersall's retain 9 per cent. of the turnover, while the State receives 31 per cent. and 60 per cent. is devoted to prize money. It is true that the people spend roughly £9,000,000 annually on the lotteries. It must be remembered that, when he was Premier and Treasurer, the Leader of my party never found it necessary to introduce a Supply Bill apologizing that the possible deficit on the year's operations would be £4,000,000. With all his gymnastic capabilities mentioned by the Minister of Education, the Leader of the Opposition possessed financial balance such as this Government cannot equal. In the previous Government's first year of office, it produced a surplus of £708,492, more than £450,000 of which was allocated to the Education Department. The present Government received from the Labour Government a present of £1,337,000 in the form of a surplus when it took over. The Minister of Education and his Government are champion tight-wire walkers. They cannot blame anyone else for the £4,000,000 deficit. Surely the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition, with his long experience of raffles, is worthy of consideration. Although the Government is no doubt well-meaning and genuine in its intentions as embodied in the Bill, it is opening the door for a weak Attorney-General to allow anyone to run a raffle. At present there is a good committee dealing with raffles and the Discharged Servicemen's Employment Board keeps a tight rein on them, but the final decision is with the Attorney-General.

The Bill dispenses with bazaars. Many honest persons believe that one must have a bazaar to run a raffle. It should be realized that pressure will be exerted on the committee, which will then refer decisions to the Attorney-General. This will open the door and permit many raffles to be run. It is easy to assert that there were only 5,000 raffles last year. Every honorable member who is a municipal councillor knows that the greatest pressure put on

him in that sphere concerns applications for permission to sell tickets for raffles in municipally-controlled streets. There is lobbying before council meetings and pressure is applied afterwards. Most councillors endeavour to do the right thing by assisting patriotic or local causes, while they refuse to help people who come from outside the district. I point out to this caretaker Government that it will reach the stage where, providing the organization concerned is reputable, neither the committee nor the Attorney-General will be able to refuse permission to run a raffle or defer it. Recently a returned soldier informed me that his organization hoped to raffle four cars this year. This measure will lead to perpetual raffles.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD. — The Labour Government instituted a perpetual lottery.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—It did so because it was placed in an invidious position. The money was here for the taking. The Premier is a flamboyant and reckless financier.

Mr. BOLTE.—Do you want me to sack everyone?

Mr. SHEPHERD.—No, only the Government. The Liberal party is not enthusiastic about this Bill because of the party's policy on raffles and gambling. The Government asserts that the Bill will tighten up the control of raffles. I believe that, as a result, many people will demand the right to run raffles and the pressure will be so intense that it will break down the determination of the relevant authority in the future.

Mr. BOLTE.—The pressure will come mainly from Labour party members.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I do not know; it is possible. The Premier would not refuse to make representations on behalf of an organization in Skipton.

Mr. BOLTE.—I would support it.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I oppose the opening up of a system which could become a menace, particularly in difficult times. I think Parliament would be doing wrong to make the running of raffles too easy. The Minister of Education was unkind in his remarks concerning my Leader, but I do not believe he meant them. I think he realizes that the Leader of the

Opposition did a very good job when he was Treasurer of this State. The Labour Ministry handled no more revenue from Tattersall's than has the present Government. I would not be surprised if soon the Government finds itself struggling for money and wants to take a percentage from the turnover of raffles conducted under this legislation.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—Two Ministers have attempted to explain the purposes of the Bill, without much success. The Minister of Education was so short of points that he even mentioned the Oakleigh swimming pool. Not so long ago in 1953 the honorable gentleman had very strong views on this matter. He stated, as recorded at page 1578 of *Hansard* Vol 241:—

This proposal is one to legalize what has been by statute, by common law and the common sense of British communities, a nuisance from the date of the foundation of the self-governing colony of Victoria. We find in the Police Offences Act that a lottery, with various significant exceptions, shall be classed as a common nuisance. Many people ask what are the circumstances that have now arisen to change what has been regarded throughout history since government took its present self-respecting form to convert a common nuisance into a necessity?

That is the very question the Opposition has asked the Minister to-night, but which he has avoided. The honorable gentleman also maintained that it should not be the responsibility of small organizations to find money for education, child welfare, mental hygiene and other services. He stated that that was the direct responsibility of the Government, and that it was time the Budget was overhauled so as to make it unnecessary for any raffles to be run in the community.

My other point is that the Minister of Education has not answered the Opposition's query why there should not be in this Bill a definition of the word "charity", as there is in the Hospitals and Charities Act. The addition of such a definition would make the Bill much more acceptable. As I stated earlier, 272 subsidized charities are registered with the Hospitals and Charities Commission, while there are another 434 which are not subsidized—a total of 706 charities.

Apparently all of them, plus others if we can believe the statement read earlier, will be applicants to run raffles. It will be impossible for the Department concerned to handle so many applications. I think it would be most unwise if 700 organizations were each allowed to run a raffle yearly, especially for an article of great value. There is merit in the suggestion that "charity" should be defined in the legislation. Otherwise the position will be so wide that almost every organization in the community—sporting, social or otherwise—may be included. I hope the Minister of Education, after reading his 1953 speech on the Tattersalls legislation, will be tempted to accede to the Opposition's request to include such a definition in the principal Act.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

COUNTRY ROADS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 17) on the motion of Sir Thomas Maltby (Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—From the point of view of the whole of the interests of Victoria, nothing could be brought before this House that would be of greater importance to the people than this measure. Probably no other State has done more in a short time and with limited finance than has Victoria to provide up-to-date highways. We all know that this work has been very costly, but it has proved to be worthwhile. Originally, railroads were built, and these facilitated the development and settlement of Victoria. Later, as engineering science developed motor vehicles, it became necessary to provide well-constructed country roads. The Minister of Public Works, with his long experience, is aware that the country section of the Municipal Association of Victoria is very strong. Of the 196 municipalities in Victoria, only 40 are not in country districts. As a metropolitan councillor, I know that municipal conferences are frequently dominated by country delegates, because of their

numbers. We realize that, in order to achieve some balance, the metropolitan members of the association devise their policy to influence country delegates. Complex problems arise in the building and maintaining of State highways, main roads, forest roads, and tourist roads by the Country Roads Board, and other rural roads by the municipalities.

At one time, we were proud of the standard of road provided by the Country Roads Board. I am sure that no member would contest my assertion that we have much to be thankful for in the way the Country Roads Board has carried out its programme of road making.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—It has become a tradition.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I agree, and that tradition is emphasized when one visits other States and recognizes the difference in standards, the different methods of construction, and the haphazard arrangements that are made in an endeavour to keep pace with the development of modern transport, particularly having regard to the increased weight and size of motor vehicles. At one time our main highways were a legend; now they are becoming a wreck. Persons who travel in the country know that, although the speed limit may be 50 miles an hour, they dare not travel above 30 miles an hour on many roads. Of course, that position is not peculiar to Victoria.

This Bill has been made necessary because of the heavy loads carried on our highways by road vehicles, and the types of vehicles in operation. The speed at which motor traffic proceeds is rendering it essential to keep much of that traffic out of country towns. For many years travellers—whether they came in their own cars or in commercial vehicles—were welcome callers, but the time has arrived for many towns to be by-passed. The Minister of Public Works indicated that several country centres are concerned at the prospect of being isolated. When the road from Elphinstone to Harcourt was constructed, thus by-passing Castlemaine, the residents of

that town thought the new route would cause such an interference with trade that some people would be forced out of business. I do not think that that has proved to be the case. If the volume of motor traffic had not increased, Castlemaine might have felt the pinch, but I should think that practically everyone who travels on that highway calls at Castlemaine on either the outward or the return journey, at least on the first trip to that district.

To-day I read a newspaper article concerning the improvements that are being made on the Geelong road to provide an express thoroughfare through West Footscray, Brooklyn, Laverton and Werribee, which undertaking is consistent with modern developments in other parts of the world. In this country we are apt to follow the American example by providing turnpikes and by-passes, because our open spaces, coupled with our climatic conditions, offer considerable possibilities in that regard. We must be careful as to what we do about our roads. Everyone wants the best possible thoroughfares to be constructed. I claim that a cheap road is a poor one, because maintenance upon it is excessive. In fact, Federal authorities estimate that the sum of £100,000,000 would be insufficient to put the main roads of the eastern part of Australia into good operating condition.

In the United States of America many freeways and turnpikes have been constructed; for example, in Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio. There was a proposal to build a similar highway in Texas, but it was not proceeded with because of the cost factor and the risk that toll revenue would be insufficient to meet principal and interest. The charging of phenomenally high rates per ton-mile for vehicles travelling upon the Ohio highway caused a dwindling in the volume of traffic, and the investors were not even making expenses out of their venture. The authorities concerned are now trying to induce truckers to revert to the use of the Ohio highway by offering certain concessions, including the provision of free meals for drivers. This course is being adopted in an effort to make the road pay. It has

Mr. Shepherd.

been found that transport operators, in dodging the thoroughfares that are subject to toll fees, have been using and ruining the weaker ancillary roads.

Local suburban municipalities have discovered also that, where excellent main roads have been laid down, transport operators, using vehicles loaded to capacity, travel along side streets in order to avoid traffic lights, roundabouts and so forth, on main highways, and thus cause damage to secondary thoroughfares which it is beyond the capacity of local councils to repair. It would be useless to have an express road from Melbourne to Geelong if it were to be intersected by numerous cross roads. The traffic that will ultimately be carried on that thoroughfare is beyond our ken just now. Experts are preparing estimates based upon natural development and other factors, but it is obvious that for the distance of 40 miles approximately between Melbourne and Geelong it will be necessary to construct an up-to-date road, along which traffic can move quickly. I recall that in the Lincoln tunnel, New York, a motorist commits an offence if he fails to travel at a speed exceeding 40 miles an hour. I understand that on the Geelong road there will be only one cross road and railway crossing to interfere with the even flow of traffic. I invite members to observe the preliminary stages of the work that are now proceeding at Brooklyn.

When the Country Roads Board commences a project, one is inclined to conclude that its officers do not know what they are about. I have in mind the work that is proceeding on the Princes Highway between Oakleigh and Dandenong where, in wintry weather, there is a colossal, muddy, slushy area of indefinable mess. Out of it all, however, is developed a first-class road, towards the construction of which motorists contribute substantially by pounding down the road-making materials with the wheels of their cars. During the next ten years, there will be a considerable change in the type of road construction adopted. There will be over-passes, under-passes, and so on. There will also be a solid strip down the centre of main

highways to divide traffic. During the short time that the Cain Administration held office, it effected a couple of improvements in main roads. One was at Woodvale, beyond Myer's Flat, in the Bendigo district, and another was at Glenrowan. I point out that it is necessary to plan for the avoidance of open rail crossings. Those that are particularly dangerous cope with only one or two trains daily.

I shall be interested to observe what will happen as a result of the passage of this measure. Obviously, good public relations must prevail. It will be necessary for the farming community to be subject to certain restrictions with which they are unfamiliar. For instance, access to their properties may be regulated. Oft-times those affected are unfamiliar with departmental procedure and it is extremely desirable to explain the relevant details to them so as to ensure that misunderstanding will not ensue. In some instances, local people must be allowed to feel their way, as it were, although they must not be permitted to determine matters of policy. Gradually they will become accustomed to using the new facilities.

Some people experience difficulty concerning the adoption of a changed procedure. I have received communications from persons who growled about the resumption of certain land, which had not been paid for. Investigation revealed that the appropriate claim form had not been submitted, because the parties concerned were unaware of the requisite procedure. Good public relations can help in that regard. Many grade crossings will be removed by the construction of over-passes and under-passes, and ancillary traffic will thus be directed away from main roads, ensuring freedom from interference with commercial traffic. I trust that the Board, which will be entrusted with the implementation of this measure, will be enabled to look to the future confidently and, with competence put into effect many of the good ideas that it has submitted over the years.

Mr. COOK (Benalla).—I cannot allow this opportunity to pass without commenting on the Bill, which is to amend

the Country Roads Acts, to make provision in respect of by-pass roads, and for other purposes. We, who live in country districts, realize the value of the work that has been done over the years by the Country Roads Board. Our minds go back to the time before the constitution of that body, when there was jealousy between country shires concerning roads linking one town with another. At that particular period there was inadequacy of finance and lack of co-ordination between shires. When the Country Roads Board was constituted, it was viewed with suspicion, because there was doubt whether municipalities would then be affected financially or otherwise. Over the years, however, we have learned of the vast improvements that have taken place on main roads throughout the State, and there is much for which the Country Roads Board should be thanked. As time passes, expansion becomes necessary, and I gather from the provisions of this measure that certain amendments are necessary to permit a continuation of the good services that have been rendered in the past.

Upon glancing through the Bill, I conclude that it relates chiefly to the widening of certain sections of roads throughout the State. Work in that regard has been progressing on the Hume Highway, in the north-eastern part of Victoria. Sections of that thoroughfare have been widened effectively, but the work might well be extended much further. Many of our arterial roads must be widened considerably, even to the extent of duplicating their present width. Many accidents occur because of the volume of traffic and the narrowness of roads and bridges. I consider that this Bill will serve a useful purpose in enabling the Board to widen roads and bridges, and I hope that sufficient funds will be made available so that the Board may undertake all the work it envisages in that regard. The Bill deals also with the building of by-pass roads, so that through traffic may avoid provincial cities and towns. Country people realize that that step will become necessary sooner or later. With the large number of interstate hauliers and others using the

highways, congestion is frequently caused in some towns. Even though objections may be raised by country people jealous of the trade of their town, some action will be needed to relieve this problem. The realization that any steps taken towards this end will benefit all concerned overcomes any fears of country residents. Although I support the main portions of the Bill, I believe there should be co-ordination between municipalities and the Country Roads Board in connexion with the planning and implementation of these proposals, particularly the construction of by-pass roads. Doubtless, the Board will be prepared in the future to act as in the past, and enable its officers with technical training and practical experience to give their services to the municipalities in an advisory capacity. I know from personal experience that they have been of great help to country municipalities.

Many items in the Bill will provoke more discussion when the Committee stage is reached. Sub-clause (1) of clause 15 provides that the Board shall maintain every by-pass road and that no municipality shall be liable to pay any contribution in respect of such maintenance. That will be a relief to country shires, as it means that the limited funds at their disposal will not be depleted. Sub-clause (2) of clause 17 states—

Except as otherwise prescribed by by-laws of the Board no person shall cause or permit any animal to be taken or enter or be upon any by-pass road unless it is confined within a vehicle lawfully using such road.

That seems to be rather a drastic proposal. Sub-clause (3) of the same clause provides for a penalty not exceeding £100 to be imposed on an offender. Although that is a drastic provision, I suppose it is wise. Generally speaking, the Bill meets with my approval, and if the matters to which I have referred are resolved in the way I have suggested, the Country Roads Board will be assisted. I believe country councillors will be only too happy to do all they can to assist the activities of the Board.

Mr. Cook.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—As the honorable member for Benalla has stated, the Country party supports this Bill. However, I wish to bring a few points under the notice of the Minister of Public Works. He stated that it was essentially a Committee Bill; we realize that it consists of bits and pieces, all of which have some connexion with the Country Roads Board. All honorable members and practically all people throughout the country are loud in their praise of the Board and the job it has performed. Nevertheless, few persons pause to consider where the Board is drifting in relation to finance, and whence money will be provided to carry out the proposals contained in this short measure. The salaries of technical and administrative officers are being increased, the wages of workmen have been raised and other costs are continually increasing. Yet no effort has been made by any Government—I do not blame this Government, or the preceding Labour party or Country party Administrations—to explore means whereby the Board could be enabled to finance its work on a more satisfactory basis than obtains at present.

It is common knowledge to all councillors throughout the State that this year the Board has been unable to meet its obligations in respect of certain work performed in country districts. At the commencement of the current financial year, the Board told various municipalities that it would make funds available for certain works. When making the allocations, the Board presumed that the weather would break early and thus prevent the full programme from being carried out. With the increase in the mechanization of road work, as well as the favourable weather enjoyed, the Board found that the councils had been able to progress with their works programmes almost to the point of completion. Accordingly, the Board is almost £1,000,000 short in its reimbursements to country municipalities. I understand that the Government will provide extra finance to enable the Board to meet these claims, but in the meantime, country municipalities will have to pay interest on the sums outstanding. Country municipalities operate

two bank accounts, one of which is the ordinary general account of the municipality, while the other is the Country Roads Board account. If the Country Roads Board reimburses a municipality in full for any money spent on its behalf the council concerned is involved in no interest charges. However, if the Board is unable to meet its commitments, as is the case at the present time, for some unknown reason it is not liable for payment of interest on money outstanding; the municipality concerned must bear that charge. I do not blame the Country Roads Board for that system; it has always obtained. Nevertheless, with the increase in mechanization and the risk of continued fine weather—if one can use such an expression—the Board will have to be more careful in future than formerly in allocating funds for municipal works.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Are the payments you speak of related to unclassified roads?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—They are for work performed by municipalities on all types of roads, and for which claims are submitted to the Country Roads Board. In the past, the Board has met those claims without delay. That is why the expression, "Something must be done" should not be used. It is the duty of this Parliament to devise some means whereby the Country Roads Board will receive sufficient funds with which to carry out its important work.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I propose by a new clause to cover the present contingency by giving the Board what might be called "till money" to the tune of £500,000.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—That will not cover the debts. The "catch" is the interest charges, which the municipalities have to meet to-day. A concerted effort must be made to induce the Commonwealth to revise the formula related to the allocation of petrol revenue tax. I admit that such a revision could not be made for twelve months because the relevant Commonwealth legislation has just been re-enacted. The Federal Treasurer

was reported in the press to have said that he would be pleased to consider any proposals placed before him in relation to the Federal Aids Road Agreement. Victoria did not avail itself of that opportunity. It makes our own position difficult if we are to provide £4,000,000 for roads in Western Australia, Queensland, and South Australia. We would not object so much if that amount was fully expended on roads, but there is a doubt as to whether that is so. Nevertheless, it reduces Victoria's pittance. Recently the Federal Government increased the petrol tax by 3d. a gallon, allocating 1d. of it to the States on the old area-population formula, but Victoria received only a fraction over a half-penny. The payments to other States for road works should come out of the Federal Government's share of the petrol tax, not out of Victoria's portion.

Recently I forwarded a letter to the Premier from the Country party conference asking him whether he would convene a conference of all political parties, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, the Municipal Association of Victoria, interested unions and other representative bodies, to discuss ways and means of submitting a case to the Federal Government as to why Victoria should receive a better deal in relation to its share of the petrol tax. If we pooled all our ideas and formulated a plan, and then sent delegates to the Federal Government at Canberra, we would soon find out exactly what were our prospects of an increased allocation. Everyone hates being robbed, and that is what is happening to Victoria. It is useless to say what the Country Roads Board can or cannot do. It is all a question of finance. Each year the Board becomes loaded with higher interest and sinking fund payments in respect of the loan moneys which it is expending. For many years the Railway Department paid only 1 per cent. in interest charges. Then £30,000,000 of its liabilities was transferred to the general revenue account. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission pays no interest charges on the capital costs of its head-works. Yet for important road works which can help to

save lives, the Country Roads Board does not receive a "cracker" from any Government. It is many years since the Board was granted direct Government assistance. The funds which are received now are loan moneys on which interest and sinking fund payments must be met. As those charges increase, the amount available for road construction and maintenance will become less and less.

I am aware that in its present financial position it is impossible for the Government to do anything at the moment, but some arrangement should be made with the object of progressively reducing the dead weight of the Country Roads Board's debts. The plan which I formulated, and which bears my name, is costing the Board £150,000 a year to meet the debts of municipalities incurred prior to 1933. That was because a number of municipalities defaulted. It is time that the Government decided to grant the Board about £100,000 a year for seven or eight years in order to liquidate its debts of approximately £750,000. Then the Board would be able to make the roads safe for life and limb. I can speak with some experience. During the last nine months of last year three cars in which I was travelling folded up on the Princes Highway between Oakleigh and Morwell. I do not think I have ever travelled on that road without seeing an accident.

The Board must have funds with which to widen roads and eliminate dangerous curves. No matter what speed limits are imposed, there will always be cranks who travel at 70 or 80 miles per hour. The roads must be made safer. My party advocated that better lighting should be installed on roads. General Motors-Holdens Limited provided a specially fitted truck, and the Police Department, Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, and Municipal Association co-operated in conducting experiments near the Melbourne stadium. It was found that amber lights, roughly the size of ordinary dining-room lights, provided the best illumination over a distance. However, nothing further was done in that direction.

Sir Herbert Hyland.

One often hears over the radio that the police intend to prosecute thousands of people for exceeding the speed limit. Press reports indicate that many lives are lost on the road. Those lives are worth more than the few pounds it would cost to improve the roads. I appeal to the Government to convene a conference, as was suggested by the Country party, in an endeavour to obtain for Victoria a more equitable distribution of the petrol tax than that which it now receives. If more money were obtained from that source, the Country Roads Board would be enabled to do a far better job than at present. I am sure that no party in this House would attempt to play politics at such a conference. If more money were available, the Board could proceed with its job in a workman-like manner. When he next attends a Premiers' conference at Canberra, the Leader of the Government should press for appropriate action that will render unnecessary such resolutions as are being passed by the score by various organizations concerned with petrol tax. Unless something is done concerning finance, this Bill will not "gallop a yard."

Mr. DRAKEFORD (Pascoe Vale).—Every member of the community must realize the good work that is being done by the Country Roads Board. I echo the sentiments of the Leader of the Country party, who asserted that all parties should make a concerted effort to obtain more money from the Federal Government to enable the Board to do a better job than it is now able to perform. Members of the Board, and also the engineers, do an excellent job in the circumstances. Unless more money is made available to the Board for the purchase of the best machinery available and to attract competent engineers to its service, there is grave danger that many of its present efficient staff will be lost to other authorities.

I applaud the provision in the Bill that relates to the impounding of cattle. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Public Works mentioned the number of accidents and deaths caused on country roads by collisions between cars and straying cattle. If the Country Roads Board can do something to offset

that danger to motorists, a great step forward will have been taken towards road safety. On one occasion, a friend of mine was travelling on a country road at a reasonable speed, when his vehicle collided with a horse that appeared from nowhere. The man concerned was maimed for life. The Bill provides severe penalties for people who allow cattle to stray on to roads and endanger the lives of people travelling along the highways. To my mind that is an excellent provision.

The Country Roads Board is responsible for the construction and maintenance of certain metropolitan roads. The Board is really a State highways authority, and I consider it only right that it should look after roads that lead into cities and large towns. The Board is charged also with the responsibility of assisting in the construction of bridges—a most commendable procedure. When the Geelong-road is fully developed, I trust that many cross-roads will be eliminated by means of by-passes. That road will then compare favourably with main highways in other countries. The Board has done an excellent job on Warrigal-road, Oakleigh which thoroughfare has been widened, involving a great deal of engineering skill. An excellent job has been done also on the Whittlesea-road. Along that road, at numerous points, the alignment has been altered to eliminate railway crossings. I commend the Board for its work in that regard. Some time ago, I counted no fewer than six crossings between Melbourne and Whittlesea. Now, I believe there are only two. That is an example of what a good road authority can do. The Bill possesses many commendable features.

However, the Country Roads Board is considerably hampered by lack of finance and, for that reason, I believe the Government is anxious to make as much money available to the authority as possible. Until Victoria obtains a greater return from the Federal Government out of the money collected from the tax on petrol, it will be impossible for the Country Roads Board to do all the work that is necessary. The Leader of the Country party stated that of the recent

increase of 3d. a gallon in the price of petrol, Victoria is receiving less than one halfpenny a gallon for road works. That is a very poor return. I believe any Government at Canberra will fail in its duty if it refuses to allocate more money to the States in the near future.

The Country Roads Board should take whatever steps are necessary to control heavy goods vehicles travelling on our highways at night and during week-ends. These vehicles cause tremendous damage to our roads and are responsible for many accidents. Under present conditions, proper facilities are not provided for this type of transport to travel safely along the roads, and I consider that such vehicles should be restrained from using the highways until adequate facilities can be provided. I commend the Bill to the House, and I trust that more finance will be made available to the Country Roads Board to permit it to make further improvements to our roads.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).

—I understand that after the Bill has been read a second time, the Minister of Public Works proposes not to proceed to-night with the Committee stage.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I intend that progress shall be reported on clause 2. There are two amendments which members should have time to consider.

Mr. CAIN.—This Bill consists of two Parts, the major portion being Part II. The measure proposes an innovation, the administration of which will have to be tempered with commonsense. In my opinion, the Country Roads Board is an excellent and well-managed public authority which has done valuable work for this State. Probably, it has made mistakes. It was a pioneering organization, and over the years it has carried out a magnificent job for the State. Therefore, it is to be entrusted with further developmental projects. The question of traffic is linked with this Bill. There is a desire to improve traffic conditions. The accident rate is higher in country districts than in the metropolis. To offset this tendency

country roads, as well as those in the city of Melbourne, must be improved. The purpose of the Bill is excellent. Some inconvenience will be caused as certain rights of the people will be restricted. Yesterday, the Melbourne City Council gave final approval to the Wellington-parade roundabout. Its decision upset a number of persons in East Melbourne, because, as a result of the adoption of one-way traffic in certain streets, they cannot go where they like from their properties. When restrictions are placed on people, some opposition must be expected.

When the Bill is passed, a number of property owners in country districts will not have complete freedom to go where they please. Amongst other things, the measure increases penalties when wandering stock are impounded. Straying animals constitute one of the greatest dangers to road traffic. When special roads are constructed, and property owners are not permitted to drive on certain parts of them, there will be a certain degree of opposition. Doubtless, there will be claims for compensation on the ground that the values of properties have been impaired in some way. However, it is necessary to face the situation, because every day the terrific problem of transport is growing.

In the latter part of the Bill, provision is made for the construction of free-ways in country districts. This will entail the expenditure of large sums of money. Underpasses also will be built and this is a step in the right direction towards solving the problem. In the years 1948 and 1952 I travelled over what I considered to be the finest roads in the world. Hitler's memory will never die so long as the autobahns survive. In 1948, there was one bridge at places where formerly two had been provided. As the Germans were driven back during the second world war, they blew up every bridge, and there were thousands of them. After the end of the war, a rebuilding programme was undertaken, but only one bridge was built where previously two had been situated. At that time, there was not much traffic on the roads. In Germany, the main roads do not pass through towns, but

by-pass them. The autobahns are remarkable highways, and the most efficient I have ever seen.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—Is it proposed to construct similar roads in Victoria?

Mr. CAIN.—Yes. Those in Germany were on a very much larger scale than can be expected in this State for many years. Thousands of miles of autobahns were built throughout Germany. In the early post-war years, the roads were used by only a small volume of traffic. In fact, in 1948 they were almost completely denuded of transport, but four years later a second series of bridges were built, and parallel roads constructed. Astounding development had taken place by 1952. Germany then had two-way roads with few cross streets running into them; the towns were by-passed. As previously mentioned in the debate, there are by-pass roads near Castlemaine and Stawell. If Victoria is to keep pace with modern times, this important work must be undertaken. It will be expensive, but in my view the Country Roads Board is well qualified to perform it. Moreover, the sooner a commencement is made the better it will be for the State.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—I suppose much maintenance will be saved?

Mr. CAIN.—Road maintenance is determined largely by proper construction in the first place. Another factor is that most Victorian roads were constructed to carry much lighter traffic than that which now uses them. Many roads, particularly the Hume Highway and, to a lesser extent, the Western Highway, were built to carry a certain type of traffic, but the vehicles have increased in numbers and weights, with the result that the roads have broken up. No thoroughfare can be subjected to unlimited traffic indefinitely. The Country Roads Board now uses more modern methods of construction and employs a better technique than it did even ten years ago. Consequently, the roads it builds in the future will be safer and more lasting. At this late hour, I do not wish to criticize the Bill, because it is probably the most sensible measure that has been presented by the Government during its twelve months of office.

Mr. Cain.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—That is very high praise.

Mr. CAIN.—I agree. I suggest to the Minister of Public Works that attempts should not be made to do too much at once. My Deputy has suggested that there should be a trial for a short period. Doubtless, inconvenience will be caused to certain people, but they must be educated to accept the underlying principles. I shall not delay the second reading of the Bill; I give it my blessing and that of the party I represent. Legislation of this kind is above party politics. I trust that the constructing authority—the Country Roads Board, which has been the subject of much discussion over the years—will continue to provide what is badly needed, namely, a perfect road system from one end of the State to the other. Of course, the Board, like other instrumentalities, faces difficulties of finance. I trust that in Committee some of the minor deficiencies will be remedied.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Progress was reported.

MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 24) on the motion of Mr. Bloomfield (Minister of Education) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park). — This Bill is a short and simple one. It might not be rated as very important by the average reader of the tabloids, but it is of importance to the institution which it affects and to the graduates who, because of their profession—perhaps the right term is calling—have a considerable influence on the mind of the community. It will be agreed that clergymen should be scholarly men and not mere pulpiteers, otherwise the hungry sheep who look up to the shepherds are not fed with wholesome fare.

We live in an age when theology, once hailed as the “Queen of the sciences,” has been reduced in many ways and in many places to the status of drudge of the physical sciences. It is, therefore, satisfactory that in Melbourne there is set apart from a secular university an institution for the promotion of clerical studies, where scholarship is of a high standard. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Education referred to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. This is awarded as a pass or with honours. A Presbyterian clergyman in my district holds that degree, and he has told me that when he went abroad to pursue his studies for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, which he secured—his high intelligence typifies the I.Q. of electors in my district—he found that it was at least the equivalent of the degree of Bachelor of Divinity granted in one of Scotland’s ancient and renowned halls of learning.

I do not think the Melbourne College of Divinity is subsidized by the State, and I know that members of the various faculties give their services largely in an honorary capacity. The college now wants to confer the degree of Master of Theology and to do other things. Let it do so. “Master” is a degree conferred by similar institutions or by overseas universities to which faculties of theology are attached—the University of Hull is the newest of them. The degree is known as “M.Th.” The Minister rightly pointed out that if it were to be known as “M.D.,” there might be confusion between it and the degree of Doctor of Medicine. As to that, however, there are not many medical practitioners entitled to call themselves Doctors of Medicine. Theirs is perhaps the only profession in which the lesser equals the greater, when the Bachelor calls himself a doctor. And the odd thing is that when they acquire the degree of Doctor of Medicine, many of them drop it as if it were a reproach and insist on being addressed as “Mr.”

Some hundreds of years ago, there was a man who at once was a doctor of divinity and Doctor of Medicine, or what passed for a Doctor of Medicine in his

day. There are many such people to-day, but the one to whom I refer has a fame that has vanquished time and encircled the world. I have no doubt that some of the more mentally venturesome members on the Government side of the House have heard of him, and maybe sampled some of his writings, suitably modified to satisfy their unsophisticated palates. His name was Rabelais. However, I have digressed slightly. I return to the Bill to say that the Opposition has no objection to it.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Degree of Master of Theology).

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education). — I thank the honorable member for Albert Park and the party he represents for the speedy passage that has been accorded this Bill. I express my regret that although the honorable member referred to his favourite author, he did not favour members with quotations from that well-known literary figure. As he stated, this is a small Bill, but is of importance to the body it concerns. We are grateful for his co-operation in having it so speedily passed.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE: FRUIT FLY MENACE — AUSTRALIA-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY: SPECIAL OLYMPIC APPEAL — EDUCATION DEPARTMENT: MOORABBIN STATE SCHOOL: BILLETING OF OVERSEA CHILDREN DURING OLYMPIC GAMES.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).— I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow at Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).— I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. COCHRANE (Gippsland West).— For the past three or four years, fruit growers have expressed concern about the spread of the dreaded fruit fly pest. So far, the electorate that I have the honour to represent has been free of the disease. Recently I received a letter from the honorary secretary of the Garfield and Bunyip District Fruit Growers' Association, directing attention to the possibilities that may follow a fruit fly infestation. I passed those representations on to the Minister of Agriculture, who intimated that he would investigate the matter and advise me further. To-day I received a communication, from the Pakenham Upper Fruit Growers' and Progress Association, which organization is particularly concerned also about what might happen if the fruit fly pest affects crops in that district. A request is made that proper precautions be taken. The communication states, *inter alia*—

You will no doubt have noticed through the press certain publicity given to the fruit fly disease, which is seriously affecting the fruit industry in this State and is causing alarm amongst growers in this district.

The most recent official report shows that this menace has now spread as far west as Moe, and I understand unofficially that closer areas still will be proclaimed at a very early date. I am informed that commercial orchards are within 6 miles of these latter points.

You will therefore appreciate the danger to fruit growers in this area and I have been asked by my association to write to you to seek your assistance through Government channels.

It is suggested that you ask Parliament to widen the powers already given fruit inspectors, to impose heavier fines on offenders, and eradicate neglected orchards immediately. It is also felt that our highways are not policed to any great extent, and I suggest that additional funds should be granted to the Department of Agriculture, to enable it to employ sufficient inspectors to patrol them, 24 hours each day if necessary, in order to prevent the spread of the disease through infected fruit carried by car from fruit fly areas.

I ask the Chief Secretary to direct attention of the appropriate Minister to this matter, with the view of ensuring that

every precaution is taken for the prevention of the spread of the fruit fly menace.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond).—Recently, certain organizations, including trade unions, were circularized with a request to contribute to what is called a "Special Olympic Appeal." At first glance, the appeal might seem to be connected with the Olympic Games that are to be held in Melbourne later this year, but closer scrutiny reveals that it is sponsored by the Australia-Soviet Friendship Society. The appeal is accompanied by a pamphlet in which it is stated—

WHAT WE DO.

We distribute Soviet books, magazines, newspapers, music in Australia, and send Australian publications to various organizations in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

We regularly screen outstanding Soviet films and lend them to other bodies like schools, trade unions, university societies, the armed services.

We organize lectures and discussions, and the regular exchange and translation of scientific works.

We help to arrange visits to and from the Soviet Union.

Now, we want to do more.

On the back of the pamphlet the following is printed:—

This year will see a great pilgrimage of the sportsmen of the whole world to Melbourne. Such a thing happens to us only once in a life-time. The presence of 500 Soviet athletes and officials will undoubtedly open the way for further visits by Soviet sportsmen and reciprocal visits by Australians to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The publication proceeds—

WHY WE NEED £3,000.

In all these developments the role of the Australian-Soviet Friendship Society is vital, indispensable. In such conditions we can no longer operate from a post office box without even a telephone. We urgently need £3,000 for (1) an office and club-room (for receptions, exhibitions, &c.), and (2) the entertainment of Olympic visitors.

Enclosed with the appeal is an official collection list, upon which is printed a request that collection lists and money be returned to Clive O. Jackson, public

accountant, 67 Victoria-parade, Collingwood. This man is a notorious member of the Communist party and an active organizer on its behalf. A circular letter, which bears the heading, "Australia-Soviet Friendship Society," states, *inter alia*—

Dear Sir,

Our Society recently launched a Special Olympic Appeal for £3,000. The money is required to establish suitable office and club premises (at present we are obliged to operate from a P.O. box) and to provide hospitality for the many overseas visitors expected in Melbourne this year.

That communication is signed by Mrs. R. Dowdle, another active member of the Communist party, who is well known for her activities on its behalf. The appeal is an impudent attempt to exploit the 1956 Olympic Games and to deceive people. Many persons, unless the position is made clear to them, will have a fraud perpetrated upon them by the Communist party, which is seeking to exploit the forthcoming Olympic Games in the name of the organizing committee. Accordingly, some deluded persons may be prompted to contribute to the appeal which represents a scandalous attempt by the Communist party to take a mean advantage of respectable folk. I ask the Government to investigate this activity and to make it perfectly clear to the public that the authorities responsible for conducting the Games have no connexion whatever with the appeal and that in no circumstances would they sponsor an effort launched by active members of the Communist party, which is in no way associated with the forthcoming function.

Mr. SUGGETT (Moorabbin).—I desire to bring to the notice of the House, more particularly the Minister of Education, something which I consider is a fine and spontaneous gesture by the pupils of one of the schools in my electorate. I refer to the State school in Tucker-road, Moorabbin, and with the permission of the House I should like to read a short letter, which is self-explanatory. The letter is addressed to the consuls

and trade commissioners of countries having representatives in Australia. It reads as follows—

Dear Sir,

The senior pupils of the above school, imbued with the high Olympic ideals of cementing friendship with those of other lands, have asked me, their class teacher, to approach you with the following request.

As you are well aware, this is our Olympic year, and we would like to act as hosts to any child visitor of our own age group (approximately ten to thirteen years) during the Olympic Games.

Should you know through inquiries made to your Consulate, of any scholar of your country travelling here with parents or friends, we would count it indeed a favour if our suggestion could be arranged.

We are willing to arrange for the girl or boy to stay with the family of a selected scholar if desired, and during this time every endeavour will be made to show our visitor the bushland and seashore, with its birds, animals, and flowers. We will welcome them to our school and show them as much of our way of life as is possible. Such exchange of ideas and knowledge should be of value to our respective countries.

We feel that our ideas are ambitious, but worthy. As the Consul of your country we therefore approach you, asking your aid and sympathy with our proposal.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

G. S. BAILEY,

Senior Assistant.

I consider this proposal is a splendid one; it is indicative of the fine spirit that is being inculcated into the minds of the children by the worthy headmaster of the school, Mr. George Hallett, and his excellent staff. I think, by their actions, they are broadening the vision of the children entrusted to their care, which cannot but help promote a better type of citizen for the future.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! Does the honorable member propose to ask the Minister to do something about this matter?

Mr. SUGGETT.—Yes.

The SPEAKER.—I ask him to be as brief as possible.

Mr. SUGGETT.—I direct the Minister's attention to this matter hoping that other schools might be encouraged to make a similar gesture.

Mr. RYLAH (Attorney-General).—In reply to the honorable member for Gippsland West, I think he is already aware of the attention given to this problem by the Minister of Agriculture, but I shall bring his further representations to the Minister's notice. Perhaps the honorable member could make available to me the letter from the Pakenham Upper Fruit Growers' and Progress Association.

Concerning the matter raised by the honorable member for Richmond, which is in complete contrast to the remarks of the honorable member for Moorabbin, it would appear that some effort is being made to exploit the Olympic Games for purposes other than those connected with the games. The Government is not associated with the appeal to which the honorable member referred and would in no circumstances approve of the Olympic Games being used as an excuse to make an appeal for some extraneous purpose. If he would place before me the documents in his possession, I shall have them investigated by the Attorney-General's Department.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—I express my gratitude to the honorable member for Moorabbin for departing from precedent and bringing forward something that is not a grievance, but a matter for congratulation. I should like to say that the pupils of the State school at Tucker-road have manifested a splendid and generous attitude. I shall do what I can, and what is appropriate, to bring this action to the notice of other schools. It may be that there are not many avenues immediately open to me for this purpose, and consequently I suggest that the honorable member make the correspondence available to the press so that it might receive wide publicity. However, I thank him sincerely for directing my attention to this matter.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.36 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, May 9, 1956.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager) took the chair at 4.52 p.m., and read the prayer.

MELBOURNE COLLEGE OF DIVINITY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—I have examined this Bill and am of the opinion that it is a private Bill.

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests).—In another place this Bill was ruled to be a private Bill, but it was treated as a public Bill. I propose that a similar procedure shall be followed in this House. Therefore, I move —

That this Bill be dealt with as a public Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

On the motion of the Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests), the Bill was brought in and read a first time.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

NEW SCHOOLS: CLASSROOM ACCOMMODATION: TEACHING STAFF.

The Hon. PAUL JONES (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

(a) With respect to each of the last three years for which figures are available, what was—(i) the number of new schools (primary, secondary, and technical) and additional class-rooms built; (ii) the total cost of the buildings; (iii) the number of buildings other than Government school buildings used for school purposes by the Government; (iv) the number of male and female permanent teachers, respectively; (v) the number of temporary male and female teachers, respectively; and (vi) the number of male and female student teachers, respectively, in training?

(b) How many new buildings and class-rooms and additional teachers are required to bring school accommodation and staffing up to a reasonably satisfactory position?

(c) When is it expected that the lag in school accommodation and teaching personnel will be overcome?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answers are—

(a) (i) In respect of the financial years 1952-53, 1953-54 and 1954-55, the answers are as follows:—

In 1952-53—

27 new primary, 1 new secondary and no new technical schools; and 254 additional class-rooms of all types were built.

In 1953-54—

22 new primary, 10 new secondary and 3 new technical schools; and 387 additional class-rooms of all types were built.

In 1954-55—

12 new primary, 10 new secondary and 7 new technical schools; and 400 additional class-rooms of all types were built.

(ii) Separate figures in respect of individual schools are not immediately available. The following information is in respect of capital expenditure in the respective years. This includes the cost of new school buildings and additions, as well as the erection and purchase of teachers' residences, and the purchase of land and properties.

Total capital expenditure for the financial years were as follows:—

	£
1952-53	2,881,863
1953-54	4,358,640
1954-55	5,023,476

(iii) The number of buildings other than Government school buildings used for school purposes by the Government were as follows:—

1952-53	298
1953-54	294
1954-55	278

(iv) As at the 31st December in each year the numbers of male and female permanent teachers were as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
1952	5,412	3,137
1953	5,694	3,078
1954	6,131	3,176

(v) As at the 31st December in each year the numbers of male and female temporary teachers were as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
1952	260	1,654
1953	338	1,936
1954	403	2,176

(vi) As at 31st December in each year the numbers of male and female students-in-training were as follows:—

	Males.	Females.
1952	749	995
1953	939	1,366
1954	906	1,507

(b) The answer to this question depends upon—

- (i) the rate at which buildings and class-rooms can be erected.
- (ii) the future intake into the teaching service, and
- (iii) the rate of growth of the school population.

None of these factors, particularly (i), can be estimated accurately.

The position with regard to teachers can at present be regarded as reasonably satisfactory. Based on estimated additional enrolments of 18,000 a year, a minimum of 600 new class-rooms and 600 additional teachers will be required annually, once the present shortage is overtaken.

(c) (i) Accommodation: For reasons shown in the answer to question (b) it is not possible to give a definite answer to this part of the question.

(ii) Teachers: The intake of teachers into the teaching service is regarded as satisfactory, and it is believed that teachers will be found for all children who can be accommodated in schools

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

REPRESENTATION: MUNICIPAL FINANCE.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

Has he obtained the information asked for by me in Question No. 2 of the Notice Paper of 2nd May; if so, will he make it available to the House?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

The Minister of Public Works informs me that the information is not yet available. It is being obtained and will be made available to the House as soon as possible.

COMMERCIAL GOODS VEHICLES ACT.

EXEMPTIONS.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

Will the Government consider exempting from the provisions of the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act 1955, all contractors engaged in municipal contract works?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

It is assumed that this question concerns Part 2 of the Commercial Goods Vehicles Act 1955, relating to payment of road charges.

There is no provision in the Act whereby the Minister or the Government can grant exemptions. If such a provision existed it would probably invalidate the Act. Only Parliament can grant exemptions.

Accordingly, every owner of a commercial goods vehicle exceeding 80 cwt. load capacity is liable to pay the road charge for mileage travelled on public highways in Victoria unless he solely carries commodities as set out in the 3rd Schedule.

It would not be advisable for the Government to amend the present legislation to provide further exemptions whilst the Act is being subjected to attack in the courts on the grounds that the present very limited exemptions, which apply to intra-state and interstate traffic, are claimed to be discriminatory in such manner as to render the Act invalid.

SOLDIER SETTLEMENT COMMISSION.

NAMBROK-DENISON AREA: DRAINAGE CHANNELS.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

(a) What is the length of the main drainage channel in the Nambrok-Denison soldier settlement area?

(b) What is the length of the subsidiary drainage channels in the area?

(c) When is it anticipated that these channels will be completed?

(d) How many drag line scoops are engaged on this work?

(e) What is the cost per yard of excavating earth with the drag line scoops?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answers are—

(a) The total length of main drains will be approximately 40 miles.

(b) The planned length of subsidiary drains is approximately 90 miles.

(c) This will depend upon the rate at which funds are made available for this work, the total cost of which will be in the vicinity of £400,000.

(d) Four dragline excavators are engaged on the construction of these drainage works of which three are working at present and one is under repair.

(e) The cost of excavation with dragline excavators is 1s. 9d. per cubic yard, but the total cost of earthworks including spreading and other costs is approximately 2s. 10d. per cubic yard.

COMMONWEALTH PAY-ROLL TAX
ASSESSMENT ACT.PAYMENTS BY GOVERNMENT
INSTRUMENTALITIES.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN (Monash Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

What steps (if any) has the Government taken since I raised in this House the question of payment of pay-roll tax by governmental instrumentalities, to relieve the State of this burden?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

This matter is continuously under discussion between the respective Governments, but so far the Commonwealth Government has not seen fit to amend its legislation to exempt State instrumentalities from payment of the tax.

STATE ACCIDENT INSURANCE
OFFICE.

WORKERS COMPENSATION PREMIUMS.

The Hon. PAUL JONES (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

Are the State Accident Insurance Office new premium rates for workers compensation in the quartz gold-mining industry of £184 per year (16s. per shift) for each underground worker and £65 per year (5s. 8d. per shift) for each surface worker considerably in excess of those payable in other States; if so, is there any good reason therefor?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

1. The rates for workers compensation insurance in respect of quartz gold-mining industry are considerably in excess of those payable in other States, as shown below:—

		Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queensland.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.
		Percentage on Wages.	Percentage on Wages.	Percentage on Wages.	Percentage on Wages.	Percentage on Wages.
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Underground Workers	..	400 0	167 6	93 6	89 6	42 6
Surface Workers		200 0	167 6	60 0	89 6	37 6

2. The Victorian rates include indemnity in respect of liability under the Workers Compensation Act and also under other Acts and at common law for an unlimited amount, whereas the New South Wales and Queensland rates include liability under the Workers Compensation Acts only and in Tasmania the other Act and common law cover is limited to £2,000.

The Victorian rates were adjusted as from the 1st July, 1955, on the actual experience for the three years ended 30th June, 1953. Over the past two years for which statistics are available the loss experience for underground workers at the old rate of 163s. 3d. per cent. has been as follows:—

1952-53 230.8 per cent.
1953-54 300.7 per cent.

and for surface workers at the old rate of 78s. per cent. has been as follows:—

1952-53 106.7 per cent.
1953-54 247.4 per cent.

It would appear that from the loss ratios experienced for the year ended 30th June, 1954, the increased rates now applicable will be inadequate.

The Workers Compensation Act in Victoria is the widest in Australia and workers' compensation rates for practically all classes of employment are therefore much higher than other States. The main differences between the Victorian Act and that of other States is that compensation is payable for all diseases arising out of or in the course of employment, or during journey or recess periods, including non-employment diseases which become aggravated, accelerated or which recur during the protected period.

In New South Wales the employer is only liable for diseases which are due to the nature of the employment and moreover silicosis, a common mining complaint, does not come within the scope of the Workers Compensation Act in that State but is provided for under the Workers Compensation (Silicosis) Act 1942, and special levies are made on all employers to cover the benefits provided by that Act. Again treatment expenses are limited in New South Wales and unlimited in Victoria; consequently in this State individual claims for medical, hospital, and other treatment often cost several thousand pounds in respect of individual cases.

In Queensland compensation for mining diseases is payable at a specially reduced scale and is subject to certain residential qualifications.

In Western Australia only limited benefits are payable for mining diseases and special provisions are contained in the Workers Compensation Act of that State excluding certain miners and governing the reporting and treatment of mining diseases.

In Tasmania mining diseases are excluded from the Workers Compensation Act and included in the Workers (Occupational Diseases) Relief Fund Act.

Information regarding rates and conditions in respect of South Australia are not available at present.

LATROBE VALLEY.

DEVELOPMENTAL GRANTS.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

What grants or subsidies have been made on the recommendation of the Latrobe Valley Development Advisory Committee during this financial year, and to whom were they made?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is—

Grants have been made to the following public authorities during the current financial year:—

Shire of Morwell ..	£7,000
Shire of Traralgon ..	£24,900
Shire of Narracan ..	£12,480
Country Roads Board ..	£9,100
	£53,480

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF THE HON. M. P. SHEEHY.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—By leave, I move—

That the Hon. Maurice Patrick Sheehy be appointed a member of the Public Works Committee.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—This motion comes before the House as the result of the vacancy caused on the Public Works Committee by the death of our lamented colleague, Mr. Ludbrook. The personnel of that committee and of others of the kind forms the subject of mutual arrangement and discussion with the Government and, in accordance with

the arrangement that was made by the Government at the time, two members of the Public Works Committee belonged to the Liberal party and two to the Country party.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—As distinct parties.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—There were two Liberal members, two Country party members, and two Labour party members. I understand that at the time the claims of another party were adverted to and considered, but were overlooked, repudiated or rejected. So one would have thought that, with the loss of a Liberal party member of the committee, there would be, from the Government, a proposal for the appointment of another Liberal party colleague in his place.

One, I think, would be entitled to assume that. It might be put that the arrangement to appoint two members from each party would not include the selection by one of the parties of a member who was not a member of that party. However, I do not claim that this proposed appointment is in breach of the arrangement made nearly a year ago because it seems perfectly clear that the Liberal party, in proposing the appointment of our erstwhile colleague, Mr. Sheehy, has faith in him and believes that he will be just as good a servant of the Liberal party as any other member sitting in this Chamber.

So we can only congratulate Mr. Sheehy upon the somewhat belated recognition of his virtues as a member of the Liberal and Country party! He came into this House as a member of the Australian Labour party. He will leave it with the blessing and recognition of the Liberal and Country party and, no doubt, Mr. President, this proposed appointment of Mr. Sheehy, a member of the anti-Labour party, will lead to much more harmonious relations—

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—I wish to raise a point of order. The expression just used by Mr. Galbally is offensive to me and I ask for its withdrawal. It is not the name of my party, to which Mr. Sheehy belongs also.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).

—The debate upon this motion has taken a very curious turn. The question is that Mr. Sheehy, a member of this House, who is highly respected by all his fellow members, should be appointed to the Public Works Committee. If any member feels that he should attack that proposed appointment for any reason he thinks fit and proper, he may do so. I do not think I can, as presiding officer, compel Mr. Galbally to withdraw the expression "anti-Labour party." Its employment might conceivably cause flutterings in the hearts of some members to whom the expression may be unpleasant, but I am not prepared to say that it exceeds the bounds of parliamentary language.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I believe the Government in this instance has seen fit to face the realities of the political situation and to conclude that firm supporters may come from the ranks of those gentlemen I have just indicated. I can only hope that those political realities will bear more fruit in the future and that the harmonious relations which have prevailed for some time to keep the Government in office will continue. Although the party which I have mentioned has now a separate organization we trust the day is not long distant when it will have the one organization, embracing both of the other parties I have mentioned, so that the Government will become known as the Anti-Labour, Non-Communist Liberal party.

The PRESIDENT.—Order! I think Mr. Galbally's remarks are now too far removed from the question before the Chair, which is whether Mr. Sheehy should be appointed a member of the Public Works Committee. I consider that an attempt to forecast future political combinations has nothing to do with the motion.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Well, Mr. President, let me conclude by congratulating Mr. Sheehy. I express the hope that he becomes a true Liberal and Country party member of the Public Works Committee and does not abuse the confidence that is now placed in him by the Government.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—Speaking in support of the recommendation contained in the motion, I wish to say at the outset that I congratulate the Government on its recognition of what I consider to be a very fine principle in the appointment of the parliamentary committees which investigate all matters of interest to this legislature. I feel that, in placing Mr. Sheehy upon this particular committee, the Government is making it possible for a political point of view to be submitted to the members of that committee—one that it is highly essential to put before them.

I think this proposal is consistent with the attitude of the Australian Labour party to which I belong and have always belonged, namely, that there should be appointed to these parliamentary committees representatives of all parties in the Parliament. The Australian Labour party, to which both Mr. Sheehy and I have the honour to belong, recognized this principle when one party had only two members in this Chamber and we saw that that party had representation on the various committees. So I compliment the Government on giving effect—somewhat belatedly, perhaps, and arising from the death of Mr. Ludbrook—to the principle of consulting the Leaders of all parties before making such an appointment and, in so doing, rectifying a weakness in the constitution of the Public Works Committee at the opening of the present session.

It is indeed satisfying that the Government party and the Government itself are prepared to recognize another party whose political policy is the absolute opposite of their own, by appointing Mr. Sheehy who has fought against propositions put forward by the Government when he considered that they conflicted with his own ideas and the ideals of the party to which we belong.

It was a peculiar sort of speech that Mr. Galbally saw fit to make—one that I think was designed more than anything else to try to detract from the splendid record of Mr. Sheehy both in this House and in politics over the years.

No one in politics, however, could successfully do that. I happen to have held high honours in the party to which Mr. Sheehy and I belong and I know the records of that party, of which Mr. Sheehy has always been an honest and upright member. The veiled criticisms we heard a few moments ago do no credit to the man who voiced them. The history and records of the party which I have the honour to support show that Mr. Galbally did not even have a record of two years' membership when he sought and gained political honours.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—Order! That statement is quite outside the scope of the motion.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—I am sorry if I have strayed but I was impelled to do so by the unwarranted attack made upon Mr. Sheehy. We know that honorable member. We are aware of his honesty of purpose in municipal affairs and in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. We know also that by his appointment to the Public Works Committee the Government realizes that it is favouring a member who is rightly opposed to its own political philosophy and will refuse to become in any way associated with that political philosophy. I congratulate the Government upon this appointment and feel sure that Mr. Sheehy will prove to be a very able member of the Public Works Committee.

The motion was agreed to.

HIRE-PURCHASE BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 2) on the motion of the Hon. J. W. Galbally (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I rise to oppose this Bill and I do so on numerous grounds. First, I suggest that in due course I shall be able to demonstrate that the Bill could have no final result other than to put the State of Victoria at a considerable disadvantage. In the first place, however, I wish to say that I recognize that the honorable member who brought the Bill forward did so

because he believes that if any activity in the community is successful, it should be controlled in some way. Of course, the Labour party has followed that policy as a political creed. I have no doubt that this Bill has been prepared under the general instructions of the party. If, on the other hand, the Bill is meant to be useful to the community in some way, then I suggest that it is a mess. I believe that, in approaching the consideration of this measure, it is necessary to go over some of the background of the hire-purchase system. Hire-purchase has two fundamental needs: the first is social and the second is economic. I propose to deal first with the social aspect. Hire-purchase obviously constitutes the method by which the vast majority of people obtain their durable and non-durable domestic goods. In America 8 per cent. of the national income passes through the channels of hire-purchase, and that country has the highest standard of living in the world. So, it cannot be said that hire-purchase has retarded the American economy. In Australia, I believe the percentage is unknown because the statistical information is not, in my opinion, reliable.

In 1940, evidence was taken before a committee, of which the late Mr. Ben Chifley was a member, and a considerable amount of information was gathered for presentation to that body. At that particular date the value of hire-purchase book debts outstanding was approximately £85,000,000. The figure given by Mr. Galbally for 1953 is £200,000,000, but that includes only the hire-purchase transactions conducted by those companies who render returns to the Acting Government Statistician. I know of one company, with book debts on its own account of nearly £3,000,000, that did not render a return at the time Mr. Galbally's figure was calculated. In addition, other organizations have subsidiary companies for merchandising, carry part of their own hire-purchase business, and pass to outside firms the balance they are unable to cope with. I gather, from reading the evidence given before that committee to which I have referred, and also the report it issued, that there was as much

hire-purchase transacted outside of the major companies as there was within. If that assumption is reasonably correct, and if the figure of £85,000,000, which was accepted at that time as being correct, is accurate, then I should imagine that the present hire-purchase book debts are considerably in excess of £200,000,000. Whatever the figure may be, hire-purchase plays a vital part in the economy of the community.

Let me now explain why people use this facility. My opinion is that 70 to 80 per cent. of the people—and this is borne out by statistics—never save anything. Some may say that they do not save because they do not receive sufficient money, and others may say that they spend all their income because in these days they are secure in the knowledge that they will be looked after in death and in sickness. It is a fact that in England not less than 70 per cent. of the population die without estate. By that I mean that at the date of death they have less money than is necessary for a probate return to be lodged. Curiously enough, in Australia, 80 per cent. of the people who die do not leave sufficient to render necessary a probate return to the Commonwealth Government. So, the figures are closely related. In other words, a vast majority of the community spend all the money they earn.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—Those figures will increase considerably when the recent tax increases imposed by Mr. Menzies have full effect.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Strangely enough, in most countries the figure remains static, regardless of the political colour of the Administration of the day. The habits of the people seem to maintain a constant trend.

The Hon. D. J. WALTERS.—Does the figure quoted include both males and females?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Yes.

The Hon. D. J. WALTERS.—I suggest that it should be divided by two.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—A large percentage of women is included among those who died without leaving estate.

The Hon. D. J. WALTERS.—That is because the husbands died without estate.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—That is not always the case. If Mr. Walters is interested, I shall obtain the correct figure for him. Offhand, I think 39 per cent. of the total wealth in America is held by females. What would the people who tend not to save do with their money if there was not a facility which enabled them to buy durable goods under long term conditions? I suggest that a solution to that problem can be found by reference to the amount of money spent in the ways in which you can spend a small sum and have nothing left. A few years ago, I was interested, for other reasons, in calculating how much money was spent in a business which has only transitory results. In Australia there are 6,812 hotels and wine saloons, representing an investment of not less than £100,000,000. In other words, only twice as much money is invested in hire-purchase than in hotels and wine saloons. In this country there are over 500 racecourses and 13,856 racehorses, and total attendances at race-meetings in 1950-51 was 11,000,000. The total sum invested in racehorses and racecourses would be in the vicinity of £20,000,000. In addition, we have 1,653 picture theatres worth about £150,000,000, and employing 8,000 people. As well as having this capital invested in these avenues, the public spent £162,500,000 on drink in 1950-51, and £100,000,000 on cigarettes and tobacco. The figures are probably much higher now.

The Hon. PAUL JONES.—What is the figure for gambling?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Assuming that the betting community loses 10 per cent. of its wagers, I estimate that figure at £50,000,000 a year.

The Hon. F. M. THOMAS.—Does that figure include off-the-course betting?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Yes. I do not propose to enumerate all the other luxury items in detail, but I believe that if the amounts spent on them were aggregated the figure would be in the vicinity of £400,000,000 a year. That

is expenditure in small amounts for which there is no lasting return to the spenders. It is my experience that most people who purchase luxury items have nothing left and I believe they spend their money because it burns holes in their pockets. I have found that to be the case not only with people with whom I am friendly, but with some of my relatives. If they cannot spend their money on "A" they will spend it on "B." They must get rid of it. The hire-purchase system is there to take care of these people. It forces them to save.

I now propose to analyse what hire-purchase costs such people, because that is a fair and reasonable question that may well be asked by politicians who want to control something, even if it is only hire-purchase. During the adjournment of this debate I took the trouble to prepare the following statement, which I have had circulated among members:—

DOMESTIC APPLIANCES—MODERN COST.

	Per cent.
Direct labour	4.7
Factory over-head (including foremen, designers, toolmakers, &c.)	13.9
Direct material	21.7
Factory selling over-head ..	4.0
Income tax	2.4
Factory profit	4.7
Factory selling price	51.4
Sales tax	9.8
Dealers' margin	27.3
Total retail	88.5
Terms charge (eighteen months—£8 deposit at 10 per cent. flat) ..	11.5
Total cost to consumer	100.0

As an assumed basis, I took a domestic appliance costing £100, including interest charged at 10 per cent. flat with a term of eighteen months. Of course, the whole complexion of industry has changed in recent years and we now have a high efficiency in tooling, a greater degree of skill, and automation in its various forms, all of which are tending to increase direct costs of over-heads such as tooling, machinery, design, engineers' scheduling and all the paraphernalia that goes with high-speed mass production.

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The effect of this change is illustrated in the summary that I have circulated relating to an actual product. Direct labour costs—that is unskilled labour—are approximately one-third of factory over-head. I draw attention to that fact because when output falls, direct over-head increases in proportion. In other words, if one obtains double the output from a particular factory by using the same tools and machinery, then one would halve the factory over-head cost component of each article produced and the saving would be greater than the direct labour cost. The economic principle by which hire-purchase is used to obtain a greater output—which it undoubtedly has done—makes a tremendous contribution towards reducing costs. Any member who has studied the figures of durable products sold under hire-purchase terms will realize that the prices of those goods have not increased by the 400 per cent. or 500 per cent. by which wages have risen since 1939. An article with which I am personally familiar—a 4-valve radio receiver—was sold for £13 13s. 0d. retail in 1939 and to-day it is priced at £19 19s. 0d.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—The rate of interest in 1930 was 12 per cent.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—At the moment I am concerned not with interest but with comparative prices, having regard to inflation. How many people in the middle income group are able to buy refrigerators and motor-cars for cash? The answer is, very few. If they were not able to obtain accommodation by hire-purchase they would not buy such items and their cost would increase immeasurably. It is my belief that any additional charge is more than offset by the lesser cost resulting from increased production which is made necessary by buyers purchasing articles on terms instead of spending their money on beer, cigarettes, races and other forms of transitory indulgence. In addition to direct labour and the factory over-head, the cost is made up of income tax equal to half the cost of direct labour; sales tax, which is twice the cost of direct labour; and the dealer's margin. That is very substantial because people demand selling service.

I do not know whether we can even envisage a form of control whereby people would purchase only what they urgently required at a factory. The dealer's margin is 27.3 per cent. Of course, that is considerably lower than the pre-war figure when the margin for most of the classes of goods referred to was 40 per cent. of the retail price.

It will be noted that the terms charge is 11.5 per cent. of the total price of the goods, including the terms charge. If the purchasers bought for cash they would not have to pay that 11.5 per cent. There is no doubt that if one works out the 11.5 per cent. on a pure rate basis, which people are so fond of doing, the rate of interest is around the 20 per cent. mark. However, I suggest that the vast majority of buyers would never save £200 for a refrigerator or £1,000 for a Holden car. As a result, if hire-purchase facilities were not available those customers would be lost to the industry. I point out that our economy is delicately balanced. The farmer receives approximately 25 per cent. of available labour, transport uses 30 per cent., and, in various ways, Governments probably 25 per cent., the balance going to durable industries. We notice that when any Government attempts to take any action that touches the economy of the community, the first industries to be affected are those built upon the hire-purchase system. To-day there is talk—no doubt where there is smoke there is a little flame—of motor-car industries dispensing with labour because the demand for cars has been detrimentally affected by sales tax and other imposts.

The facility of hire-purchase fulfils a need, and the charge made for the service is not an inordinate percentage of the total cost of an article. Moreover, it makes a contribution, in reducing the cost of production. I shall now deal with those calculations that are sometimes made as to the pure rate of interest. Of course, I would not be so stupid as to dispute the mathematical accuracy of the fact that if a person lends money at 10 per cent. and starts to collect it the following week, provided there are no arrears and

he immediately invests every penny returned, the pure rate of interest, ignoring all expenses, is approximately 18 per cent. It is curious that people refer to the charges for hire-purchase accommodation as interest. However, the Government committee that investigated the matter and furnished a report in 1941 stated, "Finance charges are not usually regarded as interest."

I have made certain calculations concerning the rates of interest. I asked a number of companies to supply me with the flat per-annum charge they make. Members will appreciate that the figures I have circulated include the finance of the sales of some motor-cars at as low a rate of interest as 5 per cent., new cars at 6½ per cent., second-hand cars at 8 per cent., refrigerators at 9 per cent., radios at 10 per cent., and so forth. There are different rates for various classes of business, for the very obvious reason that the expenses are different. In other words, if a firm sells a radio receiver on terms, and, after the deposit is paid, the balance owing is £15 to be made in 78 weekly payments, 78 collections are necessary to obtain the £15. On the other hand, if a motor-car valued at £1,000 is sold on terms over a ten-month period under promissory notes, it is probably cheaper to collect the £100 payments than it is to make the 3s. 4d. a week collection from the small hirer. It is obvious that the cost of collection varies tremendously.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—Are the collections made by a collector, or are they paid in some other way?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—They are not collected personally. I shall explain to the House shortly the fundamental difference between cash orders and hire-purchase agreements, which encompass the collection cost. That aspect was dealt with in the investigation made in 1940. Taking the case of one hire-purchase company that supplied figures, the average flat charge per annum was 9 per cent.; the average flat cost for collecting the money per annum was 4.6 per cent.. The collection cost varied from 4.2 per cent. to 4.9 per cent. the average cost of

three major companies being 4.6 per cent. The cost of collection does not include any charge for the cost of the money; it merely provides the bare cost of recording the transaction. The flat margin for the use of the money is the difference between the flat charge and the flat cost of collecting it. I think that might rightly be termed interest upon capital or profit upon capital. It is set out at 4.4 per cent. in the following series of calculations:—

	Per cent.
Average flat charge per annum ..	9.0
Average flat cost for collection per annum	4.6
Flat margin for use of money (interest)	4.4
Pure rate per annum is therefore ..	8.5
Tax at 8s. in £1 of income equals 40 per cent.	3.4
Return on capital	5.1
The way big profit is made by companies—	
Capital—say	£100
Borrow	400
Available cash	£500

Let out at profit rate of, say, 8.5 per cent.; say 7.0 per cent per annum is cost of borrowed money; 1.5 per cent. is margin of profit on borrowed cash.

Margin on capital is therefore 8.5 per cent. on £100, plus 4 x 1.5 per cent. on the borrowed money.

Therefore total margin is 8.5 per cent. + 6 per cent. = 14.5 per cent. on original capital, less tax of 4/10ths of 14.5 per cent. = 14.5 per cent. minus 5.8 per cent. = 8.7 per cent.

Now it is possible to start translating this first 4.4 per cent. into pure rates. What is done by the ignorant or by those who want to draw an adverse picture is this: They take the total charge, and taking the flat interest rate at 10 per cent., they say that is 18 per cent. on a pure basis. Then they take the flat rate of the cost of collection at 4 per cent., and contend that is a profit of 16 per cent. That is the same as the operation of taking lemons away from oranges and arriving at the answer in melons, because the two factors have no relation whatever. The pure rate of profit or of interest on the capital involved is 8.5 per cent., as will be seen from the figures. After paying income tax of 8s. in the £1, the return on capital is 5.1 per cent. I know that

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some people will ask how big companies make large profits, and that is a fair question which I consider deserves an answer. Assuming that a person had a capital of £100 and wanted to go into the hire-purchase business with his good credit, he might borrow £400.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—Is that possible to-day?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—It is. One complaint against the hire-purchase companies is that they are offering too much for accommodation. I shall demonstrate shortly that there is a limit to the amount of interest they can offer to pay. Having borrowed £400, the person with a capital of £100 would have £500 available for lending purposes. Let out at a profit rate of 8.5 per cent., and paying 7 per cent. interest on the borrowed money, including brokerage and advertising, the margin of profit on the borrowed money is 1.5 per cent.—on each £100 of borrowing. That is to say, four times 1.5 equals 6 per cent. By adding 8.5 per cent. on the capital total, the result is 14.5 per cent. After payment of taxation he has a net profit of 8.7 per cent. Of course, for those companies which cannot borrow, the final percentage is not so good. On the other hand, some can borrow more than four times their ordinary capital and make greater profits. It is assumed by those people who have short memories—and of course memories can be short for all sorts of reasons—that hire-purchase companies have always been favourites of the Stock Exchange, but that is not true.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—It is a long way from true.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—That is so. I made an investigation into this subject-matter in 1940, and took out the names of a number of companies that were interested exclusively in the hire-purchase business. I ascertained the market value of their shares and the net assets as disclosed by the balance-sheets. Altogether, I examined the position of fifteen major companies quoted on the Stock Exchanges of Australia, and without exception their shares were beneath

the value of their own assets. The price which people were willing to pay for the shares was such that unless dividends of the order of 7 per cent. to 12 per cent. were paid they would not be a profitable investment.

The Hon. D. J. WALTERS.—The year 1940 was not a very suitable one to take for such figures; everybody was very panicky at that time, on account of the war.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—I took the precaution of going back into the period when the figures were not influenced by the war. Mr. Walters may read this document later. About the year 1930, when a substantial number of bad debts were incurred, some of the major companies whose shares to-day sell at high premiums had their shares sold at a discount and in fact wrote off capital. The next question I am likely to be asked is "Why are the companies so prosperous to-day?" I think the answer is "Because there has been over a number of years a shortage of materials, labour and commodities." A few years after the war, when that position eased, perhaps workers who had not saved much during the war were short of money but, generally speaking, people were anxious to obtain all types of commodities and good profits were made. Workers in secondary industries earned good wages and the standard of living rose. Then the market was flooded with goods and it was necessary to call upon hire-purchase companies for credit to keep up the volume of turnover. Those companies used tremendous sums in order to provide this finance, and in a market where money was in short supply their commodity—credit—became very valuable, as Governments are finding to-day when interest rates are rising.

Many hire-purchase firms have advertised for loans, offering interest rates as high as 8 per cent. It is interesting to note, as always seems to be the case, that this Bill has been brought in when the door is about to close. The horse is allowed to bolt, then steps are taken "to lock the stable door." It is quite clear that hire-purchase

business has now reached its peak. The book debts of the companies concerned are beginning to decline. I predicted that state of affairs would be reached in the last quarter of last year, but it was not until January, 1956, that the decline became evident. When that happened, a new and important factor entered the field—competition between hire-purchase companies. It will cost money to go out after business, and some of the hire-purchase companies are beginning to cut prices with the view of offering concessions to dealers in order to maintain turnover. That procedure will automatically limit the amount of interest hire-purchase companies can offer for loans on the open market. I believe it will be easy to observe that trend as it develops.

During 1940, the various traders in Victoria formed a committee which collected details concerning hire-purchase transactions and furnished reports to a firm of chartered accountants. I do not think it is necessary for me to read the full report of those investigations, but I can acquaint the House of figures relative to hire-purchase business in various classes. It is a curious thing that when a commodity is new there is a great demand for it, and not a great quantity is sold on hire-purchase terms. However, the proportion which is sold by that method is disposed of on high deposits and on short terms. As the market becomes saturated with the commodity and manufacturers are forced to attempt to gain more and more business in order to maintain turnover, various methods are used in an endeavour to decrease the sum demanded as deposit and so lengthen the terms offered. If a manufacturer has control of the financing of his retail sales, he endeavours to exercise that control in such a way as to keep the turnover of his factory on a satisfactory basis. The percentage of various classes of goods sold under hire-purchase terms at the time indicated were—sewing machines 80 per cent., pianos 75 per cent., farm implements 50 per cent., bicycles 80 per cent., furniture 72 per cent., radios 75 per cent., refrigerators 37 per cent., and motor-cars 25 per cent. The figure given for

refrigerators refers to electric refrigerators; to-day the proportion would be nearer 75 per cent. for that type of commodity.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—To what year do those figures refer?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER. — The figures were taken out over a few years immediately preceding the inquiry. Details were obtained from a large number of traders, and consolidated. Before passing to the various points of the Bill, I shall discuss the use of cash orders. There is a vast difference between cash order business and hire-purchase selling; vastly different results are obtained. A person who wishes to buy a cash order pays 5s. for a document worth £5. In other words, he pays 1s. in the £1—5 per cent. for twenty weeks. The cash-order company demands from the retailer a percentage discount. That figure varies; the last time I had cause to examine it I discovered that it was between 12½ per cent. and 17½ per cent., according to the type of goods required. For the moment, I shall take the figure as 12½ per cent. That means that the cash-order buyer is really charged 12½ per cent. plus 5 per cent.—17½ per cent.—for twenty weeks. I shall leave honorable members to work out the implications, but they are quite fantastic, calculated on what I describe as the Galbally method. Unfortunately, cash order repayments have to be collected by the door-to-door system. Our inquiries revealed that in certain suburbs in Sydney this method of trading was used by occupants of every other house. We were interested in ascertaining why the margin charged was so great.

I remember that the most efficient company incurred collecting costs—the payment of persons employed in travelling from door to door—of 9.7 per cent. It must be realized that they were collecting amounts like 5s., 3s., 7s. 6d. and 10s. at a time. Therefore, the cash-order companies were left with 5 per cent. plus 2½ per cent. for twenty weeks to carry the internal costs of administration, plus their own interest. To my mind there were some undesirable features in that process. In shops

where the cash order business was large, a retailer knew that a customer could buy any goods in his window by such means, and he would be called upon to pay out a discount of 12½ per cent. to the cash order company. If half of a retailer's business was done by means of cash orders, he would have to increase his gross profit margin by 6½ per cent. overall in order to cover that type of expense. Of course, that is what was done in practice. Any system which forces hire-purchase companies or cash-order companies to make a charge upon retailers, merchants or manufacturers who sell the goods has that result. It raises prices to all buyers, both cash and credit.

I make that point because I wish to reveal that if the Bill now being considered becomes law—I shall not at this juncture go into the absurdities of the measure—Victorian consumers will be deprived of the opportunity of purchasing a large volume of goods. Let us take the case of a trader whose payment for borrowed money and cost of collections of hire-purchase business is greater than the amount proposed to be allowed under the terms of the Bill. What can he do? We shall assume, first of all, that he is a man who has no capital of his own to carry hire-purchase, and so he must depend upon hire-purchase companies for finance. A hire-purchase company will be constrained by the proposed legislation to charge so little to the hirer that it will not be able to conduct the business at a profit. It will then have two alternatives. One is to operate in a State where there is a Labour Government and no control of hire-purchase selling. That State will then receive the benefit of the volume of the business that should be done in Victoria. The other alternative is to levy a discounting charge upon the dealer. That is done to-day in many cases where the dealer does not guarantee payments to the hire-purchase company. A non-recourse charge is imposed.

Dealers have approached me in my capacity as a manufacturer stating that they must receive a higher margin on

the commodities I manufacture. They have maintained that selling costs are so great that no profit remains. One examines that kind of approach and perhaps finds that 2 per cent. of their overhead costs of 25 per cent. is made up of non-recourse charges. Nevertheless, like lawyers and accountants, they consider they should be allowed to live. If a manufacturer is forced to grant them higher discounts to cover payments to hire-purchase companies, then he must adjust his retail prices in order to cover that increased discount. In the ultimate, all these increases in costs are passed on to the retail price. Unfortunately, the burden of all increases falls upon the cash buyer as well. I suggest that it is in the interests of the community that the cash buyer should be protected because it should be the aim of the Government to encourage savings.

I shall now examine the problem of the retailer who has a little capital and likes to carry some of his hire-purchase business. His practice will be to put up prices in his own business and then to grant the hire-purchaser a small discount based on the amount required to give a finance company its margin. The Bill also covers the case of country vendors of farm implements. A large number of dealers in country areas make contracts whereby a plough, for example, is paid for over a period of three years, one-third of the amount being payable at each harvest. All sorts of curious hire-purchase agreements are framed to suit particular circumstances. It would be awkward in such cases to charge 6 per cent. flat because the money is not regained quickly enough to enable it to be used again. The return would be completely inadequate, and the dealer would have to make a different arrangement in order to pay the finance company its fee. In other words, the retail price would have to be marked up for all buyers—cash and credit.

There is one other class of person that I would describe as a manufacturer-cum-retailer-cum-hire-purchase operator. A great advantage would be conferred on him by Mr. Galbally's Bill because he adjusts the selling price of

his commodity, charges the dealer no non-recourse or non-sufficiency charge, fixes the rates, and places all other dealers and manufacturers at a disadvantage. Although he would derive benefit from the Bill, I do not think it was prepared with precisely that object. Its impact on different classes of people would vary, according to what they are financing. I shall make one other point concerning the fixing of rates. Some overseas hire-purchase companies adjust their rate in the manner I shall now describe. They work out the cost of carrying an account over a period of one year. In Australia it would be around £3. In other words, if one had 20,000 accounts on one's books it would cost £60,000 a year to handle them. Thus, if the hire-purchase account is for two years, a flat charge of £6 would be imposed on the hirer. It does not matter whether a man is purchasing a car for £1,000 or a 4-valve radio set for £20, he still pays the fixed accounting charge. On top of that a pure flat rate of interest is charged to take care of the profit or use of the money. Recognizing the difficulty, strangely enough—because he has had little experience in this business—Mr. Galbally's Bill endeavours to cope with the situation by making some differentiation in the various permissible fixed charges to be allowed. However, the charges are inadequate when it is recognized that the cost of keeping the account and carrying collections is £3 a year, irrespective of the size of the transaction.

There are some useful and informative statements in the report of the Board of Inquiry, comprising members of all parties in the Federal sphere, which was set up in 1941. One of the Board's findings was that finance charges are not usually regarded as interest; I agree with that. The Board found also that, on the whole, hirers are satisfied with the terms of hire and with the treatment they receive from dealers and finance companies. Paragraph 16 of the report states—

The evidence discloses that transactions in Hire-purchase in Australia involve a very considerable turnover and affect a very large number of people. There seems

to be nothing inherently wrong with the system in peace time, except where terms of repayment have been extended beyond three years. Provided articles bought are useful, contribute to a better standard of living, and do not deprive the householder of essential commodities, the system may be regarded as a useful one in the general economic structure.

The following interesting comment is made in paragraph 103—

The Board did not find that finance companies treated hirers harshly, and evidence showed that in many cases postponement of instalments had been agreed to and that usually the finance companies endeavoured to act with consideration and avoid repossession if possible.

The Hon. PAUL JONES.—Was that a parliamentary committee?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—No, it was a Board of Inquiry set up by the Federal Government to investigate the influence of hire-purchase and cash order system on the wartime economy.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—That does not mean that its findings were unanimous.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—The Hon. J. B. Chifley, who was a member of the Board, signed the report. Now I shall deal with the Bill in more detail. Obviously it was drawn up by someone who is attempting merely to deal in a clumsy fashion with a subject that has very delicate consequences. "Principal" is defined as "the net cost of the goods" and at a later stage the Bill provides that interest must be related to the principal. That shows that the author does not appreciate that interest is always paid on the unpaid balance; it is not charged on the retail price. Obviously, the Bill enables one to avoid what the measure itself sets out to do—to make the fixed rate of interest 6 per cent. At present, by making the hirer pay 25 per cent. deposit and charging him 6 per cent. on the retail price, a gross margin of 8 per cent. is obtained. Perhaps that is not important, but the illustration shows that the Bill does not even do what it purports to do.

The Bill provides that one must not charge additional sums for anything at all. If charges are made they must not exceed, on a sum of £200 or more, the amount specified. Assume the article sold

is a Holden car; perhaps the purchaser would like to insure it for twelve months at a premium of £40 or have it repaired. I suppose that all must come out of the 50s. because that is what the Bill says. The purchaser might even wish to take out third-party insurance which is not on the car, at a cost of another, say, £10. That, too, must come out of the 50s. The hire-purchase company might insist on his insuring the car for two years, if the money is outstanding for that period. Of course, in such circumstances a contract could not be signed; one would just give up, or increase the retail price. There is no provision covering these aspects. If the hirer does not keep up his payments one cannot charge him any more for interest because a limit is provided. The hirer cannot be charged for repossession or re-hire. The price is fixed and no allowance can be made. Obviously, the only way in which these problems can be surmounted is to add an additional amount to the retail price. The Bill is stupid. Clause 3 shows a lamentable lack of knowledge of what is required. In paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1) it is provided—

at or before the time when the agreement is made, a memorandum in writing of such agreement is prepared by the owner.

The owner referred to in a hire-purchase document is not the dealer but the hire-purchase company. Therefore, I suppose a dealer in "Woop-woop" will bring the hirer to Melbourne to see the managing director of the Industrial Acceptance Corporation, to have him prepare the document. Nothing else will do; the transaction is to be made difficult. The hirer must not fill in the document; he might undercharge himself. Is there anything more ridiculous? In order to sell a 4-valve radio in the suburbs, the dealer will have to bring Mrs. Brown, with her pram, into the Industrial Acceptance Corporation to interview someone who represents the owner and who will sign the document. I like clause 5. I have listened with pleasure to Mr. Galbally discuss the rights of prospective criminals, whose interests must be looked after, and how British justice ought to be preserved in our courts.

Here we have crime by proxy. Clause 5 provides that where a person who is guilty of an offence against this Act is a corporation any person being a chairman, member of the governing body, director, manager, secretary, or officer of the corporation, shall be deemed to have committed the like offence. That means that if an office girl fills in an agreement and makes a mistake—overcharges 5s.—the chairman or other officer is liable to pay a penalty up to £500 unless he goes to court and can prove his innocence. I have had some slight experience in this class of business, and realize that, with the sort of staff one gets to-day to fill in documents, a company is fortunate if the instalment paid is posted to the right card. It is not proper that if an employee makes an error innocently in a document, without the knowledge of, for example, the chairman of a company, the chairman should be liable to a fine of £500. I repeat that this is crime by proxy.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—The concluding words of clause 5 are “unless he proves that the act or omission constituting the offence took place without his knowledge or consent.”

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—The clause is borrowed from the Companies Act.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—If the chairman can prove that, on the afternoon in question, he was playing golf, he could substantiate his claim that the act was done without his knowledge. The Bill contains many flaws, and makes a chairman or governing director liable for a heavy fine in the circumstances I have outlined.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—It does not contain the provision you allege.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—I appreciate that Mr. Galbally is hoping to save something from the “fire,” and he has the last words, with the assistance of the President.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—I do not know that Mr. Warner should make that statement. The words in the clause to which I directed attention are

so obvious that I thought he had not seen them. It is quite within the competence of the President to point out what appears in a Bill without making any comment on it. I have no desire to assist either Mr. Warner or Mr. Galbally, but a great deal of time will be saved if, on occasions, I refer to a part of the measure that stares one in the face, so to speak, but appears not to have been noticed.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—There are in the Bill a number of glaring errors, and I fear that no one can assist Mr. Galbally to determine how it is possible to pay third party insurance out of 50s.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Where does the Bill make such a provision?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Sub-clause (4) of clause 2 states that for the purposes of this Act “permissible premium” means premium paid or payable under a hire-purchase agreement in respect of—

(a) insurance of the goods or chattels the subject-matter of the agreement until such time as the property therein passes under the agreement, having regard to normal risks involved;

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Does the sub-clause not state that the permissible premium shall not exceed such reasonable rate as is approved by the Government Statist?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Yes.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Where is provision made for it to be paid out of the additional charge?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Because it is contemplated that the dealer will not be enabled to add to it more than a permissible additional charge.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I think this has touched you on the raw. It is not the hungriest pig that squeals the loudest, but the one that is dragged from the trough.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—I do not know what trough Mr. Galbally has been dragged from.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—I do not understand the meaning of those cryptic remarks; therefore, I suppose I cannot say they are offensive to anybody.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—I consider I have amply demonstrated that a very rough and somewhat unpractised hand has been put upon a subject which has very far-reaching effects from social and economic standards, and from the standpoint of every form of industry and trade. The Bill has been prepared with the sole object of advertising, or, alternatively, of introducing some form of unnecessary control that can be well met by means of competition.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—Members of the party I represent support the Bill. I listened with great interest to the arguments submitted by Mr. Warner, and whilst he may have a greater knowledge of the general subject of hire-purchase than I can claim, I feel that he has dealt in a wrong manner with the proposition embodied in the measure. In my view, the Bill aims at achieving something basic for the improvement of the lot of the people. It does not purport to interfere with hire-purchase or prove that it is undesirable. The honorable gentleman devoted a large part of his speech to showing that hire-purchase is very desirable. The Bill seeks to limit, to some extent, the charges that may be calculated under hire-purchase. I believe that is in the interests of the community and for the good of the country.

Mr. Warner quoted figures of expenditure by people on amusements, gambling and liquor; such a consideration is irrelevant to the amount of money they spend on buying commodities by hire-purchase. Perhaps they have that money available because they are buying goods on time-payment rather than for cash. If people spend their money on amusement, irrespective of the form it takes—with the exception, perhaps, of drink, where there is a high excise charge, which swallows up the greatest portion of the purchase price—they create employment and thus play a part in the general economic life of the country. That is so even when they go to the pictures or to any other type of amusement which involves the employment of labour.

One of the basic features of interest charges, particularly when they are excessive, is that they constitute a charge over and above all else. Interest charges are non-productive. When higher wage rates are sought by workers, it is asserted on behalf of the employers that industry is unable to afford to pay higher wages unless there is greater productivity. But do we hear that industry is unable to pay higher interest rates unless there is greater productivity? Do higher interest rates add to the national income and the productivity of the nation? Of course, they don't; the contrary is true. Interest charges, as they accumulate, deprive the people of purchasing power so vital to the community.

I contend that interest rates should always be attacked, and, wherever possible, lowered. I hope to show that only by a general lowering of interest rates will it be possible to reduce such charges on hire-purchase. Mr. Warner presented to the House figures to show that the payment of any interest higher than the absolute minimum is desirable for the community. In one of the documents Mr. Warner presented, there is an analysis of the cost of domestic appliances. It discloses that direct labour charges are 4.7 per cent. There are at least five items in respect of which it can be said there are no general labour costs—namely, factory selling overhead, income tax, factory profit, factory selling price, and dealers' margin. No wage costs are involved in 50 per cent. of the components. That is allowing for the fact that the interest charged under the peculiar figures Mr. Warner has presented will absorb 11.5 per cent. of the cost.

But it is the money paid to the people of the community, in the form of wages, that constitutes the future market for goods produced—not money paid in interest charges. Most of the goods sold are purchased by the expenditure of wages. Yet Mr. Warner produced figures which show that, in the ultimate cost of an article, a very small percentage is due to direct labour

charges or to any other form of labour charges. The figures would be very interesting, coming from an authority such as Mr. Warner, if submitted to an industrial court in support of increased wages for members of the community in general.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—Mr. Warner has always claimed that 85 per cent. of the cost of any commodity is made up of wages.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—The document to which I refer does not support that contention. In defence of the general system of the payment of interest, and particularly of high interest charges, all sorts of peculiar tricks calculated to fool the general population can be played with figures. I do not know that Mr. Warner has acted intentionally in this regard. I feel that he is trying to justify the present-day interest charges on hire-purchase. I have no doubt he can prove that money would not be forthcoming for hire-purchase business at a lower rate of interest than that charged now.

If we can drive the general rates of interest down, money will become available for hire-purchase at a lower rate. That assertion was proved during the war. The Government then stated that, in the interests of the national economy, no interest rate over a certain figure should be charged for loans, and it was able to conscript capital almost to the stage reached in the conscription of men. General interest rates were lowered by Government intervention, and money became available for everything at lower rates. Such rates of interest can be reduced at any time only by similar action. Possessors of capital will at all times seek the highest return, just as the workers try to sell their services to the community for the highest figure they can extract. However, people who seek to obtain the best yield in this field are the first to say, "Hands off the interest rates. No one must interfere, by legislative enactment or in any other manner, with the rate that can be obtained by capital for the financing of goods used in the community."

In one of the documents Mr. Warner circulated, I observe the fantastic case of the man with £100 who borrows £400 and then charges interest. An endeavour is made to show that the dealer in hire-purchase is receiving only a certain rate of interest. That does not disprove the fact that the purchaser is paying an excessive amount. All that Mr. Warner proves is that the dealer collects a high rate of interest and a certain part of it has to be "milked" for the people from whom the money has been borrowed. Taking this to its final conclusion, I would say that the most logical place for him to get the £400 is from a bank. Then we might find that it manufactured the £400 by means of book entries, and so on; that it never had the £400 anyway; and, in fact, nobody had £400, but somebody was paying interest on it somewhere, and so the interest charges accumulated.

Honorable members laugh. I agree this is laughable, but we all believe in this feature of the economy. We utilize it and have done so for years. Honorable members would be amused if they read the monetary history of the United States of America, and learned that, at one stage, playing-cards bearing the Governor's stamp were used as currency for years. People thought that was fantastic, because in other countries gold was the recognized means of exchange. In Australia, there has been adopted virtually a similar method of currency, not because it was desired to abolish the gold standard, or any other standard that has existed from time to time, but because the pressure of modern developments in industry has forced us to use a monetary system that can be geared in some way or other to productivity.

The whole basis of the argument propounded by the Minister of Transport is fallacious. Although members laugh, I claim that the supposititious sum of £400 borrowed from a banking institution by the mythical firm mentioned by the honorable gentleman does not actually exist, any more than does a lot of other credit that is allegedly made available. The fundamental factor, however, is that a substantial portion of

everyone's income is "milked off" to meet interest charges on sums of money that are fictitious. Accordingly, insufficient funds are available to buy the results of the productivity of the nation.

The sitting was suspended at 6.31 p.m. until 7.53 p.m.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—I am endeavouring to establish that this measure cannot be discussed properly without debating the whole of the monetary and credit structure of the nation. It is true that the interest rates charged by hire-purchase organizations are not governed by the value of the assets handled or the sum of money that is lent. Recently, because of a Federal enactment, those companies were enabled to increase their interest charges, at a time when wage rates in particular were pegged. Banking institutions have asserted that, on the most desirable types of loans, namely, those for housing, they may not and, in some instances, will not lift interest rates. Experience has revealed, however, that ultimately economic pressure forces up rates of interest. Obviously, if more advantageous rates are applicable to other types of lending, money will disappear from the home-building market and be diverted into more remunerative channels. That drift cannot be prevented under the credit system which now obtains.

Our economic record proves that money tends to be attracted to the higher rates of interest in the same way as labour tends to be drawn to those industries whence higher incomes are derived. From time to time, one hears lamentations to the effect that university professors are remunerated on a basis which, because of inflationary conditions, is almost comparable with the wages paid to a dustman. Recently, a Bill was brought down in this Chamber and the responsible Minister, in his second-reading explanation of it, asserted that it was impracticable to attract men to the particular industry concerned because of the smallness of the remuneration; accordingly, it would be necessary to reduce the standard of the requisite qualifications.

It is useless for the Minister of Transport to contend that hire-purchase companies conduct their businesses for

the benefit of customers. If any advantage accrues to a person who buys goods under hire-purchase conditions, it is incidental so far as the organization is concerned. Hire-purchase companies exploit that field of investment which yields the highest rate of interest. If that principle is recognized, the Administration will be better enabled to control what might easily become a field of investment in which the interest rates are disproportionate to the value of the service rendered to the community. This Bill has its good points. Any proposal that tends to interfere with rates of interest is ridiculed. That is what happened when the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia was mooted. Economic experts of the day forecast that the financial structure of the nation would be ruined if that banking institution were established. At the time, the proposal represented an entirely new departure in the field of economics. However, the Commonwealth Bank has since proved to be an outstanding success, despite what financiers predicted to the contrary.

A somewhat similar position obtains with respect to the objective sought to be achieved by this measure. The Minister of Transport asserts that it will be impossible of implementation. I maintain that an honest attempt should be made to reduce rates of interest in certain types of business, irrespective of the recent enactment of the Federal Government authorizing increases. Any reduction in interest rates must inevitably benefit the community as a whole. Past experience indicates that, if the position is permitted to go unchecked, and higher interest rates are obtainable from the investment of capital in certain activities, the credit structure of the nation will suffer total collapse. That has previously happened in our economic history.

Mr. Galbally mentioned that "usury" was once the only term known for the return obtained upon money lent. The practice has grown up of regarding usury as the extraction of interest on a basis that is not subject to control or interference. Over the years, as the supply of currency became insufficient to meet a constantly expanding

economy, certain persons were enabled to corner currency in the same way as others cornered corn sacks and other commodities, and so they were enabled to demand increasingly higher rates of interest until the ridiculous stage was reached where the rates became so exorbitant that they were regarded as usury. We now have a brand new term with which to describe lower rates of interest. We call it "interest." I do not blame anyone in particular for the fact that our modern monetary system will not function effectively, irrespective of our desire that it should do so.

In times of war, Governments have reduced the rates of interest, but that did not cause any hardship to the community. When it is analyzed, the business community was never so well off as when the rates of interest were low. That is the fundamental principle of this legislation. Certainly the Bill does not go as far as one would like; it merely deals with one phase of the credit structure. The rates of interest are dependent upon one another, and upon bank interest—the basic form of interest—all other rates of interest are founded.

It is essential that hire-purchase interest rates be strictly controlled and not permitted to get out of hand if the credit system is to work in the interests of the community. Many instances could be cited of how a sound credit system is advantageous to the nation. For example, the Western world could not have reached its present state had it not built up a credit structure similar to the one now operating. One of the principal reasons why the East has lagged so far behind is that it did not devise, as rapidly as the Western world, suitable systems of currency and credit. The Chinese people introduced a form of currency whereby all coins contained a hole in the centre to enable them to be threaded around their necks. A person with surplus currency did not invest it or make it available to others for investment purposes. It was in the Western world that the idea of keeping currency in circulation was first introduced and the credit system was based upon that principle. Some people say, "Let us abolish that

system because it is fallacious," but I do not advocate such a policy. Great evils could flow if excess charges for purely book entries were permitted. Fundamentally, the hire-purchase system is the first thing that should be socialized. I may have departed somewhat from the subject matter of the Bill, but I wish to emphasize that when dealing with interest rates for hire-purchase, one is dealing with all interest rates.

If hire-purchase was greatly restricted in Victoria, the tendency would be for business to flow to States where interest rates were higher. I realize the limitations of this Bill. This matter should be tackled on a Federal basis, but, unfortunately, the only action taken by the Commonwealth Government has been a relaxation of interest rates—an open sesame to go ahead and increase them. At the same time, it is claimed that wages cannot be increased unless there is greater productivity. Such a policy must inevitably lead to inflation. I agree with the Minister of Transport that there are some defects in the drafting of the Bill, and Mr. Galbally, who recently criticized the drafting of certain other measures debated in this House, probably appreciates that the measure is capable of improvement. One such weakness is noted in clause 4 where reference is made to a rate of interest of 6 per cent. The clause is incomplete as it does not indicate whether the rate of interest is 6 per cent. a month or per annum. I believe the intention is that it should mean 6 per cent. per annum, but if that is so, it should be clearly indicated in the Bill.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—If Mr. Little referred to the definition of interest in sub-clause (1) of clause 2 of the Bill he would realize that it means per annum.

The Hon. J. W. LITTLE.—I studied that definition, but consider that clause 4 is indefinite and should be clarified. There is much to commend legislation aimed at the lowering of returns available to the hire-purchase companies on moneys loaned. The Bill is designed to curtail the abuses that have arisen in the past. Previous Governments have

found it necessary to interfere with money-lending companies, and hire-purchase is such a vast business now that the Government should draw the line and say, "Beyond this you may not go". I do not accept the Minister's contention that the clause relating to the limitation of charges could be interpreted to mean that such charges should include insurance premium payments. The clause alludes to charges over and above insurance. For that reason, much of the criticism of the Bill has been unfounded. The slight weaknesses in the measure may be corrected during the Committee stage, but the general principle of the Bill is sound, and, as it is in the best interests of the people of Victoria, members of my party propose to support it.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—This Bill relates to one of the most important economic factors in the community. Having listened to the experts contribute to the debate, it is somewhat difficult for an ordinary layman, like myself, representing the Country party, to address the House. However, I emphasize that thousands of people in the community today would not be able to secure even the ordinary amenities of life unless a hire-purchase system was available. It is apparent that people receiving moderate incomes could not purchase such items as refrigerators, washing machines, and so on, except under hire-purchase conditions. Those who are fortunate enough to be able to pay for goods in cash, or who can obtain an overdraft from the bank, are more favourably situated. Hire-purchase is an essential part of the economic life of the community and an abandonment of the practice would create wholesale unemployment.

The Minister pointed out that hire-purchase had increased tremendously in recent years. Quite a number of reputable firms are now engaged in hire-purchase activities, and to my knowledge, the Commonwealth Bank, the English, Scottish and Australian Bank and the National bank of Australasia are also directly or indirectly interested in this form of business.

I understand the National bank is interested in a firm trading under another name, and the bank holds a substantial part of the firm's capital. Other firms with wide experience in financial matters, are also lending money for all types of business. They are not likely to engage in the exploitation of their customers or to charge ruinous rates of interest in order to make profits. They are in the business because it is lucrative; if it were not, they would not be in it. I believe that such firms are carrying on upon a sound basis and doing so reasonably well, but there may be other types of business in which those concerned are inclined to charge higher and more burdensome rates. That kind of practice should be investigated.

The Leader of the House mentioned that this charge is not one for interest, but a charge for a service rendered, enabling somebody to buy a certain article. That is partly but not wholly true. Interest is collected on the money lent as well as for the service rendered. In quite a number of cases the effective rate, or the total interest charged, is as high as, or slightly higher than, 18 or 19 per cent., and in some instances the figure may be much higher than that. The bank rate of interest upon overdrafts to-day is an average of 5½ per cent., varying between 5 and 6 per cent. according to the class of business upon which the money is lent. Money is being obtained to-day by custom-credit firms which are offering 6 per cent. for long-term money. Between the rate of 6 per cent., which is the normal bank rate of interest, and that high level of 18 or 19 per cent., there is a comparatively wide margin available as a return for service rendered and it should be adequate to cover such service.

This Bill postulates the theory that the interest rate in respect of hire-purchase should be controlled. I believe there is a *prima facie* case for the consideration of that point in principle, and that is almost as far as I can go. Taking all factors into account, here we have an activity operating to the extent of £400,000,000 in hire-purchase transactions, that are entered upon almost exclusively by people who can least afford to pay high interest rates. If the

interest rate is exorbitant, I think it should be controlled and reduced; but, having regard to all the factors at present, it is very difficult to suggest anything more specific.

However, I express the view that, in principle, Mr. Galbally has put forward a proposition to which this House should give some sympathetic support. I refer to the suggestion that an examination of the existing system should be made to ascertain whether there is any exploitation of the public in respect of interest charges. There is evidence, in connexion with the interest rate, that the flat rate charge is almost doubled in the final analysis; that is to say, if there is a flat interest charge of 6 per cent. it could become an effective rate of 11.6 per cent.

Neither Mr. Galbally nor the Leader of the House wishes to curtail the legitimate use of the hire-purchase system in the acquisition by the public of anything that can be applied to the maintenance of essential features of our way of life. We believe that certain features should be preserved, but that the interests of the people concerned should be protected. There are reputable firms selling good lines on hire-purchase. They know the customers with whom they are dealing and there is nothing outrageous in the transactions. There are considerations, however, such as this: I have been informed that in certain sessions broadcast over the air firms say to the public, "Bring in all your old electrical appliances and we will buy them blind. Bring them in to us. We will pay you 15s. for your old toaster and £5 for your worn out wireless set." By such inducements people come in to these business places and, before going out again, they have bought something on the hire-purchase basis, the amount allowed for their old article having become the deposit on the new. In the country I have seen newspaper advertisements to this effect: "In this hot weather you need a refrigerator. Come in and see us. Pay us £1 and take one home."

That kind of business may be said to be carrying things to extremes. Firms and individual people selling goods by

such methods are liable to be dealing with hire-purchase firms who, knowing the character of the business in question, charge higher rates of interest on the ground that they are taking bigger risks. The effect is that the 99 per cent. of the public who are honestly paying their way with the aid of hire-purchase suffer because of the prospect that some other people may default.

I am not sure that this Bill, in its machinery provisions, provides the correct approach. As a party, we have not had much time to examine it. We should like the Bill to be referred to a Select Committee of this House for examination. Such a course would be only fair and proper, and I agree that it would take some time, but if the Government is not prepared to appoint a Select Committee, my colleagues and I will vote for the second reading of the Bill in order that it may be further analysed and considered. The Premier has stated publicly that he, with his fellow State Premiers, will discuss this whole question in a month or two. It is the belief of my party that if the second reading of this Bill is agreed to we shall be giving the Government an instruction that interest rates are among the factors that should be examined without delay.

The Bill contains clauses, however, to which we cannot agree. For instance, one clause refers to a fixed rate of 6 per cent. Interest rates fluctuate; they move up and down. In the past I have had to seek an overdraft, on which I have been charged 7 per cent. I have paid a rate even higher than that recently but the fact remains that the interest rate has been down as low as 4½ per cent.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—There is nothing in the Bill to prevent a hire-purchase company from charging less than 6 per cent.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—Nothing at all! The normal rate, however, might rise and 6 per cent. might be considered too low. Then this measure, if it reached the statute-book, would have to be amended to provide for an increase of the interest rate beyond 6 per

cent. The Bill should stick to the maximum bank rate. There should be a ceiling so that the maximum in respect of all loans would be adopted. We suggest that, instead of having a complicated provision, there should be fixed a limit which could be charged above the bank rate as fixed by the Commonwealth Bank and charged by the associated banks.

There is one other clause that I might mention at this stage. We do not agree that the Government Statist should determine premium rates. Premium rates on the hire-purchase of cars are causing considerable trouble. I have heard that good business men engaged in the selling of cars contend that the insurance rate charged on cars under hire-purchase is much too high. Whether a purchaser has a balance of only £100 or £200 still owing on his vehicle he still has to pay the extraordinarily high insurance rate demanded by all those engaged in this kind of dealing. Why should a person, who himself is engaged in a lucrative business and who offers to put down £1,500 on a car costing £1,700, be called upon to pay the very heavy extra rate levied by insurance companies on all motor-cars sold under hire-purchase?

I direct the attention of the Government to the fact that interest rates are regulated in regard to the associated banks. I have here a copy of the regulation itself. History records that King John wanted to borrow some money from one of his subjects, and when the subject refused, King John took him out into the forest and pulled out his teeth one by one until he consented to handing over the money. However, such incidents do not occur to-day. I wish now to refer to section 39 of the Commonwealth Banking Act 1945—the section which governs the interest charged by the Commonwealth Bank to associated banks. Sub-section (1) states, *inter alia*—

The Commonwealth Bank may, with the approval of the Treasurer, make regulations—

- (a) making provision for and in relation to the control of rates of interest payable to or by banks, or to or by

other persons in the course of any banking business carried on by them;

- (b) making provision for and in relation to the control of rates of discount chargeable by banks, or by other persons in the course of any banking business carried on by them.

Sub-section (2) of the same section reads—

Any person who contravenes or fails to comply with any regulation under this section shall be guilty of an offence punishable—

- (a) if the offence is prosecuted summarily—by a fine not exceeding One hundred pounds or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months; or
- (b) if the offence is prosecuted upon indictment—by a fine not exceeding Five thousand pounds or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Clause 5 of my Bill is pale compared with the regulation that Mr. Byrnes has just read.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—I do not propose to deal in detail with the Bill, but there are some clauses of it which require reconsideration. For instance, if there is a breach of contract the hirer of a car could disappear and no one would know who owned the vehicle because the contract would be null and void.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—To which clause is Mr. Byrnes referring?

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—I do not like clause 3. I consider that the Bill needs almost complete redrafting. The Country party agrees with Mr. Galbally as to the principle of the Bill.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Clause 3 refers to a hire-purchase agreement being unenforceable. There is quite a difference between that and a contract being null and void.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—The agreement could not be enforced and the hirer could walk off and apparently no one would own the car.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—According to the law of the realm, the hire-purchase company would own the

The Hon. P. T. Byrnes.

vehicle. Mr. Byrnes is almost as inaccurate as was the Minister of Transport.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—Different views are held, apparently, upon this clause, and they can be discussed in Committee.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—The associated banks have their rates of interest controlled, and some years ago a Country party Government enacted legislation which controlled the rates of interest charged by money-lenders. I believe that there is a *prima facie* case for further examination of interest rates, and I point out that hire-purchase is much more widespread in our economy than are the actions of money-lenders. The Country party has decided to support Mr. Galbally in principle because we consider that there should be an examination of interest rates. Some members may have the impression that I am damning Mr. Galbally's Bill with faint praise, but that is not so. He has postulated a theory which we support because it merits examination. However, we are not prepared to give him our unqualified support on the measure.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN (Monash Province).—I consider it the duty of every legislator to examine thoroughly and dispassionately the contents of any Bill that is brought before this House, no matter who may be the author or only begetter thereof. In that spirit, I have perused this measure with interest to ascertain the principle it propounds. It is only fair to say that, like the famed curate's egg, it is good in parts. I think the measure could do with a "smell of the lamp," in order that it may embrace a principle which could be given effect throughout the whole community. I welcome Mr. Byrnes's statement that he is prepared to examine the question of interest as it affects the community. I think that marks a major step forward and I sincerely trust that the Country party will persist in that proposal so that we may have some formula or pronouncement which could guide the community in what I might describe as a pre-inflationary period. I use the word "pre-inflationary" because I regard the ultimate period of inflation as one of financial catastrophe and

disaster. I have lived through one of these periods and I do not want to experience a recurrence.

It is of interest to notice the origin of the word "usury," of which Mr. Galbally made much use. The term is nothing more or less than a word in Latin comparable to the phrase "about to use." A person who is about to make use of money, bargains with somebody about the profit that either person may get from the loan. In the modern sense, usury is regarded as an excessive charge for interest that weighs down on the unfortunate person who obtains the loan, and is calculated to reduce him to a level where he must abandon the goods he purchased or the pledges he has given, and emerge from the transaction much poorer.

A person who claims to espouse Labour party ideals should have enshrined the principle of restriction of mortgage interest in a Bill of this type. It is childish to talk about hire-purchase agreements if one finches in the task of reminding the Australian community that the rate of interest on mortgages secured on the homes of people is gradually soaring to inflationary levels. Many Australians to-day are paying as much as 15 per cent. interest on temporary advances for finance granted to them preparatory to the purchase of a house through the War Service Homes Division. Up until recent years that Division would not discharge a mortgage, but to-day it says, "Get your own finance. We cannot give you the money yet. You build the house and we will redeem the sum owing on it." In many instances prospective home builders have borrowed money at exorbitant rates of interest for periods of twelve months or more. To my mind that is a most unconscionable transaction and reflects on Parliamentary institutions that doom home builders to pay such exorbitant rates. I refer particularly to young ex-servicemen who are endeavouring to obtain that resettlement in the community which was their right when they returned to Australia as survivors of a terrible conflict.

The ancient bankers were the Carthaginians and the Babylonians, and in more modern times we have the

Italian and Dutch banking institutions, which first introduced letters of credit in the Middle Ages and put banking on a modern footing. The Jewish houses also played some part in this improvement. To-day, the great nations of the world, such as the United States of America, Great Britain, and even Australia, base a tremendous amount of commerce and trade on credit. Where that credit requires a reasonable rate of repayment or reimbursement, we of the Australian Labour party have nothing to say against it. In our policy speech we have pledged ourselves to 2 per cent. marriage loans to enable young people to settle down. We propose that such a principle should apply not only to former servicemen but to everyone in the community, because many men were prevented from enlisting in the armed forces. The Labour party has never believed that they should be deprived of fair benefits. It is greatly to the credit of the Curtin Federal Government that, in a vital time of war, this community was subjected to a merciless clamping down of investment and interest. I venture to say that that alone was one of the greatest factors in our successful emergence from the war. It was not merely the victories of our armies and the successes of our allies that allowed us to triumph; the fact that the Australian economy was geared for war played a prominent part. Those who evolved the black market deserve eternal discredit.

The very focal point of civilization is the home, and I have already made reference to limiting mortgage interest on loans on houses. I consider that a principle should be enshrined in this Bill to ensure that young people may obtain articles such as furniture, or even a washing machine, needed in the modest five-roomed house. A person should not be required to pay excessive rates of interest on money borrowed to purchase items of that character.

If a man borrows £100 for twenty years at 5 per cent. interest, and does not lessen his loan during that period, he repays in interest an amount equal to his original borrowing. As one who has had a great deal to do with the legal aspect of lending money, I know

The Hon. T. W. Brennan.

that the borrower must see clearly that in a certain time he will have repaid his loan, even with the interest payments. In other words, he must have a loan that is reducible by steady payments of so much a week, a fortnight, or a month. To their great credit, most citizens in this community realize that and so wisely limit their borrowings to purchase essential needs. Of course, what is essential for one man may be a luxury for another. Some members of this House who have to entertain business executives would require a luxurious car costing thousands of pounds, whereas others could carry on their conversations in tram-cars.

In my opinion, hire-purchase should relate primarily to goods of necessity required by the community. Luxury items cover a wide field. Unfortunately, we in Victoria are caught in a financial mesh. The Federal Government has involved the position by first allowing unrestricted importation and spending, and then suddenly closing the sluice gates of entry on the current account, with the result that trade and commerce in the community are temporarily halted and stagnated. It is common knowledge that such a course has been taken twice by the present Federal Administration, which, in my view, is pursuing a perilous course of coquetting with inflation. At least, seeing that we are bound by the Federal chain of circumstance and union, we have the power and the right to raise our voices against any process which tends towards inflation and the increasing of interest rates. I contend that the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Treasurer rendered notable disservice to Australia when they removed the restrictions on interest rates on mortgage securities. We shall yet live, I fear, to regret the fact that mortgage rates have been allowed to get out of hand. I could have forgiven Mr. Galbally's sallies about anti-Labour—we of the Australian Labour party know how to deal with such comments—if he had mentioned that matter, but, unfortunately, we have received what is apparently just a front-line merchandising proposal which has placed attractive things in the forefront and has left the unsaleable heavy objects behind.

The real problem in the community is wrapped up in the question of price control. I was one who, during the régime of the last Government, protested and voted against any attempt to remove such control. To the credit of the party now in Opposition, there was at least one distinguished member who voted also against any attempt to abolish price control. What is to be done? Can we, by some wave of a magic wand, prevent people from buying? In my opinion, there are two methods. Either we can act through a Federal agency and close the door on imports, or, on the other hand, we can limit hire-purchase. The Commonwealth Government has acted in the former direction. This Bill endeavours to cover a field that is of particular interest to the worker. I submit that, apart from the principle of limitation of interest for which I, as a Labour man, am bound to vote, this Bill will be rendered futile. We have already heard a learned exposition by the Minister of Transport. I take it that we can regard him as a conscientious member of the commercial community. I should like to ask him this question: If such a measure as this became law and the rate of interest on hire-purchase agreements was limited to 6 per cent. per annum, what would prevent the price of goods from rising?

The Hon. A. G. WARNER.—Nothing.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—I fear that is what would happen, but I shall not allow that fact to deter me from espousing the view that the rate of interest is a matter of great concern. It is of the utmost importance that we protect from the pernicious effects of over-charging of interest those members of the community who desire to purchase goods on terms. Even if this House is merely able to make a pious gesture, with the aid of all parties, I think the effort will have been well worthwhile. So I commend the Bill.

The House divided on the motion (Sir Clifden Eager in the chair)—

Ayes	22
Noes	10
	—
Majority for the motion	12

AYES.

Mr. Arnott	Mr. MacAulay
Mr. Bradbury	Mr. Machin
Mr. Brennan	Mr. Mansell
Mr. Byrnes	Mr. Rawson
Mr. Feltham	Mr. Sheehy
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Smith
Mr. Fulton	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Galbally	Mr. Tilley
Mr. Jones	Mr. Walters.
(Ballarat)	
Mr. Jones	Tellers:
(Doutta Galla)	Mr. Bailey
Mr. Little	Mr. Swinburne.

NOES.

Mr. Bridgford	Mr. McArthur
Mr. Cameron	Mr. Warner.
Mr. Chandler	
Mr. Dickie	Tellers:
Mr. Gawith	Mr. Mack
Mr. Grigg	Mr. Thompson.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 (Short title and citation).

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That progress be reported.

In view of the fact that this Bill has been read a second time, the Government would like to determine what it should do about the measure.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—The Minister of Transport has made a rather cryptic statement. During his second-reading speech he condemned the Bill as a piece of clumsy draftsmanship and said that he abhorred all the clauses and was flatly against the principle involved. Now the House has in its wisdom decided to carry the second-reading motion, and has acknowledged the principle underlying the Bill, he asks that progress be reported. Of course, if the Government had any serious intention of taking over the Bill I would be the last person to oppose the interests of the community and seek to prevent that step from being taken. However, the Government, through the Premier, has already made a public pronouncement condemning the Bill.

Before honorable members agree to progress being reported, the Minister of Transport should indicate what he has in mind. Merely to report progress is another way of putting the Bill into cold storage. If the Government wishes to kill it in that way, its spokesman

should make that clear. If, on the other hand, the Government is impressed with the proposals and by the attitude of our Country party friends—

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—And your Labour party friends, too.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Our erstwhile Labour party friends. I appreciate the attitude of the Minister of Transport, but I point out that this Bill is now the property of Parliament and the Minister should say clearly what his intentions are with respect to it. Otherwise, I shall not be prepared to accept this move as bona fide. In that case I would invite the Committee to say that the motion we are now considering is merely another clever trick of the Minister of Transport.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province).—I support the remarks of Mr. Galbally. There is a lot of evidence to show that we should carry on with the consideration of this Bill. Not only has the House carried the motion for the second reading, but statements have been made by members of the Country party indicating that they feel that, with one or two exceptions, the Bill would be acceptable to them. In the circumstances, I think the best move that could be made would be for the Committee to go through the Bill clause by clause and so allow members of the Country party to suggest what amendments they desire to move. If we come to a full stop, that will be the time to report progress. If the Bill is dealt with in that manner and any improvements are suggested, they can be incorporated on the spot. For that reason, I support the Leader of the Opposition in his remarks.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. D. J. Walters).—To whom was Mr. Rawson referring as "Leader of the Opposition"—to Mr. Galbally?

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON.—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN.—The Standing Orders are quite clear. No parties are recognized in this Chamber.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province).—I, too, wish to support the remarks of Mr. Galbally.

The province I have the honour to represent embraces the hub of Victoria. It includes Sunshine, the industries of which ensure that farmers obtain all the implements they require; Footscray, correctly described as the Birmingham of Australia; Port Melbourne and Williamstown, where further progress is made each year; and South Melbourne, a city of which we can all be justly proud. In this area live thousands of honest, hard-working people. An honest man never looks for dishonesty in another person. Therefore when a glib salesman approaches him—in the words of the Minister of Transport, glib salesmen are induced to persuade others that they need goods in order to maintain the output of factories so that costs can be kept to a reasonable level—and he is encouraged to buy goods which he needs, it is essential that he should have some protection against dishonesty. This Bill will provide that protection. Therefore, we feel that it should receive the support of all honorable members and should be discussed before an attempt is made to discard it in the manner suggested by the Minister of Transport. He stated earlier in the evening that so much money was spent by wage earners that not much was left for pleasure. I know that the Minister is of too generous a disposition to deny the hard-working men of this community some indulgence. I can assure the Committee that hard-working men do not enjoy half as many pleasures as some of those more fortunately endowed with the world's goods. If the working people are required to pay cash for all the amenities they wish to acquire, they will, it is true, have little left for pleasure.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. D. J. Walters).—I take it that the honorable member is relating his remarks to a reason why progress should not be reported. That is the only matter under discussion.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—I am endeavouring to do so.

The CHAIRMAN.—To date, Mr. Machin's remarks have been a little wide of the mark.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—I should like this Bill discussed clause by clause. The Minister of Transport ridiculed certain of its provisions.

The CHAIRMAN.—I consider that the remarks of the honorable member are not related to a reason why progress should not be reported on the Bill.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—I shall conclude by saying that I endorse remarks and views expressed by Mr. Galbally.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—I do not think we should report progress at this stage because no progress has been made. In view of the decision on the second-reading motion, I consider that the Bill should be considered in Committee until such time as there is disagreement regarding it. On clause 1 the Minister of Transport moved that progress be reported. I do not see anything in that clause to which objection could be taken, in view of the fact that the principle underlying the Bill has been agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. D. J. Walters).—Order! I wish to make it perfectly clear that reporting progress is just an ordinary procedure so that members may consider the form of any amendments they may wish to move. Honorable members are assuming what might not be in the mind of the Minister of Transport.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—Adverting to what you have observed, Mr. Chairman, when I introduced this measure, I pointed out that what I had to say on the subject did not represent the last word, and that I would consider any amendments proposed. I am still prepared to do so. However, I believe the proper course to be adopted with this measure is to consider it clause by clause. It is only a small Bill of five clauses. Surely they can be discussed until a stage is reached at which the Committee is given some indication of the attitude of the Government towards the measure. What the Minister proposes now seems to me

to be merely applying the gag; nothing more or less than stifling the Bill. During the second-reading debate numerous comments were made about the clauses. For example, it was asserted that clumsy draftsmanship had occurred. I do not mind such statements being applied to myself, but I feel that I should pay tribute to the work of the Parliamentary Draftsman. I consider that the Minister of Transport, during his second-reading speech, indulged in gross and deliberate misrepresentation of clauses in this measure. The Committee is entitled to examine those clauses to ascertain exactly what they propose to accomplish. It is a novel procedure in this Chamber to apply the gag to any Bill, and it becomes all the more unpardonable to take that action with a private member's Bill, after the House has carried the second-reading motion.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. D. J. Walters).—I think the honorable member is assuming a little too much. The terms of the motion now under consideration are very clear.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I consider that honorable members should view with some alarm what is happening so early in the Committee stage. The Minister of Transport has asked for progress to be reported so that the Government can determine its attitude. For how long does the Government wish to consider the measure? There is nothing more reprehensible than for a Government to fob off proposals because it has the numbers, and wait for the time when it can sneak into recess. I hope I shall be successfully contradicted when I say that all the Government is attempting to do is to get rid of the Bill and go into recess, so enabling the Premier to proceed overseas to make all his great bargains with America. The Minister of Transport should indicate why he wishes to further consider this Bill which he and the Government have condemned. To say that the Government might take over the measure is almost like the Devil quoting scripture.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I should like to correct Mr. Galbally's assertion that I indicated

that the Government might take over the Bill. That is far from my intention. I stated that the Government would like to consider what it should do about the measure. I think the whole of Mr. Galbally's excitable references to the Premier and his trip overseas, to the South Melbourne situation, and so forth, were entirely due to his apparent ignorance of the procedure of this House. The position is that when progress is reported, the Bill, which is sponsored by a private member, will be placed on the Notice Paper for next Wednesday as a matter of priority.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—In my second-reading speech, I mentioned that there was some difficulty in drafting amendments to the Bill. My colleagues and I will support the Minister's attitude. I understand that if progress is reported the Bill will automatically appear on the Notice Paper for next Wednesday.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Et tu, Brute!

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—I think my party has shown that it takes an impartial view of the measure and will continue to do so.

The Committee divided on the motion (the Hon. D. J. Walters in the chair)—

Ayes ..	..	..	17
Noes ..	..	..	14

Majority for the motion 3

AYES.

Mr. Bradbury	Mr. MacAulay
Mr. Bridgford	Mr. Mack
Mr. Byrnes	Mr. Mansell
Mr. Cameron	Mr. Swinburne
Mr. Chandler	Mr. Thompson
Mr. Dickie	Mr. Warner.
Mr. Fulton	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Gawith	Mr. Feltham
Mr. McArthur	Mr. Grigg.

NOES.

Mr. Arnott	Mr. Sheehy
Mr. Bailey	Mr. Smith
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Galbally	Mr. Tilley.
Mr. Jones	
(Ballarat)	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Little	Mr. Brennan
Mr. Machin	Mr. Jones
Mr. Rawson	(Doutta Galla).

Progress was reported.

MARKETING OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS (EGG AND EGG PULP) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to reconstitute and make further provision with respect to the Egg and Egg Pulp Marketing Board, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

MEDICAL (REGISTRATION) BILL.

The Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to grant the Medical Board of Victoria discretionary power to accept for registration purposes the qualifications of any alien doctor if, in the opinion of the Board, the exercise of those qualifications would be of benefit to the State. Prior to the second world war few doctors possessing European qualifications came to Victoria. Those who did usually obtained, before leaving Europe, certain easily acquired Italian qualifications which entitled them to registration here. The arrangement was cancelled when Italy entered the war in 1940, and it has not been renewed. Consequently, in 1945, only persons trained as medical practitioners in Victoria or the principal countries of the British Commonwealth, other than Canada or India, could be registered in this State.

In 1946, by Act No. 5151, Part I. of the Medical Acts was amended to permit the registration of certain alien doctors who had been authorized to practise in Victoria during the war years by virtue of the National Security (Alien Doctors) Regulations made by the Commonwealth Government under its National Security Act 1939-1943. Eighteen doctors are still registered under that Act. Although the main purpose of the 1946 Act was to allow certain alien doctors to continue to practise in country districts, the amendment did not have that effect after the National Security Regulations

expired. All alien doctors registered came to Melbourne to practise within a few weeks of registration.

The second amendment easing to some extent the restrictions imposed upon the registration of alien doctors was contained in section 3 of the Medical Act 1950, No. 5498. This amendment enabled the Medical Board to register persons who had completed the final three years of the medical course in an Australian university and training equivalent to the remainder of the course anywhere else in the world. Nine alien doctors have availed themselves of this provision and a further six are at present studying at the University of Melbourne. It is thought advisable to consider further the registration of others. In the war years and the early post-war period, chaotic conditions existed in European and other countries, and some of the most highly qualified medical practitioners who formerly resided there now live in Australia and other parts of the world. Previously, relatively few overseas medical men visited Australia unless they were brought here for research purposes.

Honorable members are aware of the integrity and high calibre of the Medical Board of Victoria. Whenever a Bill to amend the Medical Act has been introduced in Parliament, tributes have been paid to that Board and to the high standard of our medical services. There is no desire by the Government or anyone else concerned with this matter—least of all the Medical Board—to reduce in any way the standard that now prevails. However, it is realized that there are living in the community some persons whose services could be of great value to the State. Many, owing to their financial position, are unable to take advantage of the present legislation and undertake a three-years' medical course. Possibly, they have families and are employed in other spheres of activity to enable them to earn a living.

It is intended that the Medical Board shall be given, at its discretion, the right to register medically qualified persons who, they consider, had special qualifications in the countries of their origin,

and whose services would be useful to Victoria. Persons selected will have to prove that they possess the necessary qualifications. Furthermore, they must be of good character and have an adequate knowledge of English. The latter is desirable, because, in interviewing patients, they must be able to understand what they are told and to give clear instructions.

When the Bill has been passed, Victoria will be brought into line with practically every other State of the Commonwealth in this matter. In other States, the appropriate Board has authority to register practitioners from overseas. The Medical Council of Tasmania has power, until 1959, to select only two doctors a year for a year's training at a hospital. In New South Wales, the conditions are similar to those proposed in the Bill; in Queensland, the authorities will accept persons registered in other States; and in Western Australia, which has not a medical school, there are practically the same conditions as will obtain in Victoria when the legislation is amended. South Australia has gone a little further than Victoria proposes, in that it has reciprocity of registration with Canada, Ceylon, and India. Otherwise, conditions in that State are almost identical with those outlined in the measure I am explaining.

Tasmania has a small population and no medical school of its own; consequently, it draws on Victoria for doctors. However, its requirements are small compared with those of other States. Whenever such a proposal as that embodied in the Bill has been submitted to this Parliament, there has been a realization of the ability and knowledge of medical men who have come from European and other countries. Victoria can, with advantage, utilize their services. It is intended to vest the necessary discretion in the Medical Board, whose integrity, knowledge, and standing in the community will safeguard the high standard of our medical services. I commend the Bill.

On the motion of the Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON (South-Western Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

SUPREME COURT (WARDS OF COURT) BILL.

The Hon. G. S. McARTHUR (Minister of Forests).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The measure has been introduced on the recommendation of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee. Lay members of the House may be surprised to learn that in equity any infant—that is any person under the age of 21 years—can be made a ward of the court by a fund being settled on him and a suit to administer the fund being initiated. This action may be taken without the leave of the court being obtained. Strangely, there is no amount fixed for the fund, and it is not uncommon for an amount as low as 2s. 6d. to be settled on an infant.

It is a serious contempt of court to remove a ward of the court from its jurisdiction, or for the infant to marry without the consent of the court. The settlor need not even be a relation of the infant. Members can thus imagine that the procedure may be subject to grave abuse. In fact, it is sometimes used when spouses become estranged. For example, suppose a woman lives in Sydney and her husband resides in Melbourne, and that they have children. If the husband, by adopting the simple procedure I have outlined, without leave of the court, makes one of the children a ward of the court, it becomes impossible for the wife to take that child out of Victoria. That is a very serious matter. In England, the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1949 was passed in order to correct a similar position that existed there, and to make it necessary for the leave of the court to be obtained before an infant could be made a ward. This measure has the same objective. When it is passed, it will be essential that leave of the court be obtained before an infant can be made a ward.

It would be possible under the present law for a stranger, by adopting the procedure to which I have referred, to make a persons' children wards of the court, and it might be difficult to extricate them from that position. It is important that the Bill be passed. It may come

as a surprise to members to realize that the power I have mentioned is based on the ancient authority of the Lord High Chancellor of England. There is a grave weakness in the law at present, and I invite the House to accept this small but important piece of legislation.

On the motion of the Hon. F. M. THOMAS (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
(BROADMEADOWS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 8) on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province).—I believe this Bill can be dealt with expeditiously. Briefly, it relates to the desire of the Shire of Broadmeadows to be elevated to the status of a city. Under the principal Act, however, it would be necessary for the municipality to pass through the intermediate stage of being declared a borough. Certain difficulties are associated with that requirement, however, and accordingly it is necessary to pass enabling legislation.

The Shire of Broadmeadows has a population of 26,000 and a net annual valuation of £600,000. Its total revenue is £148,000 per annum. The district is situated relatively close to Melbourne. It is only 5½ miles from the General Post Office, at its nearest point, and 13 miles at its most distant point. The Labour party desires that the municipality be proclaimed a city at the earliest possible moment. However, there are constitutional difficulties which preclude that from being done between the months of April and August. Accordingly, a request was submitted to the Minister of Public Works to put in motion machinery for amending the law so that the municipality of Broadmeadows might become a city at an early date.

I urge the Government to ensure that, when Broadmeadows is declared a city, all residents in that district will be

charged for electricity at the rate applicable to the metropolis. My understanding is that, at the present time, some consumers are being charged at the rate applicable to country districts. I assure the House that this concession will be deeply appreciated by local residents.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL (North-Western Province).—The Country party supports the Bill. The Shire of Broadmeadows has the requisite qualifications as to population, valuation and annual revenue to merit its being declared a city. The municipality encompasses a considerable area, including a reservoir and a military encampment. The passage of this measure will not automatically have the effect of the municipality being declared a city, but it will authorize the presentation of a petition to the Governor in Council seeking that action. Accordingly, the status of the municipality will be enhanced. The only potential danger associated with this measure is that because of the considerable area of the municipality—a little over 9 square miles—and its proximity to the City of Melbourne, adjacent municipalities may be tempted to annex portions to their respective territories. In my view, however, the relatively large area of the municipality does not constitute a serious impediment to administration in these days of public transport facilities and modern motor vehicles.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, providing, *inter alia*—

Notwithstanding anything in section sixteen of the principal Act the Governor in Council may declare the Shire of Broadmeadows a city, and Part II. of the principal Act shall with all necessary adaptations be read and construed accordingly; and, in particular, without affecting the generality of the foregoing, the said Act shall be read and construed and have effect as if—

- (b) the power conferred on the Governor in Council by this Act were a power exercisable under paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section thirty-five; and

- (c) in sub-paragraph (iv) of paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section thirty-six for the word "borough" (wherever occurring) there were substituted the word "shire".

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I move—

That the expression commencing "under paragraph (a)" to the end of the clause be omitted, with the view of inserting the words, "without any petition or request in that behalf."

The effect of the amendment will be that the relevant provisions of the principal Act will not apply to the municipality. When this measure becomes law, the Shire of Broadmeadows will petition the Governor in Council to have the shire proclaimed a city, and this amendment will authorize the requisite action to be taken immediately. Accordingly, it is hoped that, before the end of the current month, the municipality will become a city. This amendment is submitted in response to representations from citizens of the district in general and the local council in particular. The Government readily acceded to the request.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted.

The Bill was reported to the House with an amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 8) on the motion of the Hon. A. G. Warner (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. L. TILLEY (South-Eastern Province).—Clause 2 of this small measure will amend the principal Act so as to permit the Melbourne Harbor Trust to lease, for a period of 56 years, land which is within 410 feet of the waterfront. Clause 3 is important, inasmuch as the Trust will be enabled to increase its borrowing power by the sum of £5,000,000. At some time, most members have been privileged to inspect the port of Melbourne and to observe the excellent work performed by the chairman of the Trust and his fellow Commissioners. The Melbourne

Harbor Trust has embarked upon a programme providing for the expenditure on the port of Melbourne of a sum exceeding £9,000,000. A number of most important works are enumerated, but as members have already received a copy of the list, I shall not read them. The enlarging of the entrance to the port, which will cost approximately £2,000,000, has been sought by the Trust for some time.

The Melbourne Harbor Trust may encounter some difficulty in raising a loan of £5,000,000, particularly when it is not guaranteed in any way by the Government. Loans of this type will be difficult to fill when others offer higher rates of interest. However, this Bill will empower the Trust to endeavour to raise that money, and all honorable members hope that the loan is successful in order that important works may be carried out.

Compared with other ports in Australia, and elsewhere in the world the port of Melbourne is something to be proud of. Of course, the main function of a port is to handle expeditiously all import and exports. Unfortunately, Australia's exports have recently decreased and our imports are in a somewhat unsatisfactory state. Even if the requisite imports and exports are forthcoming, however, in order to function properly the port must have a large band of efficient and contented workers. At the mention of wharf labourers, honorable members become interested in the debate, possibly because of the difficulties that have arisen on the waterfront in the past. Members would profit from a visit to the wharves which would enable them to see, on the one hand, the progress made in connexion with the development of the port, and, on the other hand, the inadequate amenities provided for the men. The majority of the 5,000 men employed on the wharves to-day are good Australians anxious to do a good job. They must be provided with satisfactory conditions. Fifteen or twenty years ago, when the port was comparatively small, a different situation obtained. By comparison, the conditions may have been more tolerable. With the huge influx of

migrants to this country in the post-war period, the increased volume of shipping, and the greater number of wharf labourers, additional and improved amenities are essential. I have been furnished with a list of those required and I shall quote some for the information of members. For example, at Station Pier, where three shifts, each comprising 100 men, are engaged, facilities are totally inadequate. Certainly, there is a hot water urn, but the mess hut is capable of accommodating only 100 men, with the result that in bad weather a number of men must sit on the cargo on the pier. There are only five lavatories and there are no shower or washing facilities at all. Lockers are not provided at any locations and, if the men cycle to and from work, there is no suitable place in which to store their machines. From the point of view of the men concerned, these matters are important.

At No. 4 North Wharf, there is no rest hut or washing facilities for wharf labourers and, generally speaking, the area is said to be disgraceful. No facilities are provided for interstate passengers using this wharf. At Altona, there are no toilet facilities and when inclement weather prevents work proceeding, no shelter is available. Many other instances of insufficient and unsatisfactory amenities could be mentioned. These complaints could be easily rectified and so greatly improve conditions on the waterfront. Better conditions must go hand in hand with the progress of the port.

I shall now furnish the House with certain statistics concerning exports and imports and I use as my source of information the sixth report of the Stevedoring Industry Board. This report reveals that, in 1933, the total annual in-and-out cargo in the Australian ports was 20,000,000 tons. To-day, the figure has reached 45,500,000 tons. In other words, the amount of cargo has been more than doubled in the intervening years. As far as the men are concerned, it may prove interesting to note that, in the 1950-51 financial year, the average tonnage of general merchandise handled per gang was 14.20

tons. To-day, the figure per gang has been increased to 15.28 tons. Similar increased tonnages of steel, phosphates, pig iron, sulphur, and, in fact, practically all commodities, are indicated. It has been claimed over the years that men work less and less, a statement contradicted by the figures I have quoted.

Having regard to the difficulties confronting the port authority, it is imperative to have a stable import policy. This is the Federal Government's responsibility. Some time ago—shortly after the present Federal Government assumed office—it was thought that people had too much money to spend and not sufficient to spend it on, and, consequently, import restrictions were lifted. The resultant increased volume of imports caused chaotic conditions in the port of Melbourne, necessitating the employment of a number of additional wharf labourers. At one time, 41 ships were awaiting discharge. If the Federal Government, without due thought for the consequences, lifts import restrictions, and then, after additional men have been employed, decides to re-impose restrictions, the task of planning becomes extremely difficult. A good deal of the trouble encountered in handling huge quantities of cargo arises because the wharves have not been improved sufficiently. Firms which, a few years ago, might have been bringing 50 tons of goods into this country, are now importing 500 tons. I do not think the Melbourne Harbor Trust has been able to keep pace with that expansion and to make storage facilities available for it. Some years ago there was a short strike on the Melbourne wharves, and during that period they were all cleared of their accumulation of goods so that when the workers returned the wharves were entirely empty. Six weeks later, however, they were jammed again so that the men had difficulty in working upon them.

I think that a far larger amount than £5,000,000 will have to be made available to the Melbourne Harbor Trust if it is to do the job that badly needs to be done. I compliment the Trust upon its achievements, but recognize that

there is room for further improvement. I should like some of the requests of the men for amenities to be investigated. Members of this House would do well to examine these matters for themselves, on the spot. They have been the guests of the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners and have been afforded excellent opportunities to see the Commissioners' side of the undertaking. Now I think they might well see for themselves the workers' side and inquire into their complaints.

The remaining clause of the Bill is one with which our party is quite in accord. It merely rectifies an anomaly regarding the salary of the chairman, who is being paid far below the deserts of a man carrying the responsibilities that Mr. Mackenzie is called upon to shoulder.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES (North-Western Province).—The Country party supports this Bill, which contains three provisions with which we are in accord. It is only right that leases of sufficient duration should be given to enable a firm concerned to make improvements that will be worth while. It is also necessary for the borrowing powers of the Trust to be increased so that it may proceed with its work.

The Melbourne Harbor Trust has done a very good job over the years. The port of Melbourne is the best in Australia, but I realize that, even so, I may not be paying it a very high compliment. However, it is a good port even by world standards. Some years ago an expert was brought out by the Commonwealth Government to report on the ports of Australia. He stated that there was no necessity for him to examine the port of Melbourne because it had no real troubles comparable with those of other ports. Melbourne, in fact, was far ahead of all others in Australia.

Not only has the port of Melbourne paid its way, but it has also been a substantial contributor to the Consolidated Revenue, to which it pays about 20 per cent. of its receipts. I think the amount for the current financial year is about £400,000. Altogether, from its receipts the Trust has transferred to the Consolidated Revenue approximately

£6,000,000. I do not know of any other public instrumentality that has achieved the same result. The port authority has a considerable degree of autonomy, and can manage its own affairs very largely without Government interference while working as closely as practicable with the Government of the day.

Fortunately for the State, good management has characterized the Trust's activities. For about two and a half years, I was closely associated with the port authority. During that period there were troubles, but in my term of office as Minister I gained a very great respect for the Melbourne Harbor Trust. Admittedly, mistakes have been made. The man who does not make a mistake never makes anything. The Commissioners would be the first to agree that in the management of their huge enterprise they would have liked to obtain more efficiency in certain directions.

With respect to the immense amount of pilfering that occurs on the waterfront, one can only say that the same trouble is prevalent elsewhere. It would be a good idea if members of this House were to ascertain for themselves just how much has been done to reduce pilfering. I have visited other Australian ports which appeared to be run under Rafferty's rules compared with the port of Melbourne. I support the second reading of this Bill, which provides also for an increase of the salary of the chairman of the Trust. Mr. Mackenzie will certainly not be overpaid. A man who has to administer a huge enterprise such as the port of Melbourne should be remunerated in accordance with the responsibility attaching to his important post.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE (Melbourne North Province).—We support this simple piece of legislation. We consider that the clause which makes provision for leases is sound. Clauses 3 and 4 are propositions of a kind that is becoming monotonous in the records of Parliament. Such provisions appear regularly in legislation with which we are asked to deal. I refer to measures designed to increase the borrowing powers of one public body or another

with a view to providing increased facilities for the public. The purchasing power of the £1 is so reduced to-day that it is common for this institution to agree to the broadening of the restrictions placed by statute upon public bodies.

It is very necessary that the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners should pay reasonable wages in accordance with the responsibilities and duties of their employees. The fault for the constant reduction in the value of the £1 is not, of course, that of this legislature but of the Commonwealth Parliament. As for the amenities provided on the waterfront, I am aware that they are not all that might be desired. The Labour party, by means of comparatively recent legislation, made provision for a member of the waterside workers' union, Mr. Cummings, to become a member of the Melbourne Harbor Trust. Through that channel the workers on the wharves are now enabled to have their requirements brought directly before the authority. This measure is necessary mainly because of the depreciation of the purchasing power of our currency, and I repeat that we support it.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

NORTH CARLTON LAND BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

WATER (COMPENSATION) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. E. P. CAMERON (Minister of Health), was read a first time.

PROCESS SERVERS AND INQUIRY AGENTS BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.

ADJOURNMENT.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS: CHARACTER
OF MINISTERIAL REPLIES.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—By leave, I move—

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next.

The motion was agreed to.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

I ask leave of the House to permit me to add some further information to the answers to the questions asked by Mr. Paul Jones to-day.

The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).—Mr. Paul Jones has shown me the further details, and I think they come within the scope of a generally expressed answer to a general question. By leave of the House, they may be added to the answer and recorded in *Hansard*.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON (South-Western Province).—I wish to bring before the House a matter that I view with grave concern and which will have a serious bearing on the conduct of this institution. Indeed, it could have serious repercussions for every member as well as affect the democratic rights of the electors of this State. You, Mr. President, recently made a passing reference to the fact that propaganda should not appear in answers to members' questions and to the fact that questions, when placed upon the Notice Paper, became the property of the House and should be properly answered. Last week, I asked the Minister of Transport whether the police, on Saturday, 28th April, 1956, investigated overloading of a street passenger transport system in Geelong. I do not blame the Minister for the reply he gave, but I am disturbed about the character of the answer. The honorable gentleman's reply was "No." He then suggested that I repeat my question, and went on to say that although the police had not made an investigation, certain other officials had done so. Last evening, the answer to my repeated question was to the effect that the Transport

Regulation Board had this matter under supervision, but that no investigation had been made.

The PRESIDENT.—What is Mr. Ferguson's point—is he suggesting that the answer is not a proper one?

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—I am suggesting that greater care should be exercised in replying to questions. I have in my possession a statutory declaration sworn by a man who was travelling on a bus in Geelong at a certain time.

The PRESIDENT.—I want to ascertain whether this matter is a proper one to be raised on the ordinary motion for the adjournment of the House. Is Mr. Ferguson attacking the truthfulness of the answer, or does he say that it is insufficient?

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—It is not an accurate answer.

The PRESIDENT.—Mr. Ferguson wishes to present that view on the motion for the adjournment?

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—Yes.

The PRESIDENT.—I cannot stop the honorable member.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—When a person is prepared to swear that he was a passenger on a bus which a police car followed, that a police officer stopped the bus, boarded it, and questioned the driver regarding overloading, such a declaration is not made lightly. Another passenger counted 47 people on a bus licensed to carry 33—the 47 not including children sitting on their mothers' knees. Several local people wrote to me concerning excessive overcrowding on the Geelong buses, and so I placed a question concerning the matter on the Notice Paper. I do not blame the Minister for the answer, but I believe that there is something wrong with the way in which we are treated in this institution—possibly by departmental officials. If members cannot obtain accurate details in answer to questions, that is a grave reflection on this Parliamentary institution. I have a letter here from a man who states—

Please come and do something for us. I am working at the Ford industry and we are forced to travel worse than cattle.

There appears to be some concerted action by responsible officials of this famous private enterprise transport system to suppress public criticism of the unsatisfactory service that is given. When a member of this Chamber cannot receive an accurate answer to a question and one that gives the full facts, I think it is a bad day for democracy.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport) (*By leave*).—On the day when Mr. Ferguson asked me about police investigations concerning overcrowding of buses at Geelong, I caused inquiries to be made by the Police Department. I received a reply to the effect that no investigation had been made. That does not mean that police officers may not have stopped a bus in Geelong. I thought that Mr. Ferguson might have had some other reason for asking the question, and I suggested that he repeat it in another form. I realize that attempts are being made to criticize the new bus service operating in Geelong and I wanted to be very careful when answering the question. The Transport Regulation Board which has this matter in hand, has been instructed—in view of the criticism that might be expected—to take precautions to see that there is no undue overloading of buses. There was some incident on the day referred to by Mr. Ferguson, but there has been no investigation of the type contemplated by him, nor has there been any incident, so far as I am aware, that would require any special inquiry. I am quite prepared to allow Mr. Ferguson to peruse any reports or correspondence in my possession relating to the matter.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON (South-Western Province) (*By leave*).—I realize that the Minister of Transport has to rely on departmental officials for answers to questions asked in this Chamber. I ask the Minister to probe the matter further and to ascertain whether or not a police officer did board the bus to which I have referred. I am prepared to make available to him all the information that I have in my possession. I consider that the Minister should go further and ensure that the

policing of buses in Geelong, to prevent overloading, is properly carried out. I bring this matter to your notice, Mr. President, because I believe it is the right of every member in this Chamber to ask questions and that there is an obligation on Ministers to ensure that accurate answers are furnished. If this principle is not carried out, Parliament will lose its effectiveness as a democratic institution. I urge the Minister of Transport to check the matter with the Police Department. It is beside the point whether the police officer reported his investigations or not. My question was whether the police made an investigation, and I was more or less brushed off with the reply, "No." According to a traveller on the bus, who is prepared to make a statutory declaration, that is not correct. The person to whom I refer observed the police car following the bus, the policeman enter it, engage the driver in conversation, and heard the officer say that the bus was overloaded. Evidently, it was considered to be unsafe by the police. On the other hand, the Minister has stated that the inspectors of the Transport Regulation Board did not observe any abnormality. When members ask questions they should receive proper and truthful answers after full inquiries have been made in the Departments concerned.

The Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I shall be happy to investigate the matter raised by Mr. Ferguson in the light of information which he can supply. Perhaps difficulty has been encountered because of the use of the word "investigation." If the police carried out merely a routine check, which they are doing all the time, it would probably not be considered an investigation. The police and officers of the Transport Regulation Board are taking every precaution to ensure that under the new scheme there is no abnormal loading in peak periods to the danger of the travelling public.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.48 p.m. until Tuesday, May 15.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, May 9, 1956.

The **SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald)** took the chair at 2.36 p.m., and read the prayer.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).
—By leave, I move—

That a chair be provided on the floor of the House for Lieutenant-General James Harold Doolittle, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Congressional Medal of Honour, G.F.C. and G.S.M. with Oak-leaf Clusters, Air Medal with three Oak-leaf Clusters, Silver Star, Legion d'Honneur (France), and Croix de Guerre (Belgium).

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).
—I have much pleasure in seconding the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

LANDS DEPARTMENT.

ALBERT PARK RESERVE.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond) asked the Minister of Lands—

1. Whether an area of the Albert Park reserve has been enclosed by a fence and the public excluded unless payment of an admission charge or donation is made?

2. Whether permission to fence this park was refused by a previous Government?

3. If he will lay on the table of the Library the appropriate files relating to permission to fence this land?

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL (Minister of Lands).—The answers are as follows:—

1. An inspection of the Albert Park Reserve has failed to disclose that any area has been enclosed by a fence except those of long standing occupied by St. Kilda Cricket Club, South Melbourne Cricket Club, tennis courts, and bowling greens. A wing fence has been erected at the rear of the night golf practice site, but this fence does not enclose any area.

2. There is no official record to confirm that permission to fence was refused by a previous Government, but according to press cuttings I have seen it would appear that one of my predecessors discouraged the erection of a fence to enclose a soccer and cycling area.

3. Yes.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

MARRIED WOMEN TEACHERS.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg) asked the Minister of Education—

1. How many married women teachers are employed in the Education Department?

2. Whether any consideration has been given by the Government to the question of superannuation rights for such teachers?

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—The answers are—

1. As at 16th March, 1956, which is the latest date for which figures are now available, 2,070.

2. Yes.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN BOARD OF WORKS.

TOWN PLANNING: SITES FOR HOTELS.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. How many applications have been made to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, as the Town Planning Authority, for approval of sites for proposed hotels?

2. How many approvals have been issued?

3. How many requests for approval have been—(a) refused; and (b) granted subject to conditions which are unacceptable to the applicants?

4. How many appeals have been made to the Minister against the decisions of the Board; and how many of such appeals have been allowed?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—The answers are—

1. Fifteen (five applications still under consideration).

2. Five (including 3 (b)).

3. (a) Five; (b) one.

4. Three such appeals have been made to the Minister but none of them has yet been determined.

METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY: EXPENDITURE ON DRAINAGE WORKS.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. When it is expected that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works will be in a position to ensure that an adequate water supply is available to the metropolitan area, and what is the estimated cost involved?

2. What amount was spent by the Board in each of the five financial years prior to 30th June, 1955, on major water supply improvements, and how much has been spent this financial year?

3. What is the estimated cost of the Board's programme for drainage works in the metropolitan area for the next three financial years?

4. What amount was spent in each of the three financial years prior to 30th June, 1955, on drainage works in the metropolitan area, and how much has been spent this financial year?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—The answers are—

1. With the Upper Yarra Dam approaching completion and other headworks well advanced adequate overall supplies of water will be available to the metropolitan area by 1958, but further service reservoirs and large distribution mains are required within the metropolitan area to give reasonable supplies to the north-western and western suburbs and other local areas at periods of peak demand.

A total of £15,000,000 is required for water supply works over the next five years (including £5,000,000 for 1956-57) to complete these works and keep abreast for further development.

2. Actual expenditure on water supply improvements in recent years was as follows:—

	£
1950-51	1,831,000
1951-52	2,728,000
1952-53	2,120,000
1953-54	2,532,000
1954-55	3,600,000
1955-56 (to 24th April, 1956)	3,631,000

3. The estimated expenditure on main drainage (including river and stream improvement works) for the next three years, subject to the necessary loan funds and labour being available, is—

	£
1956-57	1,050,000
1957-58	750,000
1958-59	750,000

4. The amounts spent on main drainage works (including river and stream improvement works) are as under:—

	£
1952-53	729,629
1953-54	416,477
1954-55	481,075
1955-56 (to 24th April, 1956)	545,768

LOAN FUNDS.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

What amount of loan funds was raised by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in each of the five financial years prior to 30th June, 1955, and what amount has been raised this financial year?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), Sir Thomas Maltby (Minister of Public Works).—I would ask leave of the House to incorporate in *Hansard* the reply, which is in the form of a table.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Leave is granted.

The table was as follows:—

Financial Year.	New Money Borrowings.	Conversion of Maturing Loans.	Total Loan Raisings.
	£	£	£
1950-51 ..	3,129,200	2,380,650	5,509,850
1951-52 ..	3,716,235	2,112,820	5,829,055
1952-53 ..	4,069,450	4,035,450	8,104,900
1953-54 ..	3,289,800	3,793,500	7,083,300
1954-55 ..	4,850,000	4,566,350	9,416,350
1955-56 (to date) ..	3,145,425	804,575	3,950,000

SEWERAGE.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. What was the number of unsewered homes in the metropolitan area—(a) on 1st July, 1940; (b) in each succeeding twelve months up to 1st July, 1955; and (c) on 31st March, 1956?

2. When it is anticipated that homes unsewered on 31st March, 1956, will be connected to sewerage and what is the estimated cost?

3. Whether the Melbourne sewerage system is designed to serve one million people, and whether this figure represents the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works estimate of the maximum population which will be reached in the metropolitan area?

4. What enlargement of the Board's existing major trunk system will be required, and what is the estimated cost?

5. What number of new sewerage connexions will be required annually to meet the growing needs of the metropolitan area, and what is the estimated cost of this work?

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—The answers are—

1. The estimated numbers of unsewered homes in the metropolitan area, on the dates stated, are:—

1st July, 1940 ..	16,287
1st July, 1941 ..	16,104
1st July, 1942 ..	15,888
1st July, 1943 ..	16,390
1st July, 1944 ..	16,549

1st July, 1945 ..	16,809
1st July, 1946 ..	17,195
1st July, 1947 ..	18,392
1st July, 1948 ..	18,365
1st July, 1949 ..	20,071
1st July, 1950 ..	27,582
1st July, 1951 ..	32,867
1st July, 1952 ..	34,376
1st July, 1953 ..	40,125
1st July, 1954 ..	44,665
1st July, 1955 ..	53,857
31st March, 1956 ..	60,000

It should be noted that about one-third of these houses are in sparsely-settled areas, which in their present state of development could not be economically provided with sewerage facilities.

2. The estimated cost of providing sewers for unsewered houses in areas where the density of development is such that the construction of sewers would be economically justified, totals £9,000,000. The Board is at present proceeding with the construction of sewers for these unsewered houses, but the date by which the work would be completed depends on the loan funds available to the Board for this purpose.

However, it is necessary that the general improvement and amplification of the sewerage system must proceed concurrently, in order to provide the necessary capacity throughout the system.

The Board's tentative programme for the next ten years requires an annual expenditure of £4,000,000 on normal extensions to the sewerage system, apart from general improvements and amplification works. If this amount were available, the majority of existing unsewered houses in reasonably settled areas would be provided for within approximately five years.

3. The existing metropolitan sewerage system was designed for a population of 1,000,000 persons. The estimated number of persons at present contributing to the main system is 1,230,000. Certain sections of the system do not now have adequate capacity and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has adopted a scheme of amplification and improvement to provide for the future development of the metropolis. The estimated population on which this scheme is based is 2,500,000 persons, which it is anticipated could be reached about the year 2000 A.D.

4. The estimated cost of enlarging the Board's existing major trunk system, including works at the Metropolitan Farm and the main outfall sewer, as well as new pumping stations, main sewers and sewage treatment works, is as under:—

Stage 1	£5,340,000
2	4,750,000
3	12,590,000
4	5,000,000
Total	£27,680,000

The works included in stage 1 have actually been commenced and are programmed for completion by 1960.

5. The number of new sewerage connexions required will depend on the number of new houses built within reasonably closely settled areas. At the present rate of development in the metropolis, it is estimated that approximately 10,000 new connexions would be required per annum. To provide the necessary extensions of the sewerage system to keep pace with such development would require an annual expenditure of approximately £3,000,000, in addition to the £9,000,000 for the sewerage of the existing unsewered houses.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

GOVERNMENT COOL STORES: RECONSTRUCTION.

Mr. MOSS (Murray Valley) asked Mr. Fraser (Honorary Minister), for the Minister of Agriculture—

1. Whether it is the intention of the Government to extend the present capacity of the Government Cool Stores in Melbourne; if so—(a) by how many cubic feet and at what cost; (b) from what source the necessary funds will be derived; and (c) how long it will take to complete the proposed additions?

2. If he will lay on the table of the Library any file relating to this matter?

Mr. FRASER (Honorary Minister).—The Minister of Agriculture has supplied the following answers:—

1. (a) The Government has approved of the erection of a new block at the Government Cool Stores which will provide an additional 66,000 cubic feet of space at an estimated cost of approximately £50,000. This work has already been commenced.

The erection of this block is the first step in a programme for the demolition of the original wooden section of the stores which was erected in 1914 and is now obsolescent, and its reconstruction to provide an additional 204,000 cubic feet at an estimated cost of approximately £450,000.

The erection of the new block is necessary to prevent loss of storage space during the period of reconstruction.

(b) The loan funds allocated to this State.

(c) It is hoped to have the new block of 66,000 cubic feet in operation towards the end of the present year.

The complete plan of reconstruction is designed to extend over four years, but the rate at which it will be possible for the work to be carried out will depend on the amount of loan funds made available to this State, and will be subject to review in the light of the cool storage business offering to the Government Cool Stores.

2. Yes, but as the file is in use in connexion with this work, it is not desired that it should remain on the Library table for an extended period.

PENAL DEPARTMENT.

BALLARAT GAOL.

Mr. WHITE (Ballarat North) asked the Chief Secretary—

Whether it is the intention of the Government to close the Ballarat Gaol; if so, whether the land will be reserved for educational purposes?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—It is not the intention of the Government to close the Ballarat Gaol.

HOME FINANCE BILL (No. 2).

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), **Mr. Rylah** moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to a Home Finance Trust, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (BORROWING) BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 58 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1944.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

OPERATION GRATITUDE RACE MEETING BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize the holding of a race-meeting at the Moonee Valley racecourse on 15th August, 1956, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (LIABILITY OF PATIENTS) BILL.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend Part V. of the Hospitals and Charities Act 1948.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—

By leave, I move—

That this Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).

—I do not want to embarrass the Honorary Minister (**Mr. Porter**) because I know that he is not in charge of the Department of Health, but I should like a brief explanation of what is proposed by this measure.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—I point out that questions are not appropriate at this stage; they should be asked on another occasion. However, in this instance, the Minister may answer the Leader of the Opposition. In future, this type of debate must be reserved for the second-reading stage or, alternatively, on the motion to bring in the Bill.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—The Bill is quite a short one to enable hospital committees to make provision for a test as to the income of patients in relation to payments due to these institutions.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald in the chair)—

Ayes	35
Noes	20

Majority for the motion 15

AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Moss
Mr. Christie	Mr. Petty
Mr. Cochrane	Mr. Porter
Mr. Cook	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Fraser	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Guye	Mr. Snider
Mr. Holden	Mr. Stanistreet
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Tanner
Mr. Kane	Mr. Taylor
Sir George Knox	Mr. Turnbull
Sir Albert Lind	(Kara Kara)
Mr. Loxton	Mr. White
Mr. MacDonald	Mr. Wilcox
(Burwood)	Mr. Wiltshire.
Sir Thomas Maltby	Tellers:
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Barclay
Mr. Mibus	Mr. Suggett.

NOES.

Mr. Clarey	Mr. Ruthven
Mr. Connell	Mr. Schintler
Mr. Crick	Mr. Scully
Mr. Doube	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Drakeford	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Fennessy	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Floyd	Mr. Towers.
Mr. Holland	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Lovegrove	Mr. Todd
Mr. Mutton	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Ring	(Brunswick West).

PAIRS.

Mr. Bolte	Mr. Cain
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Macdonald
	(Geelong West).

RAILWAYS (COMMISSIONERS)
BILL.

Mr. FRASER (Honorary Minister).—

I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This is a Bill to amend Division 2 of Part III. of the Railways Act 1928. Following the death of Mr. R. G. Wishart, who was chairman of Commissioners of the Railway Department, and rendered worthy service to the State, the Government advertised in Australia and overseas in order to ensure that the best man obtainable was appointed to the vacancy. It was decided that the wonderful qualifications and experience of Mr. Edgar Brownbill, who has served in the Victorian Railways for more than 30 years, were so outstanding as to warrant his appointment as chairman. It is proposed to appoint Mr. Oscar Meyer, who was a close runner-up for the position, as deputy chairman, and to pay him a salary of £4,500 per annum.

Mr. CAIN.—What do you mean by stating that Mr. Meyer was a close runner-up for the position?

Mr. FRASER.—I shall allow the Leader of the Opposition to place his own interpretation upon what I said. Mr. Norman Quail, who has rendered admirable service as secretary for Railways for a number of years and is well known to members, is to be appointed as the third Commissioner at a remuneration of £4,000 per annum. The basic salary of £4,000 is only £285 above the salaries awarded by the Federal Arbitration Court for senior heads of branches in the railways. Accordingly, the salary cannot be considered in any

way excessive. It will be noticed that the salary of the chairman is fixed at a maximum of £6,000, and it is proposed to pay him, for the time being, the sum of £5,500. Provision for cost-of-living adjustment is not included for any of the Commissioners, and this fact must be taken into consideration in comparing their salaries with those of the heads of other Departments who at present enjoy cost-of-living additions to their salaries.

Clause 2 of the Bill embodies an amendment of the Act to allow of the appointment of a deputy chairman. Sub-clause (2) of clause 2 provides for the deputy chairman to act in the absence of the chairman. Provision for the salaries of the three Commissioners is made in clause 3. The last clause is merely a transitory provision to ensure the legal status of the appointees and their salaries, and to secure the position of the Railways Commissioners which might otherwise be damaged by the passing of this Bill.

On the motion of **Mr. CAIN** (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

HOUSING (SLUM RESEARCH
OFFICER) BILL.

Mr. PETTY (Minister of Housing).—

I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a short Bill which amends the Housing Act to provide for the appointment of a slum research officer. When the Housing Commission was formed under the Act of 1937, the objects of the Commission were the improvement of existing housing conditions and the provision of adequate and suitable accommodation for persons of limited means. The immediate duties of the Commission were then stated to be—

To formulate and submit to the Governor in Council detailed schemes (with estimates of the cost thereof) for meeting the most urgent requirements in respect of the provision of suitable and adequate housing for persons of limited means and the reclamation and rebuilding of insanitary areas.

The objects and duties of the Commission have been varied from time to time, and since 1945 this body's main

function has been the provision of housing for rental purposes throughout Victoria, slum reclamation having been pushed into the background. The policy of the Government is to proceed with slum reclamation, and for this purpose the activities of the Housing Commission will have to be increasingly directed to that phase of the housing question.

Although many organizations and so-called experts have produced voluminous reports and statements—many of which conflict—the Housing Commission has not made an overall study of the slum problem in Victoria in recent years. To enable that work to be undertaken, the Government proposes to create this senior position of “slum research officer”. The person appointed to that office will advise the Government on the matters involved. The inquiry is to be extended throughout Victoria, because there are sub-standard houses and slum conditions in some country districts, more particularly where aborigines are accommodated. It is intended that the slum research officer will not be restricted by present or future commitments of the Housing Commission, whose work in the rehousing field is well known and differs so radically from that associated with slum abolition projects.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, May 16.

THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS) BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This short measure amends the Constitution Act Amendment Act 1928 so as to bring the attendance fees payable to members of the Public Accounts Committee into conformity with those paid to members of other select committees, such as the Statute Law Revision Committee. At this stage, I need not elaborate on the duties of the Public Accounts Committee; they have been fully discussed in this House and members are aware of the work the

committee is now undertaking. The Bill limits the total amount of attendance fees that can be paid in any one financial year to £2,000. There is no provision in the Act for the payment to the members of the Public Accounts Committee of travelling expenses, as are paid to other committees, and the Bill rectifies that position also. Similar legislation has been before Parliament from time to time, and, therefore, it is unnecessary for me to make a long explanatory speech.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

NORTH CARLTON LAND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 2) on the motion of Mr. K. H. Turnbull (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—The Minister of Lands, in his second-reading speech, conveyed to the House little information other than the fact that it was proposed to revoke the North Carlton Lands Act 1920, in so far as it relates to the area of land in Pigdon-street, North Carlton, covered by this measure. Accordingly, the property concerned will revert to the Crown, without any reservations whatever. In all, 4 acres of land are involved, of which area it is now proposed to transfer $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres to the Housing Commission, and the remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ acre to the committee of management of the Mount Royal home for aged persons.

Much discussion has taken place concerning this land because of the fact that it has not been applied to any particularly useful purpose by the Melbourne City Council, in which body its control has been vested. The council uses it only as a store yard, to house road-making materials and heavy equipment. I think all members will agree that land eminently suitable for housing should be used for that purpose. Unfortunately, most of the land that has previously been made available to the Housing Commission has been on the outskirts of the metropolis. The Housing Commission intends to erect a block of flats on the North

Carlton land, and it is anticipated that approximately 120 flats will be provided, consisting of one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units.

Possibly the Minister of Housing has some ideas of his own concerning the matter, other than those that were formulated during the discussions that took place between the Melbourne City Council and the Housing Commission. I have seen the plan in relation to the housing scheme, concerning which I think there is no secrecy. Much publicity has been afforded it by the *Herald* and other daily newspapers. I trust that the flats that are to be erected will provide residences for some of my constituents and also some of the constituents of my colleague, the honorable member for Carlton. I should be interested to learn from the Minister of Housing just when the Commission intends to start building on this site. That aspect is of considerable importance, in view of the fact that the land is in close proximity to the City of Melbourne and that there are transport facilities on all sides. Roads do not need to be constructed, because the land is bordered by beautiful thoroughfares that are maintained by the Melbourne City Council.

The area has a natural setting of bush trees and, all in all, it will make an admirable Housing Commission site. Access to the flats will be provided by paths from the roads to each block. Accordingly, constructional costs should be much lower than would be the case if the flats were to be erected in an unsewered district, where roads were unmade and water supplies were lacking. All of the services I have mentioned are on the spot, as is also electric current. Further, the Bill provides for the transfer of $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land to the committee of management of Mount Royal. This proposal reminds me of a scheme that was originally propounded by the Melbourne City Council to build homes for the aged. The Melbourne City Council then considered the proposition of building homes for rental, but, as previously indicated by me in this House, it did not have the requisite authority under the

Act to undertake such work. Consequently, the council decided to transfer its interest in the land to the two organizations previously mentioned, namely, the Housing Commission and the committee of management of the Mount Royal home for the aged.

The original plan provided that the Melbourne City Council should advance £300,000 towards the cost of the building and that the Government should find the balance. When this plan was discarded, the council contemplated the construction of "Darby and Joan" flats for the aged. In order to implement this proposal a housing committee was established within the council. Before the work could be commenced, it was necessary to raise the full amount of money required. It was then ascertained that if the land was made over to a special committee, under the jurisdiction of the committee of management of the Mount Royal home for the aged, application could be made to the Commonwealth Government for a grant on the basis of £2 for £1 raised locally. Upon the recommendation of the housing committee of the Melbourne City Council, a new committee—consisting of five members of the committee of management of the Mount Royal home for the aged and five members of the Melbourne City Council—was formed. It is proposed that the committee will raise as much money as possible and, on the recommendation of the Melbourne City Council's housing committee, the council will contribute £25,000 towards the cost. Furthermore, from information at my disposal, I understand that the State Government is prepared to make available a similar amount, on a promise said to have been made by the Minister of Housing. If the Commonwealth Government assisted the project on a £2 for £1 basis, the sum available would be £150,000. The estimated total cost of construction of the "Darby and Joan" flats, which will comprise 96 single units, is £250,000. It is understood that the Hospitals and Charities Commission will provide 75 per cent. of this amount, namely, £187,500, making the grand total £337,500. This sum is considerably

in excess of the estimated cost of construction of £250,000. Of course, honorable members readily understand that the estimated cost could be greatly exceeded.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The cost of furnishings must also be added.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I have not taken furnishings into consideration and that may account for the difference in the figures. If the estimated cost of £250,000 proved correct, the cost of each of the 96 units would be approximately £2,500. However, the building will comprise five stories, and such facilities as electric lifts, an amenities block, and staff quarters on the ground floor, will be provided. Consequently, it could not justifiably be claimed that each unit will cost £2,500. Perhaps an estimate of between £2,000 and £2,300 would be more accurate.

The Minister has not given his official approval to the Melbourne City Council's proposal, and in view of the fact that the Housing Commission is considering the provision of prefabricated units for aged pensioners, an alternative scheme may emerge. Perhaps the Minister will supply information on that aspect during the Committee stage. The project appears somewhat costly, although a good deal of expensive plumbing work will be involved as each unit will contain a kitchen, a shower recess, wash-hand basin, and so on.

Having regard to the Government's financial interest in this enterprise, the personnel of the proposed committee should be extended to include two members of Parliament. The Opposition recommends that the honorable member for Carlton and I be chosen. The area of land concerned is in my electorate, Brunswick East, and borders on the Carlton electorate. We consider that to be a reasonable suggestion in view of the fact that the Government is making a big contribution to this scheme. It is a rather lopsided arrangement that the Melbourne City Council, which will provide only £25,000 of the money needed to develop the area, should have in effect 50 per cent. of the representation on the committee. When this scheme was originally proposed it was expected to be

supplementary to slum demolition work to take place in Carlton. Therefore, I consider added weight is given to the suggestion that the honorable member for Carlton should be one of the representatives of this House on the committee, and that I should be the other.

Many of the old people who will eventually make application to take up residence in the buildings to be provided will probably come from the built-up areas of Brunswick and Carlton. I understand that the committee to be set up will be subsidiary to the committee of management of Mount Royal. It is possible, therefore, that some of the old persons who will be housed in the buildings to be erected may entertain the idea that they are entering an institution, and that could have a bad psychological effect. My idea is that this project should be on the same lines as the Old Colonists Homes, the occupants of which have the privilege of being able to do as they wish at any time, and to participate in the community amenities only when they desire to do so. If emphasis is lent to the institutional aspect, the effect on old people is rather frightening. I suggest that any publicity given to this scheme should make it quite clear that the homes to be provided will not form part of an institution.

Interested persons should be told that although the scheme will to some extent be controlled by the Mount Royal authorities, the occupants of the homes will be given the right to move around freely at all times. It may be that these persons will be required to pay only a small rental, as is charged now under certain community schemes, and that they will look after themselves completely if they so desire. It is expected that an amenities block will be provided in order that meals can be served to the aged who cannot fend for themselves. I consider the purpose of this Bill is not merely to effect a reversion of land to the Crown without any restrictions, and I wish to make clear some points which were not explained in the second-reading speech of the Minister of Lands. I hope the Government will give consideration to the suggestions I have

made, particularly that regarding the representation of this House on the committee of management.

Mr. HOLLAND (Flemington).—I have two reasons for speaking. One is that I am a member of that august body, the Melbourne City Council, and the second is that the original proponent of this housing scheme was my late father when he was a member of the council. In 1945 he made the laudable suggestion that the area concerned should be used for a municipal housing project for aged persons. However, he was a little ahead of general opinion in the Melbourne City Council and could not induce his colleagues to realize the urgent need for such homes. The proposal was taken up a little later by Councillor O. J. Nilsen who worked hard on it and prepared a scheme which received consideration by the council. His idea was that the homes should be partially a municipal responsibility and partially governmental. That allocation of responsibility was rejected, and eventually the present scheme was brought forward by the housing committee of the city council, under the chairmanship of Councillor Evans. The council considers that housing is a governmental responsibility; in other words, it does not seem to be prepared to regard the provision of homes as a municipal function. However, examining the proposal from the angle of local government, it appears to me to be one of the few ways in which municipalities can co-operate with the Housing Commission in solving the social problem of housing people who cannot afford to provide shelter for themselves. I think the Melbourne City Council should be commended for the scheme it has propounded.

The use of the 3½ acres referred to in this Bill will be only the first instalment. The council hopes that when the new buildings have been completed they will be used as a clearing centre for persons living in slum pockets in the Melbourne area generally. I have no doubt that in time that measure of co-operation between the Melbourne City Council and the Housing Commission will enable the "dead" residential areas of the City

of Melbourne to be rebuilt. If municipalities generally adopted a similar attitude to slum abolition, that worthy objective would be achieved much more quickly than appears likely at present. The mere appointment of a slum research officer by the Housing Commission will not in itself produce results. Co-operation between the Housing Commission and municipalities could be a major factor in solving this great problem. The Melbourne City Council should be commended by Parliament for the part it has played in the scheme.

I am particularly concerned with the residue of about three-quarters of an acre of land at North Carlton which is to be transferred to some body for the purpose of providing housing for aged people. All honorable members will agree that any attempt to house elderly people who are unable to look after themselves satisfactorily, and who are at present living in poor conditions, is laudable. I do not know whether it is possible for the Bill to be amended so as to effect the transfer of the land I have mentioned to the Princes Hill Village, which is under the control of a combined committee of the Melbourne City Council and the committee of management of Mount Royal. The proposal is urgent, and if it cannot be achieved by amending the measure now before the House, I hope the Government will take early action to effect the transfer. It is proposed to build on the land a three-story unit fitted with two lifts, one of which will be capable of carrying stretchers. It will be more costly than the type of pre-fabricated units suggested by the Minister of Housing, for which the rental would be about 35s. a week. The idea is to house elderly people until they are incapable of looking after themselves, when they will be transferred to the Mount Royal home.

I urge the Government to take early legislative action to transfer the title of the land concerned, so that the committee will be able to proceed with the project. If that is not done before the conclusion of the session, the scheme will be unduly delayed. I commend the Bill, but urge the Government to implement the request of the Melbourne City Council to the Lands Department on the

point I have mentioned. I understand the letter was forwarded to the secretary of the Department on 10th April.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg).—The Bill is a step in the right direction because it will assist in housing aged persons. The previous Government acquired land on the Fawkner estate in 1946, and in 1948 the Broadmeadows council, of which I was a member, unanimously decided that provision should be made on the estate for housing aged people. The council sponsored a deputation to the then Minister of Housing, who is now the Minister of Transport. The honorable gentleman dealt with the housing problem then presented to him in a similar manner to his present treatment of transport requirements in the district. It is only commonsense that when a Government acquires land for housing purposes it should provide in its plans for the care of aged people. During the period between 1946 and 1949 much was stated about what would be done for the aged, but I regret that nothing has been accomplished. I do not know what is the Government's intention concerning land acquired for housing purposes. In that regard no action has been taken in my district since about 1951 or 1952. In fact, the place is at a standstill. I should like to know whether the Government intends to build on the land taken up there or to sell it. The McDonald Government acquired 5,500 acres in the area alongside the Hume Highway extending from Greenvale to Fawkner and Broadmeadows. It was stated that a city would be built there overnight, so to speak. Something like 50,000 tenants were envisaged, which would have made the community twice as large as Coburg. No provision was made in the original plan for accommodation for the aged; in my view, that is most deplorable. Does the Government intend to dispose of the property to which I have referred, and if so, will the land be available for purchase by members of co-operative housing societies?

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—The honorable member for Coburg is grossly wide of the mark in his debate on this measure. I do not want him to pursue the present line any

further. I ask him to return to a discussion of the subject matter of the Bill.

Mr. MUTTON.—I have been a member of this House for a long time and I have never ceased to take the opportunity—

The SPEAKER.—This is not the opportunity.

Mr. MUTTON.—During a debate in this Chamber yesterday, many irrelevant matters were discussed. Since I have been a member of this institution no Government has made provision for aged people. In my opinion, this Bill takes a step in that direction, and I trust that the Government will continue the good work. A certain municipal council decided unanimously, in its wisdom—and in fact, sent a deputation to the Minister of Housing—to make provision for the aged in an area in which it was interested. I consider that it is only reasonable that I should seize every opportunity, on behalf of the aged people of Victoria, to ensure that proper accommodation is provided for them. I ask the Minister of Housing to ignore what was done by a previous Minister in 1948 and realize that it is desirable to provide houses for the aged in any area in which the Housing Commission proposes to build homes. Nothing has been done for elderly people for years. I am sure that members of all parties find it difficult to get an elderly person admitted to a home for aged people. Quite recently I was unable to have a person in an advanced stage of senility admitted to an institution or old people's home. That is a blot on the social history of Victoria.

I pay the highest of tributes to the superintendents of those institutions; I am sure they are doing their best under the circumstances, whereas this Parliament does nothing. I agree with the honorable member for Flemington when he said that surely we owe a duty to persons who are in the twilight of their lives and need assistance. I believe that the provisions of this measure will act as an incentive to the

Government to make more accommodation available for the aged. A municipal council that will approach a Minister and ask that houses be provided for old persons must surely be acting in good faith and abiding by the code of good citizenship. I ask the Minister to investigate the position to ascertain whether much more can be achieved in the direction indicated.

Mr. PETTY (Minister of Housing).—With your concurrence, Mr. Speaker, I propose to reply briefly to certain points raised by the honorable member for Coburg. The Fawcner estate, to which the honorable member referred, is not mentioned in this Bill, but I do know that promises were given regarding houses for the aged when that land was acquired. However, I assure the honorable member that the Government has this problem prominently in mind. This measure was introduced because of approaches I made some months ago to the Melbourne City Council when I asked that organization what it proposed to do with the land in the vicinity of Pigdon-street. I had ascertained from a perusal of Housing Commission files that negotiations concerning this area had been in progress for more than five years. Following my discussion with the council, at the end of last year it was decided that it should retain approximately three-quarters of an acre of the land fronting Pigdon-street and permit the Housing Commission to obtain the remaining $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres for housing purposes. A committee associated with the Melbourne City Council proposes to erect "Darby and Joan" flats on the three-quarters of an acre first mentioned. I emphasize that the committee to which I have referred is in no way connected with the Housing Commission, but the Commission will assist that body in any way it can. On the $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres the Commission proposes to erect between 120 and 150 flats comprising one-bedroom, two-bedrooms and three-bedrooms, to accommodate small and larger families.

As was suggested by a member of the Opposition, those flats will be used to house people who are at present living in slum pockets in the city and inner

suburbs. The houses in the slum areas will be demolished immediately they are vacated. Thus, the homes erected on the land mentioned in this measure will serve a double purpose. The committee to which I have previously referred proposes to erect 96 flats in the area and will work in association with the committee of management of the Mount Royal institution to take care of the elderly people who will occupy those units. The link-up with the Mount Royal organization will be particularly valuable because the services of nurses, as well as medical assistance, will thus be available whenever required. If aged persons become completely bedridden, I should imagine that they will be removed from the flats and admitted to the hospital at Mount Royal.

I point out that I am not a member of this committee and I cannot, therefore, speak with authority on what it proposes to do. However, honorable members may rest assured that as soon as this Bill is passed the Housing Commission will proceed to the completion of plans for this area, which are now only in the preliminary stages. I firmly believe that a start will be made on the erection of these units before Christmas. The Commission intends also to provide flats consisting of one bedroom and one living-room for the accommodation of elderly people on its estate.

The Housing Commission has developed a project which entails the building of special units in Commission estates for elderly persons. Within the next two or three weeks, honorable members will be invited to inspect the first block of those dwellings to be completed. The units include single-room flats and two-roomed flats comprising a bedroom and a living room. It is proposed to accommodate elderly couples in the latter.

Mr. CAIN.—Young couples could be housed in them.

Mr. PETTY.—Such persons could be accommodated in the two-roomed units; in fact, they could live quite well in the single-room flats.

Mr. WHITE.—Where are these units to be built?

Mr. PETTY.—Throughout Victoria, wherever municipal councils co-operate with the Commission. When they inspect the flats, I am sure that members will ask their local councils to make available land for similar housing purposes. I appreciate the co-operation of the Opposition in assisting the passage of the Bill, which provides for the revocation of a reservation which applies to approximately 4 acres of land. When the measure is passed, the land will be returned to the control of the Lands Department, which will allocate $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres to the Housing Commission and the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre to the committee to which I have referred.

Concerning the other section of land mentioned in the Bill, I have taken no action. The reference is to $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre of land on the other side of the street, away from the main block. The Commission will have enough work to do with the other part for eighteen months. When the population in the locality becomes more congested, the $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre might be used for some other purpose.

Mr. FENNESSY.—A scout hall stands on that block at present.

Mr. PETTY.—Yes. It may be necessary to leave that block as it is for the present. Its future can be determined later. On the $3\frac{1}{4}$ acres, it is proposed to build 120 or 150 flats, an undertaking that will keep the Commission busy in that area for the next twelve months. When the Bill has been passed, an immediate start can be made on planning.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—In moving the second reading of the Bill, the Minister of Lands made it appear that the measure was a very minor one. However, as the debate developed, the Opposition extracted a little more information from representatives of the Government. I am glad the Minister of Housing has expressed his views on certain aspects to which the Minister of Lands did not refer. Apparently, this project is not new. Long before a plan was adopted, the

Melbourne City Council made preparations for construction work over the whole of the area, and decided to build flats to cost about £600,000.

The Lord Mayor of Melbourne and Councillor Solly came to see me regarding this matter, and asked whether our Government would take over the land described in the Bill and allow the Housing Commission to construct flats. The question was deferred for some time, and there were differences of opinion among city councillors. Finally, the council submitted plans, which I examined with the chairman of the Housing Commission, who considered that the costs estimated were excessive and that the Commission could achieve better results than would accrue from the original plans. It was suggested that the land be handed over to the Government so that the Commission could undertake the building work. That has been the result in the end. Most of the land in question under this Bill is to be transferred to the Housing Commission so that it can build ordinary flats in Carlton, where there are all the necessary essential services and none of the disadvantages that arise in outer districts.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth Government, which was dragged very reluctantly into the field, agreed to provide certain funds for charitable institutions for the building of homes. That Government has made a few contributions, principally to church organizations, throughout Australia. Apparently, the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the Mount Royal institution are to be the constructing authorities, and in conjunction with the Melbourne City Council, it is proposed to build about 100 flats for old people on land with a frontage of 500 feet and a depth of 150 feet. I assume that the flats will be free of any charge for rent—probably the Minister of Lands will be able to advise me on that aspect.

Mr. PETTY.—I do not know anything about that.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—Nor do I.

Mr. CAIN.—Parliament is entitled to be informed of what is proposed to be done by the committee of management

of Mount Royal. Does it propose to use 90 flats to accommodate some of its patients, and to charge no rent? If that is the position, I shall be happy. The sum of £25,000 is to be provided by the Melbourne City Council, and a similar sum by the State Government, while the balance is to be met by the Commonwealth Government and the Hospitals and Charities Commission. When the flats have been completed, I presume that they will carry no encumbrance—if so, that will be a welcome change. Judging by information I have received from the town clerk of Melbourne, that is the intention. The project is estimated to cost approximately £250,000. The committee to which reference was made earlier has examined the position and secured financial aid from both the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—Is the committee to which you refer a committee of the Melbourne City Council, or a combined one representing the Mount Royal institution and the city council?

Mr. CAIN.—I should say it is a combined committee; it is referred to as "the special committee." It has been ascertained that neither the Commonwealth Government nor the Hospitals and Charities Commission of Victoria may subsidize the council in such a scheme, but if the project was carried out by an independent body it would qualify for assistance from the Commonwealth Government on a maximum basis of £2 for £1 raised by such independent body, and by the Hospitals and Charities Commission to the maximum extent of 75 per cent. of the capital cost.

The Mount Royal institution obtains its funds from the Hospitals and Charities Commission, which receives allocations from two sources. Last year, it received the sum of £2,000,000 from Tattersall's, and another £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 from the Government. It is Government money that is used for the maintenance of hospitals. There is now under consideration a Bill to load further costs on the people. I do not know who is right. The chairman of the Hospitals and Charities Commission has stated that the increased charges

will produce about £700,000, and the Premier has estimated the amount to be about £2,000,000; probably both will be proved to be wrong. For the work contemplated under this Bill, the State Government is to provide £25,000 and the city council £25,000. Since the Commonwealth Government is to grant £2 for every £1 raised, its contribution will be £100,000.

A further sum of £150,000 must be found. Probably it will come from the Hospitals and Charities Commission in this State. As a result, the Government is under an obligation, either directly or indirectly, to provide a large share of the cost of the institution. The Melbourne City Council is not the main contributor, although it is providing £25,000 and supplying a valuable block of land, which must be worth some thousands of pounds. However, I doubt whether in the aggregate it is making as valuable a contribution as the State will make through the Hospitals and Charities Commission. The committee suggested for the running of the Mount Royal home will consist of five councillors or council employees and five nominees of the institution itself. It is true that should a councillor or council employee retire, he would be no longer qualified to remain on the committee. There is to be no representation of the Treasury or the Government. Surely no one will suggest that the Government should not be represented on such a body, particularly when it is providing a large proportion of the cost? It could be justifiably argued that the Commonwealth Government also should be represented.

The remarks of the honorable member for Brunswick East were more than justified. He suggested that members representing that district should be members of the committee of management or, if that is not desired, at least the Government should have some representation on the committee which will be responsible for the conduct of 100 flats. I hope I am right in surmising that the occupants will be accommodated rent-free. If rent is to be charged, members should be informed what the rental will be and who will fix it. Probably no approach will

be made to the Fair Rents Board. The finances of Victoria are in a hopeless state, and there is no more muddled body than the Housing Commission. I know that it is a big instrumentality and encounters great administrative difficulties, but the Commission, like the Government, is just muddling along hoping for something better to turn up. I do not blame the Minister of Housing or the Minister of Lands for the state of affairs that has arisen. I do not expect the Minister of Lands to know of this problem, as he is in charge of this Bill only because it deals with a transfer of land. However, I contend that it is the duty and obligation of the Minister introducing a Bill to furnish such an explanation that every member may be as well informed as possible on what is transpiring.

This is supposed to be businessman's Government. It is comprised of people who talk about governing the country on sound business lines. However, it is prepared to hand over the management of the Mount Royal home to people, many of whom have no financial interest in the project; they are philanthropists who give valuable voluntary service to that institution. I have great admiration for them, but they may not be qualified to look at the problem from the point of view of the State which is providing a sum of £250,000. Because of its muddling, the Government has been forced to apply the means test to patients in public hospitals, and has decided to increase the fee from 18s. to 36s. a day. Hospital finance has got out of hand. The present Minister of Health is lost; he does not know where he is.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! The discussion on this Bill has covered a wide field, but I shall not permit any further debate on the Hospitals and Charities Commission. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to return to the subject matter of the Bill.

Mr. CAIN.—Mr. Speaker, this Bill does relate to the Hospitals and Charities Commission.

The SPEAKER.—The relationship would be very slight.

Mr. CAIN. — A sum of more than £8,000,000 is spent annually on financing

hospitals, and the Government proposes to increase that allocation. May I say, with great respect, that the Bill is closely related to the Hospitals and Charities Commission?

The SPEAKER.—Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. This measure does not relate to the Hospitals and Charities Commission; it provides for the transfer of certain land, and I ask the honorable member to relate his remarks to that subject.

Mr. CAIN.—With great respect, Mr. Speaker, this Bill does deal with the Hospitals and Charities Commission.

The SPEAKER.—I should like the Leader of the Opposition to tell me in what respect.

Mr. CAIN.—I shall be delighted to comply with your request, because it is so easy. A document in my possession indicates that the project is estimated to cost £250,000, and that the committee has carefully examined the position with a view to securing aid from both the Commonwealth and the State Governments.

Mr. PETTY (Minister of Housing).—Mr. Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This Bill has nothing to do with the subject matter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition. To our knowledge, no application has been made to the Lands Department for the allocation of three-quarters of an acre of land for any purpose whatever. The measure provides for the revocation of the reservation for a particular purpose of four acres of land. During the debate the Opposition has been informed that the Housing Commission will apply for three and a quarter acres, but no application has been submitted in respect of the remaining land. I submit that any reference to the Hospitals and Charities Commission is completely out or order.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—On the point of order, surely the Minister of Housing does not seriously suggest that this Bill, which proposes the revocation of the Crown grant of certain Crown lands—part of which is to be used by the Housing Commission and part transferred to another body—does not affect the Hospitals and Charities Commission?

I have before me a communication addressed to the secretary of the Lands Department by the town clerk of the City of Melbourne, in which it is stated, *inter alia*—

I desire to refer to my letter of the 22nd ult. relative to the proposed transfer of approximately 3½ acres of land at North Carlton held by the council under Crown grant to the Housing Commission as a site for a re-housing project, and to the further proposal for the transfer of the Pigdon-street frontage of the land to another authority for development for the accommodation of elderly people.

As the council is not desirous of undertaking the erection and control of the flats, and is not qualified to receive financial aid in their construction through either of the above-mentioned authorities, an independent committee has been established to erect, maintain and control the flats. This committee consists of five members of the committee of management of Mount Royal, Parkville, and four representatives of the council, three of the latter being councillors whose term of office shall be such period as they remain councillors of the City of Melbourne and the fourth being the council's medical officer of health.

Surely, that reference ties up the matter with the Hospitals and Charities Commission, which is a Government instrumentality, financed by the State? Accordingly, I contend that the point of order raised by the Minister of Housing is invalid. It cannot truthfully be claimed that the Bill does not deal deliberately with the transfer of land, first, to the Housing Commission and, secondly, to the Mount Royal home for aged persons.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition concerning the point of order. Obviously, this measure provides for the revocation of a permanent reservation for certain purposes, in order that the land concerned may revert to the Crown. Since the Minister of Lands and the Minister of Housing have discussed the purposes for which the land is to be used, I contend that there is no reason why Opposition members should not debate that subject also. The land in question is particularly valuable, and it would be improper if it were allowed to remain idle, as happens with considerable

areas of Crown lands in the outback. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that Opposition members have every right to debate statements made by Ministers as to the purpose for which the land will be used when it reverts to the Crown. In the letter to the Lands Department, which was referred to by my Leader, the following paragraph appears:—

The constitution and rules of the committee and the necessary amendments to the by-laws of Mount Royal are now in course of preparation and are to include a provision that the project is to be treated as an annexe to Mount Royal.

It is evident that, in bringing this Bill before the House, the Government had in mind the purpose for which it was intended the land should be used.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—With respect to the point of order raised by the Minister of Housing, I uphold the submission by the Leader of the Opposition to the extent that reference to the use to be made of the land is relevant to the debate on this measure, but discussion of the whole of the Hospitals and Charities Commission's financial position is irrelevant.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I have not attempted to deal with the whole question of the finances of the Hospitals and Charities Commission. What I did say—and I now repeat—is that, involved in this project is an expenditure of £187,000 by the Hospitals and Charities Commission, which sum represents a direct contribution from the Treasury. To that extent, I believe that the suggested committee, comprising five members of the committee of management of Mount Royal and four representatives of the Melbourne City Council, is not sufficiently representative. In my view, the Government should have some representation on the committee. It is reasonable to assert that my colleagues who represent the district concerned should be members of that committee.

I conclude by observing that any Government that allows money to be spent lavishly, even on an excellent project, is irresponsible. For that reason, I have been somewhat critical in my

remarks, but I do not think I have been unduly so. I have tried to state the facts as I believe they are, in these difficult times when every person is called upon to tighten his belt, as it were. A Government that is handling the finances of the State and, in particular, those of our charitable institutions, ought to know what is happening. I repeat what I have previously said, that I believe the Minister of Health knows nothing of what is going on in his own Department.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

RETURNED SERVICEMEN'S BADGES BILL.

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary), was read a first time.

MOTOR CAR (THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 2) on the motion of Mr. Fraser (Honorary Minister) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—The Honorary Minister, in his second-reading speech, explained concisely the purpose of the Bill. Compulsory third-party insurance is of the utmost importance to every person who travels in motor vehicles on the roads. It is rather surprising to learn from the explanation given by the Honorary Minister (Mr. Fraser) that even in these enlightened times there is not complete reciprocity between all parts of Australia. Although Tasmania is only a small State it attracts a great many tourists, and visiting motorists from Victoria should be covered by the provisions of their third-party insurance. Most of the States of Australia recognize the provisions of the insurance legislation of other States, but the exceptions indicate that representatives of Governments still do not meet together enough in order to iron out some of these differences. Apparently, Tasmania and the Northern Territory do not recognize third-party

insurance policies entered into in other parts of Australia. The people who carry this type of insurance in Victoria are to be commended for making the initial move to attempt to force the hand of Tasmania and perhaps that of the Northern Territory. Unless the proposed extended cover is provided, a visitor from Victoria touring in his own car in another State could be placed in an invidious position if he were involved in an accident, particularly if it resulted in injury or death to some other person. I consider it desirable that Victorian motorists who visit Tasmania should be given the same rights as if they were travelling through Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales, or Western Australia. The same remarks apply in respect of the Northern Territory, but I do not know whether the Legislative Council of the Northern Territory could pass the legislation necessary to make this possible, or whether action would have to be taken at Canberra. The Opposition supports the Bill, but it would like the Honorary Minister (Mr. Fraser) to inform honorable members in the Committee stage of what the position is with regard to the Northern Territory.

I think it desirable to place on record some figures relating to the great expansion of motor-car registrations in Victoria. I quote from statistics supplied by Mr. Arnold, the Victorian Government Statist. For the year ended June 30, 1955, the new private registrations were 51,894, whilst the total registrations for that class of vehicle were 450,661. I shall not quote the figures given for commercial, hire and primary producers' vehicles. However, the total number of vehicles registered at that date, apart from motor-cycles, was 595,709. From a perusal of the well-produced and illuminating report of General Motors-Holdens Limited, one gains an indication of the number of vehicles being manufactured by that one organization at the present time and the number it is anticipated will be produced in the near future. If one includes the number of vehicles that will be imported, one can realize what a colossal number of vehicles will be using our roads in the near future.

I shall now refer briefly to the report of the Auditor-General for the year ended 30th June, 1955, and quote remarks relating to the State Motor Car Insurance Office. The report states, *inter alia*—

During the year, third-party policies increased by 24,321, and comprehensive by 7,470. The heavy losses are still attributable to third-party operations. A dissection of the accounts shows that for 1954-55 a loss of £243,973 resulted from third-party business, and comprehensive business showed a profit of £70,706. The net trading loss of £173,267 was reduced to £165,994 by interest receipts amounting to £7,273.

That comment by the Auditor-General is most important and indicates the necessity of his examining this field of insurance. Of course, the State office is not carrying all the third-party insurance. The Auditor-General's report continues—

Contracts of insurance made by the Insurance Commissioner are guaranteed by the Government of Victoria, and any claims payable which cannot be paid out of the State Motor Car Insurance Fund may be paid from Consolidated Revenue and recouped from the State Motor Car Insurance Fund when funds are available.

That is an indication that the Consolidated Revenue can be affected greatly by the incidence of claims for this type of insurance. The last paragraph of this section of the report is pertinent. It reads—

From 1st October, 1955, the scale of premiums for third-party business has been revived. The serious drift in the financial position referred to in previous reports, may have been arrested, but this can only be determined as a result of experience under the new scale of charges.

That is an indication that the Auditor-General was a little apprehensive as to the financial position of the State Motor Car Insurance Office in connexion with third-party business. Victoria is offering Tasmania a great concession under this proposal, even though it does not receive reciprocity. We hope that our amendment will induce the Government of Tasmania to come into line with the other States. As I stated earlier, the Opposition would like the Government to let the House know if there is any further information to hand concerning the position so far as the Northern Territory is concerned. We support the Bill.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—The Country party supports this measure, which is really something that concerns the insurance companies; when all is said and done, it is those companies that will have to meet any losses that may be incurred.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—It must be remembered that one of the companies concerned might make inroads on the Consolidated Revenue.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I realize that the State office is interested in this class of insurance. The insurance companies must appreciate that in agreeing to the terms of this Bill, they will become liable for extra costs. It is generally accepted that the third-party insurance business does not show any profit even though comprehensive insurance does. I consider we have to compliment the insurance companies on the initiative they have shown. As a rule they do not receive too many compliments from this institution. I support the honorable member for Ascot Vale in his request for further information, but do not anticipate that the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill will be able to furnish the details required until later. Any Victorian motorist who visits the Northern Territory should have a knowledge of what is involved as far as third-party insurance cover is concerned.

Mr. RAFFERTY (Caulfield).—I do not wish to speak at length on this Bill because the position has been explained clearly by the Honorary Minister (Mr. Fraser), and the Bill does not appear to be controversial. Nevertheless, many honorable members were surprised to discover that there was not reciprocity between all the States of Australia as regards third-party insurance cover. Apparently the relevant legislation in Tasmania does not permit of the acceptance of the terms of the Victorian Act. I think the action now being taken by this Government is commendable in that it will provide extra service for the motorists of Victoria travelling in Tasmania, which State attracts increasing numbers of tourists each year. Increasing attempts are being made to

popularize Australia as a tourist resort, and publicity has been intensified with the advent of the Olympic Games. Many visitors to Australia will desire to take their own motor vehicles to Tasmania; any action to avoid difficulties in connexion with motor-car insurance in Tasmania would be of great service to them and to the community generally. I have in mind that the relevant Tasmanian legislation will be brought into line with that of Victoria. A recent example was the adoption by Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania of the fine long-service leave legislation of this State. It is gratifying to know that other States regard our enactments so highly as to copy them. I commend the Bill to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Risk to be covered by third-party insurance policies).

Mr. FRASER (Honorary Minister).—I think it is appropriate that I should take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for his helpful comments in supporting the Bill. I thank the Leader of the Country party too for his offer of assistance to facilitate the passing of this very important measure. I shall be indeed happy to comply with the request of those two honorable members by ascertaining what is the present position concerning Tasmania and the Northern Territory in relation to this matter, and advising them accordingly in due course.

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

WATER (COMPENSATION) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 17) on the motion of Mr. Mibus (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. STONEHAM (Midlands).—This Bill deals with an important and complex matter, but the burden of discussing

it at length and sifting out the merits and demerits of the various clauses has been simplified. Recently the final report of the Statute Law Revision Committee in connexion with this matter was presented to the House, and the Government has seen fit to incorporate the committee's recommendations in the measure. In its report the committee set forth its reasons for adopting certain recommendations.

As the Minister of Water Supply mentioned in his second-reading speech, the origin of the Bill was an amending water Bill introduced by the previous Government late in 1954. As the Minister in charge of that Bill, I well remember the lengthy discussions and conferences that took place between representatives of all parties in an endeavour to reach agreement on an amendment concerning claims for compensation for damage by flooding resulting from the actions of authorities functioning within their statutory powers. The present Minister of Education played a prominent part in those discussions, at which he contributed the benefit of his legal advice. The practical experience of the then Leader of the Country party, the Honorable J. G. B. McDonald, and the present honorable member for Rodney were also made available to honorable members participating in the discussions. At that time it was agreed that a compromise amendment should be adopted forthwith on condition that the Government would undertake to refer the whole question of Division 2 of Part VI. of the Water Act to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination. I was able to give that assurance on behalf of the Government. Since then the committee has dealt with the matter expeditiously and efficiently, and I commend its members on the excellent report furnished to the House. I also congratulate the Government on its decision to adopt completely the committee's recommendations. In 1954, by way of compromise it was agreed that the amendment I shall now quote should be adopted in relation to the burden of proof of negligence or intent. Certain words

were deleted from section 260 of the principal Act, and the following words were added to it:—

... but the onus of proof that any flooding from any water supply works of an Authority was not due to any intentional or negligent act or omission of the Authority shall rest with the Authority.

The amendment also provided—

At the end of section 260 of the principal Act there shall be inserted the following sub-section—

(2) Notwithstanding anything in the last preceding sub-section no Authority shall in any case be liable to make any compensation in respect of any injury loss or damage caused by—

- (a) flooding by water from drainage works of the Authority of; or
- (b) water in any way flowing from drainage works of the Authority onto

lands classified in the register of any irrigation and water supply district as swamp-lands.

Up till that time the position had been intolerable for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. As honorable members know, if the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission does not make any provision for drainage in an irrigation area, such as the Nambrok-Denison project, and flooding occurs, the Commission is not liable to pay compensation for damage. However, as soon as the Commission carries out any work, no matter how good it may be and how adequate it is to cope with normal conditions, if flooding occurs even under extraordinary or freak conditions, the Commission is liable for the payment of damages. The 1954 amendment was designed to relieve the Commission of liability in respect of flooding which occurred in recognized low-lying areas designated as swamp lands. The matter was exhaustively considered by the Statute Law Revision Committee which heard evidence by Mr. Justice Sholl, by the Parliamentary Draftsman and by witnesses representing the State Rivers and Waters Supply Commission, the University of Melbourne, the Victorian Bar Council, and irrigators and country organizations, and also by a member of Parliament who was a former Minister of Water Supply.

I am sure honorable members must have studied the final report of the Statute Law Revision Committee with great interest. The committee's terms of reference were to report on—

... amendments of the Statute Law for the removal of any anomalies in the provisions of Division 2 of Part VI. of the Water Act 1928, as amended, relating to the liability of water authorities to make compensation in respect of injury loss or damage caused by works of such authorities and the procedure for settling disputes in relation thereto.

Now I shall refer to one or two of the committee's major recommendations. Paragraph 6 of its report states—

The Committee after having heard and carefully considered a great body of evidence is of opinion:—

- (a) that anomalies are apparent in Division 2 of Part VI. of the Water Acts;
- (b) that such anomalies have given rise to uncertainty and confusion as to the legal rights and liabilities of both landowners and Water Authorities, respectively; and
- (c) that this state of uncertainty and confusion is detrimental to the activities of many primary producers and affects the exercise by Water Authorities of their functions.

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission had to be very careful before embarking upon badly needed drainage works in the Murray valley irrigation area, the Nambrok-Denison district, and other parts of the State. In fact, the Commission had reached the conclusion that without amendment of the law it would be unwise to proceed with drainage works in those localities, because it could not possibly escape payment of heavy compensation for damage caused by flooding. That fact is clearly indicated by the committee in the recommendations I have just read. Paragraph 8 of the report states—

The Committee is of opinion that an authority should be liable to a person who has suffered damage by the act or omission of that authority in regard to the construction and maintenance of water supply works or of drainage works or of river improvement works if—

- (a) the act or omission was intentional on the part of the authority, its servants, agents or contractors; or
- (b) the act or omission was due to the negligence of the authority, its servants, agents or contractors.

The committee further stated, in paragraph 10—

The Committee is of the opinion that the claimant should not have the burden of proving the intention or negligence of the authority, its servants, agents or contractors, but that the authority should have the burden of proving that the damage was not caused by its intentional act or negligence or those of its servants, agents or contractors.

The committee clearly recommended that the onus of proof should remain with the authority to establish that damage was not caused by its acts. There was some substance in the statement made by the Minister of Water Supply when he moved the second reading of the Bill, that the Commission still considered that the placing on the water authority of this burden of proof put such an authority in a more difficult position than any private person or any other authority. He went on to say that since the Statute Law Revision Committee had covered the subject so comprehensively, and had taken evidence from so many experts, the Government was acting properly in abiding by its recommendation.

The most vital part of the Bill is contained in clause 2. It provides for the repeal of the whole of Division 2 of Part VI. of the Water Act 1928, and the substitution of the provision contained in sub-clause (1). The definition of "negligence" is of the utmost importance. It is in precisely the words recommended by the Statute Law Revision Committee in paragraph 15 of its final report, and reads as follows:—

'Negligence' means omission or failure, in the planning design construction or operation of works, to provide reasonable standards of capacity or efficiency or exercise reasonable care or skill having regard to—

- (a) the state of scientific knowledge and knowledge of local conditions at any relevant time;
- (b) the nature and situation of the works;
- (c) the service to be provided by the works; and
- (d) the circumstances and cost of the works and of the maintenance and operation thereof, and of works which it would have been necessary to construct to avoid the occurrence of any relevant damage.

Mr. Stoneham.

That definition will remove doubt and confusion that has hitherto existed. Anyone who has read the reasons handed down from the Bench for the making of certain awards of compensation will realize how complex and difficult it has been to determine the question of negligence. As I, as a layman, understand it, the amending provision means that if the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission provides works which fully measure up to the very latest and best standards of engineering science, and subsequently flooding does occur, the Commission will not be liable to pay compensation. In the past, when planning a work, the Commission could study previous records of rainfall and flooding, and say, in effect: "That is the worst that has ever happened in the past. We shall make provision to cope with double the volume of flooding that has occurred previously, and that is not likely ever to arise." But subsequently, a freak flood might occur—a flood beyond the capacity of the works provided—and the Commission would be liable. When the Bill is passed, if the Commission does—with regard to the various matters I have enumerated—pay due respect to the requirements of modern engineering practice, and takes all reasonable and adequate care, its responsibility will be discharged.

Concerning awards of compensation that have been made, there is frequently a great discrepancy between explanations given in the House by Ministers, when debating Bills of this type, and the interpretation placed on the wording of legislation by Judges of the Supreme Court. Future experience may prove that my simple interpretation of the words contained in the definition of "negligence" is wrong. It will be only after some years of operation of the legislation that it will be possible to say that the provision now to be enacted has met the requirements of not only the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission but also the residents of irrigation areas. The recommendation of the Statute Law Revision Committee is a very good one and seems eminently suited to meet the particular need. Consequently, members of the Opposition are in favour of the Bill,

and trust that the sincere attempt by the committee to find a solution to this complex problem will be successful.

Mr. MOSS (Murray Valley).—I compliment the Government upon taking the advice of the Statute Law Revision Committee and introducing the measure. That committee carried out an excellent job on a difficult subject. It went about its task in a very businesslike way and caused a measure which will be really worthwhile to be presented to Parliament. The most important part of the Bill relates to the burden of proof on the question of negligence. Many views are apt to be voiced about the difficulties of the Commission, even with respect to the ploughing of a furrow somewhere, and then its becoming liable for any flooding or damage that is caused. Over the years, inordinate claims for compensation have not been made on the Commission, and a tremendous sum of money has not been paid out for this purpose as a result of court orders.

The Country party holds the view that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should not be in any way different from the individual in relation to its liabilities. I agree that the Statute Law Revision Committee was practically forced to endeavour to define "negligence." However, I think it is the responsibility of the court, not of Parliament, to determine this question. I trust that before the Bill is passed, the Minister of Water Supply will re-examine this aspect, and ascertain whether it is possible to meet the situation. In my opinion, it is the prerogative of a court to adjudicate upon this question.

I support the Bill. It will clarify the position, and I hope it will act as a spur to the water Commission to proceed with the solution of many drainage problems on general irrigation areas and in the soldier settlement irrigation district of the Murray valley. Although this locality has been subject to periodical flooding, no provision has been made to get rid of the water effectively. I trust also that the Minister of Water Supply will

be encouraged to ensure that adequate loan funds will be made available to implement proper drainage in the valuable areas to which I have referred.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park). — I shall be the third layman to discuss this measure, which is highly technical from the legal viewpoint. It is illustrative of the vicissitudes of political life—but entirely in accord with the fitness of Parliamentary procedure—that the honorable member for Midlands, who opened the discussion of this measure on behalf of the Opposition, was, in 1954, the Minister of Water Supply who undertook to refer an amending water Bill to the Statute Law Revision Committee for inquiry and report.

It is agreeable, but not unexpected, to find that the present Minister has given to the report of that committee the consideration that was promised by his predecessor. This measure embodies the committee's recommendations, which were unanimous, but by no means spontaneous; they were made only after every aspect of voluminous evidence had been taken into account. I am certain that it will have the unanimous approval of members.

If there is one feature that is likely, more than another, to engage attention and perhaps to cause some degree of disquiet, it is the provision for onus of proof to be placed upon the authority. This signifies a further reversal of an age-old principle of English law, and it can be justified only in specifically exceptional circumstances. The Statute Law Revision Committee, based on the evidence tendered to it, concluded that circumstances affecting claims against the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission were exceptional, and it made its recommendation accordingly.

At the same time, it clarified issues that, in the past, had been ambiguous and fraught with elements of litigation. It defined "intentional damage" and "negligence" in a manner that ought to be satisfactory to all the parties concerned. It also recommended the introduction of improved methods of arbitration on claims, to bring them into line with the customary procedure of the law courts. I support the Bill.

Mr. GAINY (Elsternwick).—In sub-section (3) of proposed new section 260 of the principal Act, “negligence” is defined. I recall that, over the years, heavy loss has been sustained in various parts of the State—including irrigation districts—where, owing to lack of suitable subways beneath drainage channels, vast areas of country have been flooded. A contributing factor to the damage caused has been the obstruction or diversion of natural watercourses and their replacement by man-made irrigation channels. I am wondering whether interference with natural watercourses could be regarded as negligence. I recall that much costly litigation between the Commission and farmers in the Goulburn valley could have been averted had the requisite subways been constructed beneath irrigation channels.

Last week the House considered a measure relating to the destruction of water rats. I know that, on occasions, these animals have caused the escape of water from irrigation channels, with resultant damage to property. I wonder whether failure to destroy water rats where they are known to exist in large numbers constitutes negligence within the meaning of the measure.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—Investigation reveals that the following words have been deleted from section 260 of the Water Act 1928:—

... but in all cases the onus of proof that such flooding was not intentional or due to negligence or any negligent act or omission of the Authority or its servants, agents or contractors shall rest with the Authority.

I am pleased to note, however, that by this measure a somewhat similar provision will be inserted in the principal Act. It is possible overnight, for exceptional quantities of water to flow over a property and sweep everything away, including the banks of irrigation channels and works of the Commission. In those circumstances, it would be practically impossible for the landowner concerned to obtain evidence of negligence. It is a well-established principle that an authority constituted under a statute is absolutely liable in respect of any happening because of its negligence

but, in cases such as those that are envisaged under this measure, it is necessary for the State to be protected in some way. Accordingly, proposed new section 259 of the principal Act provides that—

Notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act or any rule of law no compensation shall except pursuant to this Division be payable in respect of any damage loss or injury caused by flooding of or water in any way sent on to property as a result of any works of an Authority, or any act or omission of any Authority or its servants agents or contractors, which are within the authority or execution of this Act or any corresponding previous enactment.

Sub-section (1) of proposed new section 260 states—

An Authority shall subject to this Act be liable to make compensation to any person for—

(a) intentional damage caused to his property by flooding or water being sent thereon; or—

That provision envisages circumstances in which, because of an emergency, it becomes necessary for the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to divert flood waters into various channels—

(b) damage caused to his property by flooding or water being sent thereon by the negligence of the Authority or its servants agents or contractors.

This paragraph expresses the rule that I have been trying to expound, namely, that a statutory body is liable only in cases of negligence. Ordinarily, it is necessary for a plaintiff—say, in a case against the Railways Commissioners—to prove negligence. In such an action there would be little difficulty in proving or disproving whether negligence had occurred, but the position is vastly different with respect to exceptional flooding of properties. In order to establish that negligence had caused the flooding it would be necessary to engage engineers, whose services are more costly than are those of lawyers. Sub-section (2) of proposed new section 260 provides that—

In any claim pursuant to this Division it shall lie on the Authority to prove that the damage was not intentional or (as the case requires) was not caused by the negligence of the Authority or its servants agents or contractors.

As I understand the position, the principle enunciated in the old section 260 of the Water Act 1928 will be restored. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is possessed of all the relevant data concerning rainfall and so forth, and no hardship would be suffered if it were called upon to disprove negligence alleged against it. In this regard I am glad that the Government has at least had some consideration for the primary producers of this State. I regard the Bill as an improvement on the original legislation, because it sets forth precisely what is meant by "intentional damage" and by "negligence." Those are the usual grounds for any action instituted against the Commission. Sub-section (3) of proposed new section 260 states—

For the purpose of this section—

"Intentional damage" means—

(a) damage designed or intended by the Authority; or

(b) damage inevitably and immediately resulting from the exercise of powers for the construction of works of the Authority.

"Negligence" means omission or failure, in the planning design construction or operation of works, to provide reasonable standards of capacity or efficiency or exercise reasonable care or skill having regard to—

(a) the state of scientific knowledge and knowledge of local conditions at any relevant time;

(b) the nature and situation of the works;

(c) the service to be provided by the works; and

(d) the circumstances and cost of the works and of the maintenance and operation thereof, and of works which it would have been necessary to construct to avoid the occurrence of any relevant damage.

Honorable members will readily appreciate that it would be beyond the capacity of a landowner to prove that the water Commission had been guilty of some fault in the planning, design, construction, or operation of its works because, over-night, the evidence of negligence may well have disappeared, and the landowner concerned would be placed at great disadvantage in trying to prove his case. Under this Bill the landowner is placed

in a favourable position, because the onus of proof is shifted to the Commission. Eventually, each case will become a problem for settlement by an arbitrator.

Section 262 of the Water Act 1928 sets forth the manner of settlement of disputes as to compensation. So far as I can trace the history of the legislation in this regard, all disputes must be referred to and settled by an arbitrator in the manner provided for in the Lands Compensation Act 1928. I agree that that seems a peculiar way of settling an action based on negligence, but this Bill was drawn up by a lawyer, who is a country man at heart.

Sub-section (1) of the proposed new section 261 of the Act provides—

Any claim for compensation pursuant to this division may at the option of the claimant be brought by way of action or by way of arbitration under the Arbitration Act 1928.

Apparently, under that provision, a claimant could invoke a jury, and in the country, where cases of this type frequently occur, a jury consisting of country men would be a good tribunal to determine such an action.

The Bill provides landowners with adequate facilities for making claims against the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. The Commission is a huge organization and many properties abut upon rivers under its control. Many landowners would be apprehensive lest in times of flood, or through the negligence of the Commission, damage should be caused to their properties. It is pleasing to note, therefore, that the Government is prepared to legislate in order to protect the interests of landowners. I believe the Government has acted quite properly in adopting the recommendations of the Statute Law Revision Committee and, consequently, members of the Labor party support the Bill.

Mr. BARCLAY (Mildura).—I congratulate the Government on introducing this amending legislation. I also commend the Statute Law Revision Committee for its careful consideration of this important question. In the Mildura district, considerable trouble

has arisen through flooding from works of the Commission. It is quite easy to put water on the land, but in the closely irrigated areas, it is difficult to dispose of it. Some years ago, in my electorate, the practice was adopted of providing drainage shafts to depths of up to 80 feet for the purpose of taking from the land any surplus water. When Sir George Goudie was Minister of Public Works in a Government led by the late Sir Albert Dunstan, he made certain money available for the provision of an outfall drainage system. When this work was being undertaken, I asked one of the supervising officers if the pipes were large enough to take water away, and he assured me that they were. However, to-day, throughout the Mildura area the pipes are not large enough for that purpose. After heavy irrigation and rain, the drains fill up and overflow on to adjacent properties. Although the Commission succeeded in keeping the water off the roads, it has not been possible to keep it from the settlers' properties. This is greatly inconvenient as surplus water backs up in the drains, runs between the rows, and thus prevents spraying of the vines, which are often attacked by black spot. Consequently, I would support any proposition designed to enable the Commission to make more adequate provision for the disposal of surplus water.

In the First Mildura Irrigation Trust area electric pumps have been installed at certain pill boxes in order that the water may be pumped back into the Commission's channels. Similar action has been taken in Red Cliffs and, to a lesser extent, at Merbein. Unfortunately, at Red Cliffs, the outfall drainage pipes are too small and the water cannot get away quickly enough to allow the ground to receive the benefit of internal drainage. When the Minister was in Red Cliffs, a deputation interviewed him regarding this problem. Earlier this year, I tendered to the Commission a claim on behalf of a Mr. Knott. He alleges that water overflowed on to his property, adversely affecting his vines, which were attacked by black spot and could not be harvested. This trouble could largely be attributed to the fact

Mr. Barclay.

that the outfall pipes were too small, and that is a problem that should be remedied by the Commission as early as possible. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages.

The sitting was suspended at 5.58 p.m. until 7.22 p.m.

PROCESS SERVERS AND INQUIRY AGENTS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 24) on the motion of Mr. Porter (Honorary Minister) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—The necessity for this Bill is regrettable but indisputable for the many reasons stated by the Minister in his second-reading speech. I am prepared to believe that members on the Government side of the Chamber have considerable knowledge of the subject with which the Bill deals, derived mainly from the erudite and elevating works of an American gentleman named Spillane and of one or two Australian imitators whose treatises sell by the ten million — or so publisher's "blurb" sets out.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that the "private eye," as this type of gentleman is colloquially described nowadays, has a literature all his own, mainly composed of moronic stuff, literary garbage, out of which delinquents are made? The Minister in charge of the Bill ought to take a look at some of it sometime.

In itself, the occupation of a private inquiry agent or detective is legitimate and has been followed by numbers of people of unimpeachable character. I could name some of these—former members of the Police Force as well as others—and there has never been any serious complaint about the agencies they conduct. It is probably true that most of their commissions have been concerned with the collection of evidence for use in divorce or maintenance proceedings, but gentlemen of this type have also been very considerably engaged in such other directions as

searching for missing persons, investigations into claims for insurance and workers' compensation, and the projects of people and companies inviting public investment. In these ways inquiry agents render valuable service to their clients and the public.

But the very nature of this occupation exposes it to exploitation by "crooks." In the last few years the field of private inquiry has been invaded by objectionable types, some of them having criminal records while others have possessed shady reputations. The public must be protected against their activities; hence this Bill. These persons act as if there were no laws or restraints of any kind. They do not shrink from selling out their clients one to another—that is to say, double-crossing them. They have been known to lodge false statements. One of their favoured hobbies appears to be the breaking down of doors of houses and flats. Sometimes they suffer for that, as happened in New South Wales not long ago. A Melbourne daily newspaper, which for the past few weeks has been conducting a forged £5 note detection bureau, reported that a Parramatta jury had acquitted a man charged with the malicious wounding of a private detective who had raided a house for the purpose of obtaining divorce evidence. The Judge said this:

If an intruder comes into your house you are not expected to stand there and conduct a Royal Commission with yourself on what he is up to. Unless you act quickly to protect yourself you might be on the end of a nasty situation.

Inquiry agents, as is well known, also act as process servers when paid to do so. It is important that they should be trustworthy, because they carry out duties that may have material effects upon the subsequent processes of law. A few members of the legal profession who are hardly ornaments of it keep in close contact with agents, both genuine and snide, and it is on the agents' recommendation that they get the bulk of their clients.

Members of the Police Force have never relished the duty of serving certain forms of notices upon citizens, and it is undoubted that they could be more

profitably employed in the interests of the community by doing other classes of work. When this Bill becomes law, it may be possible to relieve the police of at least part of the tasks that they find uncongenial and burdensome to-day. We may take it that the Minister has been supplied with the relevant facts, and therefore the Bill provides for all facets of a situation that has been fast getting out of hand. As I read the Bill, it requires both the principal and the employee operative to be licensed. That is a commonsense requirement, although perhaps it shows a certain harshness towards long-established firms that have given satisfaction. It may be that these should be issued with licences and not have to go before a court in support of their applications.

In other respects the Bill approximates broadly to the Licensing Act. It contains provisions for the revocation of licences and for their renewal, although it does not make clear whether in regard to unopposed renewals an appearance before a court will be necessary. If I may be excused a comment that is slightly digressive but arises from a kind of admiring wonder, I should like the Minister to tell me whether in his view the "private eye" in Victoria compares with the American of the species as depicted by Australian authors of "best sellers" on the 10,000,000 scale, in the consumption of distilled beverages and indulgence in other creature comforts, yet living to sleuth afterwards and to boast of his prodigious alcoholic and amatory adventures.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Bruns-
wick West).—This Bill follows the usual pattern of legislation requiring a person to obtain a licence to follow a certain avocation. An applicant must apply to the court for a licence and if he is not a fit person to hold such a licence, objection can be taken. There is similar legislation on the statute-book in relation to estate agents, auctioneers, and second-hand dealers. Inquiry agents and process servers are to some extent necessary in the community. Processes must be served on people, and frequently inquiries have to be made to support a litigant in his case before a court. An

annual licence is to be granted, for which the licensee, if I may call him that, will pay a fee of £5. If a person becomes unworthy of holding a licence, the Bill provides machinery that can be put into operation with a view to the revocation of his licence.

In examining this measure, and also the Estate Agents Bill, which is on the Notice Paper, I noticed that there is no provision for the renewal of an existing licence. After all, even an inquiry agent could have maintained a reputable character amongst the citizens of Victoria after a number of years' service in that capacity, and if he desires to renew his licence annually he must start *de novo*, obtain three testimonials and follow the processes of the law as if he were applying for a licence for the first time. It may well be that an agent has been in business for 50 years and has therefore made 50 applications, the fiftieth being in the same terms as the original. At an appropriate stage I shall move that a new clause be inserted in the Bill to remedy the defect to which I have just referred.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time.

The House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I move—

That subject to the provisions of the Process Servers and Inquiry Agents Bill the following fees shall be payable:—

(a) For each licence—a fee of Five pounds;

(b) For each duplicate licence—a fee of One pound:

Provided that where the duration of a licence will be for not more than six months the fee for the licence shall be Two pounds ten shillings.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—The purpose of this motion is to enable the Government to fix fees for process servers and inquiry agents under the terms of the Bill now under consideration. I can understand a fee of £5 being fixed—I would even agree that perhaps it should be higher—but I cannot comprehend why a concession is being granted concerning a licence for six months in

respect of which the recipient will be required to pay only half the annual fee. Whilst I have had no experience of inquiry agents, I cannot believe that it is only a part-time job. I cannot understand the motive behind the proposal, and I ask the Chief Secretary to inform the Committee just what is intended. If an estate agent takes out a licence, it must be of twelve month's duration.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The desire of the Government is to put inquiry agents and process servers in a position somewhat similar to that in which estate agents are placed concerning applications for licences. The procedure set up under the Real Estate Agents Act is the accepted method of issuing licences through the court to agents who deal with the public. Provision is made in that legislation for the issue of licences at a reduced fee. In line with the Government's policy in that sphere, the Honorary Minister (Mr. Porter) has indicated that in Committee the Government proposes to accept an amendment to be moved by the honorable member for Brunswick West. It is the desire of the Government that similar provisions should apply to both classes indicated and that the court, in dealing with applications, will act in accordance with an accepted standard practice.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—I should like to know what are those provisions of the Real Estate Agents Act to which the Chief Secretary is trying to adhere.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—Perhaps I would be out of order if I referred at this stage to the provisions of another Bill before the House. I have already indicated to the honorable member for Brunswick West what the Government has in mind.

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

The House went into Committee for the consideration of this Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7 were agreed to.

Clause 8 (Grant and effect of licence).

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—This clause contains the reason for the concessional payment of a licence fee. Every licence to be issued to an inquiry agent or process server is to expire on the 31st December in each year. If a person applied for and was granted a licence in August, it could not be current for a period longer than six months, and he would be charged a fee of only £2 10s. for that licence.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 9 (Procedure at hearing of applications).

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—Mr. Acting Chairman, I presume that I may move for the insertion of a new clause to follow clause 9 after this clause has been agreed to.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Stoneham).—The new clause must be taken into consideration after all the provisions of the Bill have been considered.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—Perhaps it may assist the Committee if at this stage I intimate that the Government is prepared to accept the new clause to be proposed by the honorable member for Brunswick West. As it deals with renewals of licences it is logical that it should follow clause 9. I appreciate the fact that the Standing Orders require that the new clause shall be dealt with later.

The clause was agreed to, as were the remaining clauses.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—I propose the following new clause to follow clause 9:—

AA. (1) Subject to this section, in any year any person who holds a licence may apply for and be granted a corresponding licence for the ensuing year.

(2) Every such application shall be made in duplicate in the prescribed form and shall together with the prescribed fee be lodged, at least twenty-one days before the latest day appointed for the holding of the court in the current year, with the clerk of the court of petty sessions nearest to his principal or only place of business; and notwithstanding anything in any Act the appropriate licence shall, unless notice of objection is lodged by any person (including the registrar) pursuant to this Act, be granted and caused to be issued by the

court as of course although the applicant does not appear personally or by anyone on his behalf.

(3) The clerk of the court shall send the duplicate copy of every application under this section to the registrar forthwith upon the lodging thereof.

(4) In the event of any notice of objection being duly lodged the application and every such objection shall be heard and determined as far as may be in all respects as other applications for licences.

As this provision is self-explanatory, I do not think I need say any more in support of its insertion.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I wish to take this opportunity of thanking the honorable member for Brunswick West for submitting the new clause. It is designed to cut red tape and, in accordance with its desire to streamline legislation, the Government is prepared to accept it.

Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park).—I too, have no objection to the insertion of the new clause, although I was not formally aware of it until it was distributed. It represents a logical extension of the renewal of licences, to which I referred earlier.

The new clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House with an amendment, and passed through its remaining stages.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from May 2) on the motion of Mr. Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—Following a discussion that took place on the presentation of a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of this Bill, the Premier made certain statements to which I would like to reply. Among other things, the honorable gentleman accused the Commonwealth Bank and the State Savings Bank of not making generous contributions to co-operative housing societies. I do not think his charges can be substantiated. Last year, when speaking of the co-operative housing movement,

he paid tribute to the assistance rendered by the Commonwealth Bank to co-operative housing in Victoria. Because the Premier is now sponsoring a Bill, the main aim of which is to assist competitors of the Commonwealth Bank, he has seen fit to make accusations against an organization that has rendered valuable service to Australia.

Mr. SUGGETT.—What accusations did he make?

Mr. CAIN.—I shall deal with them in due course. In this regard I wish to quote the following passage from *Hansard* of the 2nd May, 1956—

Mr. BOLTE.—In comparison with advances made in other States, the total again is very insignificant. In Victoria, the sum of approximately £16,000,000 has been advanced by the Commonwealth Bank for housing purposes. What sum would members of the Opposition suggest was advanced, on a comparable basis, in New South Wales?

Mr. CAIN.—There is no State bank in that State.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—About £21,000,000.

Mr. BOLTE.—The amount is £61,000,000.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Is that figure correct?

Mr. BOLTE.—It is. When he asserted that there was not a State bank in New South Wales, the Leader of the Opposition made an interjection that I expected. During one period, the State Savings Bank of Victoria advanced the sum of £15,000,000 and the Commonwealth Savings Bank lent £16,000,000, an aggregate of £31,000,000. I ask members to consider the subject on a population basis. In New South Wales the Commonwealth Savings Bank advanced the sum of £61,000,000.

Mr. CAIN.—Over how many years?

Mr. BOLTE.—In the same period. On this question, members of the Labour party appear to have been instructed by the Labour Government in New South Wales to look after the interests of that State. I have no doubt whatever about the wisdom of introducing the Bill. It is not designed either to open or to close banks. They are operating already, and cannot be prevented from doing so.

Those figures, loosely used, lead one to believe that the Commonwealth Bank contributed very much more to co-operative housing societies in New South Wales than was contributed by the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Bank to Victorian societies.

Mr. BOLTE.—It is true.

Mr. CAIN.—It is of no use the Premier or anyone else departing from the facts. In New South Wales the contribution by the Commonwealth Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank has been £61,000,000. The amount advanced by those two banks in Victoria has been £17,000,000, and the State Savings Bank contributed £15,000,000. What the Premier did not reveal to the House—he should have known it—was the fact that the co-operative housing scheme in this State began in 1945, whereas a similar scheme has operated in New South Wales since 1937. In New South Wales 90,000 dwellings have been constructed under the co-operative housing movement, as against 25,000 houses in Victoria.

Mr. BOLTE.—Because more finance has been provided in New South Wales.

Mr. CAIN.—That is the type of loose talk the Premier indulges in. The amount provided by the Commonwealth Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank for the present financial year has been £2,000,000 for Victoria and £4,000,000 for New South Wales. I am quoting round figures and all of that money has not yet been expended. However, including the amount advanced for this year, the sum of money made available for co-operative housing in Victoria since its commencement has been approximately £48,000,000. The State Savings Bank has provided £16,250,000, and the two Commonwealth banks, £17,855,000, the total for the Governmental banks being £34,115,000. The private banks have provided £9,590,000, and other organizations £4,300,000. The number of co-operative housing societies formed in this State is 266.

In New South Wales the first societies were formed in 1937, and the number of houses built to date is approximately 90,000. The total expenditure on co-operative housing since that year—including the allotment for this financial year, all of which has not yet been spent—amounts to approximately £116,000,000. The Commonwealth Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank have provided £61,700,000, or a little over 50 per cent. of the total.

Mr. BOLTE.—That has been since 1944.

Mr. CAIN.—It has not.

Mr. BOLTE. — That is where your figures are wrong.

Mr. CAIN.—I am quoting the official figures for the period since 1937, and if they are not correct I shall be delighted to hear from the Premier.

Mr. BOLTE.—The honorable member for Prahran will correct you.

Mr. CAIN.—If he does not know any more about this subject than the Premier, I fear he will not make a great contribution to the debate. Out of the total expenditure on co-operative housing in Victoria of £48,000,000, the two Governmental banks have provided £34,000,000, two-thirds of the total finance. In New South Wales they have provided, as I said before, about 50 per cent. of the finance, and other banks have provided £14,000,000. Other organizations in New South Wales have advanced £40,000,000. The number of societies formed in New South Wales totals 989. In Victoria, general insurance companies have provided £1,300,000, and in New South Wales £11,070,000. Life assurance companies in Victoria have provided no money for this purpose, but in New South Wales they have contributed £20,000,000. The figures I have quoted reveal that the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Bank have contributed much more reasonably to co-operative housing finance in Victoria than they have in New South Wales.

Mr. BOLTE.—Much more poorly.

Mr. CAIN.—That is not so; they have provided two-thirds of the finance made available in this State.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is nonsense.

Mr. CAIN.—The amount provided by the Commonwealth banks in New South Wales is a little more than 50 per cent. of the total sum spent on co-operative housing.

Mr. BOLTE.—It is still double what has been provided in Victoria.

Mr. CAIN.—It is difficult for the Premier to listen to the truth.

Mr. BOLTE.—I am endeavouring to keep you on the truth.

Mr. CAIN.—Of the total expenditure of £116,000,000 in New South Wales the two Commonwealth banks have provided £61,000,000. Of the £48,000,000 expended in Victoria, the Governmental banks have provided £34,000,000—two-thirds of the total. Consequently, it will require some one other than the honorable member for Prahran, who is inexperienced in the finances of this country, to refute the figures I have quoted. It is no reflection on the honorable member for Prahran—he lacks the experience of the Treasurer and the backing of the advisers of this Government—for me to say that I would expect the Premier to reply.

Mr. BOLTE.—You would object to an attempt by me to speak again.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! I expect the Leader of the Opposition to be heard in silence. There can be no objection to a legitimate question being asked, but members should refrain from continual interjections.

Mr. CAIN.—In other words, you, Mr. Speaker, want the Premier to stop interjecting; that is the way in which to put it. I have no objection to the Premier interjecting, but it is of no use his breaking in when he knows his statements are not true. The facts are that the Governmental banks have contributed towards co-operative housing in this State a greater proportion of the money spent, as compared with the figures for New South Wales. Because the Premier knows that to be correct, he shuts his eyes and in effect says that he intends to give privileges to two trading banks so that they can compete with the State Savings Bank of Victoria and the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—What are the privileges?

Mr. CAIN.—To-day they are fighting in the law courts in an attempt to avoid the payment of stamp tax.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—Has the Bill any reference to that?

Mr. CAIN.—I would be pleased to hear the honorable member for Caulfield rise and make a speech. Until he does, he

should refrain from interjecting. "Rafferty's" rules do not apply here. Since 1945 all the private banks, including the two to which this Bill relates, have provided less than one-third of the finance required for co-operative housing purposes. Over the last three or four years they have almost ceased to provide any money at all.

Mr. BOLTE.—So has the State Savings Bank.

Mr. CAIN.—I admit that; I thank the Premier for his interjection. The State Savings Bank to-day is providing 87 per cent. of the loans needed by home builders. Every estate agent and other businessman in the community is aware of that. However, because depositors in the State Savings Bank are becoming short of money and savings are not flowing in, at the rate previously maintained, it has been necessary for the bank to curtail its advances. They have taken no notice of the Government's proposal in connexion with home finance.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is what you would like to believe.

Mr. CAIN.—The bank has provided £500,000 only for the next financial year.

Mr. BOLTE.—That sum will grow; it has already increased.

Mr. CAIN.—I ask the honorable member for Prahran—the new spokesman for the Government—to let Parliament know to-night—not next week, next year or at the next election—how much the associated private banks of this country have provided for people desirous of purchasing homes. The Premier is not able to provide the answer. I also ask what rate of interest they are charging ex-servicemen to-day for accommodation while awaiting finance from the War Service Homes Division? They are charging it through their agents. Any ex-serviceman who obtains temporary financial accommodation while awaiting his loan from the War Service Homes Division must pay 8 per cent. or 10 per cent. interest. The usual charge is 10 per cent.

Mr. WILCOX.—He is not charged that rate by the banks.

Mr. CAIN.—The honorable member for Camberwell, who is new to this House, is a lawyer and must know that what I am saying is true. The Liberal party is a high interest party, as has been disclosed by its views on legislation before the other House. Its supporters admit that ex-servicemen are being charged 10 per cent. I have been in touch with the War Service Homes Division concerning a man who required a temporary loan of £1,000 until the Division could grant him a loan, probably by, but perhaps not until, the next financial year. He could not obtain a loan of £1,000 at less than 10 per cent. Fortunately, he was assisted by two friends who each loaned him £500 at 5 per cent.

Mr. SUGGETT.—It was not the banks.

Mr. CAIN.—I would remind the honorable member for Moorabbin that many years ago the banks would not allow an employee to marry until he received a salary of £200 a year. They were afraid bank clerks would "tickle the peter." "Johnny-come-lately" bank clerks, such as the honorable member for Moorabbin, work in banks under good conditions which have been built up over the years by the trade union movement and the Arbitration Court. Surely, new members of this House like the honorable member for Moorabbin, should know from their reading of history that that is what happened in the 1890's. The banks would do similar things now if they had the power. I realize that when the honorable member for Moorabbin loses his job in Parliament he will need to go back to a bank. That is why he and others must not be critical of the banks. The Bill before the House cannot be justified. Indeed, the Commonwealth Government showed very bad taste in permitting these new savings bank divisions of trading banks to be set up. The trading banks are still controlled to some extent by the Commonwealth Bank, and are required to deposit certain funds with the central bank.

The Commonwealth Bank has done wonders for this country. Honorable members belonging to the Country party know that when they could not obtain

assistance from the associated banks they were only too glad to approach State institutions. They appreciated the Rural Finance Corporation because it granted them funds at an interest rate $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. lower than the Government itself paid for the money. I can remember the time when a farmer, on entering a bank, would take off his hat and bow gracefully. Now, as a result of very good seasons and high prices, a member of the farming community walks into a bank with his hat on and is quite independent in his attitude towards the bank. Farmers have nothing to thank the private banking institutions for. Their thanks are due rather to store-keepers and the agents who sold their properties.

Mr. BOLTE.—Who financed the store-keepers?

Mr. CAIN.—The Government. During the depression and in time of droughts, banks "nailed up" credit and the merchants carried farmers for years. Banks never lose; they always take care of themselves. Whenever difficulties arose they told farmers to reduce their overdrafts. I do not blame honorable members on the Government side who worked for banks for the views they express. They know only what they were told by their employers. This legislation originated from the action of the Commonwealth Government, which proposed to set up two competitors against its own bank. What contribution did the associated banks make to the nation's war effort during the first world war? They protected their own interests. Why was the Commonwealth Bank instituted in the first place, and why was it required in the second world war? I assert that it is an institution used by the people of Australia to preserve themselves in times of peace and war.

The Government calls itself a people's Government, but now it proposes to follow up the Federal Government's action by removing any impediments on the operations of the two new private savings banks in this State. I am convinced that the Premier and the Government believe that these two new institutions will assist the co-operative housing

movement. Time alone will affirm or disprove that view, which I do not share. Recently, the Premier stated that already one of the new savings banks had advanced £500,000 to co-operative housing societies.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is not so.

Mr. CAIN.—I apologize. It was £250,000 to the co-operative housing movement and £500,000 to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. The Minister of Education looks impatient, but he has not the courage of the honorable member for Prahran, who rose in the House to defend the banks. I believe the new savings banks will advance funds for housing only when it suits them. During the first five or six years of the co-operative housing movement the trading banks advanced some funds for their use.

Mr. BOLTE.—But there is a charter relating to the new savings banks.

Mr. CAIN.—I am aware of that. The trading banks made advances to the co-operative housing societies for a period. But, in the last three or four years, that source of finance has completely dried up. I was aggrieved with the Premier when he attacked the Commonwealth Bank. That institution, which provided the sum of £2,000,000 this year, was the only authority to lend money to Victoria. It is true that the bank used the people's money, but it was the only one to provide finance for co-operative housing societies, and over the years it has rendered great assistance.

In 1952, when the Labour party Government assumed office, the State Electricity Commission owed the Commonwealth Bank £7,000,000. Short-term advances were made in a difficult situation, when funds could not be obtained elsewhere. I interviewed the governor of the bank, and he stated that six or eight months would be allowed for us to overcome our difficulties. Why the Commonwealth Bank should be attacked, I am at a loss to understand. I also fail to appreciate why it is proposed to provide that institution with competitors. I shall be pleased to listen to anybody who can convince me that Victoria, and its

people, will be better off because people deposit savings with the private banks, and that those institutions will be more generous to Governments and ordinary people alike than the State Savings Bank or the Commonwealth Bank. Had it not been for those two Government-controlled banks, particularly in the spheres of co-operative housing, other forms of home finance, and advances generally, the housing position would be much more difficult than it is.

If the honorable members for Dandenong and Mentone will speak the truth, they will admit that the State Savings Bank has decided that it will not lend money on houses more than two years of age, whereas previously money could be borrowed from it on properties up to five years of age. Those members, as estate agents, will also admit that less money is now available. If the sum of £2,500 can be borrowed, a house offered for sale will realize more than if the borrowing limit is only £2,000. The housing situation is so desperate that purchasers determine prices paid according to the amount they can borrow.

When the Premier made his famous declaration about home finance, and stated that his Government would compel, or induce, or encourage the State Savings Bank to provide home finance up to £4,000, hundreds of people, particularly young married couples and those about to marry, were jubilant at the prospect of at last being able to purchase a home. Three days before the last election on 28th May, a young woman approached me and produced a newspaper containing a report that the Leader of the Liberal and Country party proposed to increase State Savings Bank loans from £2,500 to £4,000 on a house costing £4,500. She asked me whether the party I represented would do likewise. I told her I should like to have her vote, but that I could not make such a promise, and that the then Leader of the Opposition, if his party won the election, could not fulfil his. She went away, and I presume she voted against me. However, last Christmas she informed me, "I now know that what you said was the truth."

Mr. Cain.

She added that representatives of the State Savings Bank had turned her away and informed her that the promise could not be implemented. Such action on the part of the Government is rank political hypocrisy.

For the reasons I have outlined, I consider that the House is not justified in straining the position to the degree now proposed. The Government is convinced that there will be advantages in conferring privileges on the private banks, but I consider that they will result in a definite disadvantage to the people of the State. Consequently, I intend to oppose the Bill.

Mr. LOXTON (Pahran).—I believe that the Leader of the Opposition is sincere in his expressions, but I consider that the principle involved in the measure has been temporarily forgotten, and that the debate has tended to drift to the question of bank nationalization, which was an important issue in 1947. The honorable member for Midlands contended last week that the new savings bank departments of the private banks would contribute largely to inflation by engaging in luxury enterprises and hire-purchase finance. I venture to say that he was ignorant of the charter under which they operate. The honorable member for Ascot Vale displayed a little more knowledge; he admitted there was a charter, but advised the House that he knew nothing about it. He quoted a report in the *Age* of 13th of April stating that at the end of February savings deposited in private banks had risen to nearly £17,000,000.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Yesterday, the figure was up to £24,000,000.

Mr. LOXTON.—That is all the better for us.

Mr. CLAREY.—There has been a drop in savings in the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. LOXTON.—I shall deal with that question. The *Age* of 19th January, 1956, published information regarding the charter for the private savings banks as laid down by the Commonwealth Government. Seventy per cent. of the deposits in the savings bank have to be held in cash, or on deposit

with the Commonwealth Bank, or in State or Commonwealth securities. Ten per cent. must be in Commonwealth treasury bills or in the Commonwealth Bank. The remaining 20 per cent. has to be invested in ordinary housing, co-operative housing, or mortgages on land. I think that is fair. The Leader of the Opposition reiterated the statement of the Premier that already a considerable sum had been lent in this State by two of these institutions. Competition is a good thing. I shall admit that the Commonwealth Savings Bank in Victoria and the State Savings Bank, up to the end of February, felt the pinch to the extent of £2,000,000 because of the competition of the savings departments of trading banks. At the same time, Victoria benefited in savings to the tune of another £2,000,000. Something else that is worthwhile is the fact that there are now 32,000 extra depositors. If there is anything needed in this country, it is more people saving money. Citizens of Victoria and South Australia are the biggest savers in the Commonwealth. The average deposit on operative accounts in those two States at the end of February was £170 18s. 0d. New South Wales with 200,000 more depositors could manage only £155 a head.

The Premier, according to the Leader of the Opposition, attacked the Commonwealth Bank. It may have been at my instigation that the Premier did so, but I am not afraid to give the facts and figures. The annual report of the Commonwealth Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1955, contains some interesting information. The Leader of the Opposition has added certain figures to those contained in this report, to bring them up to date, but for the sake of my argument, I shall take the figures as printed. Loans approved for co-operative building and housing societies amounted to £7,200,000 in 1954-55. Most of it was lent by the Commonwealth Savings Bank. This was about four-fifths of the total amount received by the various societies from all lending institutions, and brought the total allocations for this purpose by the savings bank and the trading bank since 1944 to £73,000,000. Figures I have

obtained from the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies furnish proof of that statement. Of the £73,000,000, the sum of £15,000,000 was lent in Victoria.

It might interest members to learn that the State Savings Bank of Victoria last contributed to a new co-operative housing society in 1953.

Mr. CLAREY.—That bank made prior commitments.

Mr. LOXTON.—My reference was to new co-operative housing societies.

Mr. FENNESSY.—What did the bank which you represent do for those societies?

Mr. LOXTON.—I thank the honorable member for his interjection. I am proud to state that I am on the "temporary reserve list" of the English, Scottish and Australian Bank, which institution, during the early years of co-operative housing in this State, advanced to societies a total sum of £5,080,000, and the interest rate was pegged at 3½ per cent. for the duration of the loan. Those facts probably appal Opposition members. There can be no doubt that an all-time "high" has been reached in respect of hire-purchase, the foremost bogey of to-day. I remind Opposition members that the Commonwealth Bank of Australia commenced hire-purchase dealings in this State some considerable time ago. How did the trading banks react to that occurrence? Were they bemused and worried when clients transferred their business to the Commonwealth Bank because that institution provided means whereby washing machines, motor-cars and so forth could be purchased? No. They said, in effect, "This is competition; we shall be in it," and that is what they did. The Opposition may be surprised to learn that, last year, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia engaged in hire-purchase dealings to the extent of £13,800,000, and actually financed 20,060 retail transactions.

Mr. CAIN.—What did the private banks do in that regard?

Mr. LOXTON.—The English, Scottish and Australian Bank is connected with hire-purchase transactions as is also the National Bank of Australasia. The

latter institution has a 40 per cent. shareholding in Custom Credit Corporation Limited. Incidentally, the Bank of Adelaide, which is a relatively small banking institution, is also connected with hire-purchase.

Adverting to the total sum of £73,000,000, which as I previously mentioned has been advanced by the Commonwealth Bank since 1944, I might state that, of this amount, Victoria got £15,000,000. At the end of February, 1956, the total value of savings bank deposits in New South Wales was £371,000,000 as compared with the sum of £373,000,000 in Victoria. From a publication which I now hold, I discover that, during the past year, the Commonwealth Savings Bank approved nearly 5,000 Crédit Foncier loans, for a total sum of £7,000,000. The application of a little mental arithmetic will disclose that the average sum of money advanced to each borrower was in the region of £1,400. I venture to suggest that the people's bank is not helping the public to the extent supposed by its "cheer leaders." Moreover, I claim that no home builder represented by an Opposition member could afford a deposit of £1,600 upon a house estimated to cost £3,000. In those circumstances, a loan of £1,400 is totally inadequate to meet the situation.

Mr. FENNESSY.—Not all home builders want to borrow the maximum sum permissible.

Mr. LOXTON.—I believe in the principle of providing the greatest good for the largest number, but the policy of the Commonwealth Savings Bank is to do a little good for a selected few, who can afford a deposit of £1,600. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Savings Bank is not assisting those persons whom Opposition members and also supporters of the Government are eager to assist, namely, those who cannot afford a large deposit.

Mr. TODD.—It is now impossible to obtain loans from the trading banks, and you know it.

Mr. LOXTON.—The trading banks have done a tremendous job for the community. A graph which I have before me reveals that upwards of 61 per cent. of the total advances by trading banks

were applied to agriculture, dairying, grazing, manufacturing, commerce, home building and public authorities. Do Opposition members contend that the trading banks should refuse financial assistance to farmers and commercial enterprises?

Mr. TODD.—I repeat that advances cannot be obtained from private banks.

Mr. LOXTON.—That is because their money is tied up by the central bank.

Mr. CAIN.—Your argument will not "wash."

Mr. LOXTON.—Funds are flowing into savings banks from private banking institutions. That money is available to the State and to home builders, because it is not tied up by the central bank.

Mr. CAIN.—You have a poor case.

Mr. LOXTON.—I support the measure, and trust that every penny deposited with private savings banks will be gratefully received and well and worthily applied.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—Those members on the Government side of the Chamber who contributed to the debate departed considerably from the vital principle of the measure. The House is not necessarily concerned with the detailed management of the Commonwealth Bank or even of the State Savings Bank of Victoria.

Mr. ROSSITER.—Do you disagree with your Leader?

Mr. CLAREY.—I do not assert that I agree entirely with him or that I disagree with him in any way. My contention is that much discussion of the Bill has been irrelevant to the main proposal that it embraces, which is simple in character. If the House were to get down to the essence of the measure, the debate could probably be concluded within five or ten minutes. Clearly, in effect, the Government wishes to make a donation of some sort to the private banks in recognition of what they did for the Liberal party in 1947 by "turning out" the Cain Labour Administration. Because of a grave doubt whether cheques drawn on private savings banks would be subject to the payment of stamp duty, the Government decided to

place the matter beyond all doubt by affording a concession in that regard to the clients of private savings banks.

The attitude assumed by the Premier toward this measure is remarkable, particularly in view of the manner in which, a few months ago, he deplored the drift in the State's finances. As recently as last night, in this Chamber, the honorable gentleman asserted that, by the end of next month, Victoria would be "in the red" to the extent of £3,500,000, and he did not know where additional revenue could be raised because of the inequity of uniform taxation exacted by the Commonwealth authorities. Now, in this short measure, it is proposed to make a gift to the clients of private savings banks which will amount to many hundreds of thousands of pounds annually. The Premier laughs, but he knows that my contention is true. I have before me a copy of a proposed charter for the private savings banks. It states, *inter alia*—

OPERATION OF CHEQUE ACCOUNTS.

Excepting a society, body or club (not being an incorporated or unincorporated company or other body engaged in or formed for the purpose of trading or acquiring pecuniary profit or other gain), a savings bank will not permit a customer to operate by cheque on an account opened with it.

The number of cheques handled by the private savings banks could be considerable, running into millions. They may be exempt from stamp duty.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Amounting to 2d. on each cheque.

Mr. CLAREY.—That is true. So far, there is no indication of the extent of the proposed concession, but the Government has said, in effect, "We want to put private savings banks on the same basis as the State Savings Bank, so that there may be equitable competition." The Country party supports the Government on this measure, but I point out that only the other day that party urged the Government to stop the flow of margarine from New South Wales into Victoria. Apparently, members of the Country party believe in competition, when it suits them to do so. If their own pockets are likely to be affected, they seek to be placed in a close preserve.

What is the reason for the sudden absence from the Chamber of the honorable member for Prahran who, having spoken, has flitted from the scene while his arguments are being answered? He suggested that the private banks are coming into the savings bank field in order to render service to the public. The past record of the private banks reveals that they are utterly unconcerned with the welfare of their clients. No wonder the honorable member for Prahran said that he looked to the future and not to the past! The record of the Liberal and Country party is such as to make one realize that when they speak of looking to the future, they are throwing dust in the eyes of the electors. Why have the private banks entered upon savings bank business? They have done so because they realize that to-day savings bank deposits have greatly increased, thus creating a field for exploitation. Hitherto, the private banks were not interested in small investors, but they realize that bank deposits have now reached almost astronomical figures.

Reference was made earlier to the fact that private savings banks' deposits had increased; there is no doubt about that. The *Age* and *Sun News-Pictorial* of 5th May contained identical statistics concerning deposits in the new savings banks. The article in the *Age* read as follows:—

The two new private savings banks operated by the Bank of New South Wales and the Australia and New Zealand Bank have attracted business worth £24,366,000 in the first three months of their operations.

Total deposits in all savings banks at the end of March were £1,108,215,000—an increase of £6,546,000 on deposits at the end of February.

During the same period last year the increase in deposits was only £368,000.

At the end of March this year there were 7,034,000 operative accounts with savings banks, with an average deposit per account of £157 12d., whilst the average per head of population was £119 14s.

It is into this field that the private banks are now encroaching. In many instances clients have been induced to close State Savings Bank accounts and transfer their deposits to private banks. I, personally, operate both trading and State Savings

Bank accounts, but my trading bank account contains only sufficient to enable my cheques to be honoured.

In the *Quarterly Survey* of the Australia and New Zealand Bank Limited, issued in January, 1956, appeared an article dealing with savings in Australia. This article, which indicated the great development that had taken place in savings bank deposits, stated, *inter alia*—

Total savings deposits have shown considerable growth in recent years. Thus from June, 1951, to July, 1955, total deposits rose from £A837,000,000 to £A1,081,000,000, the average per account rising from £A133 to £A157, and the average per head of Australia's population growing from £A100 to £A118 in spite of the rapid rise in the population during this period.

I do not wish to weary the House with statistical data, but I reiterate the reasons why Labour party members oppose this measure. The State Savings Bank has always been recognized as the bank of the people; its branches were established throughout the State for the workers. As at 30th June, 1955, the State Savings Bank had an amount at credit, including school banks, of £260,150,379, as compared with only £4,227 on 31st September, 1842, when the bank was first opened, with only 230 depositors. To-day, the number of depositors is 2,126,216. Should we, as a Parliament, do something that will imperil our own State Savings Bank? I do not mean to imperil it to the extent that it might not be able to meet its obligations, although certain private banks found themselves in such a position some years ago. The State Savings Bank has never defaulted or been forced to close its doors. It has rendered fine service to the community. If it has not done more in the past, there are probably reasons for that, and there is no justification for enabling new banks to be opened, at the expense of the State Treasury, to permit competition with our own State Savings Bank.

Mr. SUGGETT (Moorabbin).—After listening to the debate last week on the machinery phases of the Bill, and having heard certain speakers to-night, I recalled my early days when I used to attend Sunday school. I remember particularly the words of the old hymn we once

sang, "Tell me the old, old story." Yes; it is the old old story again twisted and warped, and hashed up, like boarding house stew. The honorable member for Brunswick East gibed at Government members for dwelling in the past, and yet last week, we heard from Opposition members all about the banks not fulfilling their commitments in the last century. I thought for a moment that the honorable member for Melbourne would introduce a little sanity into the picture. He said that this measure could have already been disposed of within five minutes, although he remained on his feet for at least fifteen minutes.

This is a simple measure which, if passed, would affect the operations of two savings banks that have been given a licence to undertake savings bank business by the Commonwealth Government. That is a *fait accompli*. It is important that sufficient emphasis be placed on the terms of the Commonwealth licence granted to the new savings banks. This licence provides—

The Commonwealth Government licence requires savings banks to maintain at least 70 per cent. of deposits in securities issued by Commonwealth or State Governments or issued or guaranteed by an authority constituted by or under a Commonwealth or State act. The remaining 30 per cent. or less after providing for working funds and for day to day requirements may be used for (a) loans to building societies, the repayment of which is guaranteed by the Commonwealth or a State; (b) loans for housing or other purposes on the security of loans in Australia.

I imagine that that money could be very helpful in filling Commonwealth and semi-governmental loans. An analysis of the figures just released by the Commonwealth of Australia in Treasury Information Bulletin No. 2 of April, 1956, shows that total bank deposits in Australia increased by £16,800,000 in the quarter ended 31st March, 1956, as against an increase of £7,600,000 in the same quarter last year, £7,900,000 for the previous year, and £6,600,000 in 1953. This information shows the value of competition. As the Premier stated in his second-reading speech, the State Savings Bank has a new look. It is a good thing to have a little competition. In fact, it was suggested by

one of the daily newspaper columnists that the bank was even considering taking monthly payments of electric light bills and the like as a service to its depositors. One of the results of competition is that the public receives better service.

It has been stated that the private trading banks have done nothing for housing—they have been termed the blood suckers and the leeches. I have been attacked because I am described as a bank clerk. True it is that I worked for a trading bank, but I emphasize that that was my chosen vocation. If my Socialist friends had had their way, I would have had no choice, because the Labour policy, as enunciated, is that of socialization of industry. Lest there should be any doubt as to what is meant by the word "industry," I shall quote from the platform of the Australian Labour party, which sets out an objective of the party as, "The socialization of industry, production, distribution, and exchange." One of the methods to be adopted in order to achieve that objective is—and again I quote—"The nationalization of banking, credit, and insurance."

Many unfounded charges have been made against the Government and the trading banks. For example, the Leader of the Opposition suggested that there was a conspiracy between the Commonwealth and State Governments. I do not know whether he is acting under doctor's orders or not, but the term "conspiracy" sounded vaguely familiar. Let us look at the facts in regard to the banks and their assistance to housing. I refer to one bank particularly as I am more qualified to speak for that institution.

The parent bank—the Bank of New South Wales—has recognized its national duty in connexion with housing. In 1953, the president of the Bank, Sir Colin Sinclair said—

I should like to mention our assistance in a sector where the banks often incur much uninformed criticism. There are many features about loans for housing purposes which do not make ideal propositions for trading banks. But recognizing the national needs, and consistently

with its liquidity requirements and its responsibilities to the needs of other borrowers, the Bank has made advances connected with housing to the extent of some £30,000,000 in Australia, about 20 per cent. of its Australian advance business, a proportion higher than ever before.

It will be appreciated that the Bank of New South Wales, which is the oldest and largest bank in the Southern Hemisphere, has played no small part in the development of this country.

In the four years 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, £48,000,000 was advanced directly for home building to 30,766 individuals and 243 building societies.

It is the intention of the bank, when security forms are available and discussions with the central bank have been concluded, to lend this money out, broadly speaking, where the depositors are domiciled. There are ample arguments to controvert the ill-founded statements of members of the Opposition. This Bill will not place the new savings banks in a favoured position. Their inauguration is a *fait accompli*; they are in operation. I repeat that they are not being placed in a favoured position, but the question at issue is: Should they be impeded in the ordinary conduct of their banking business by having to put stamp duty not only upon their withdrawal forms but even on the pass-books with every deposit of money?

So it is a simple matter and, as the honorable member for Melbourne has truly said, it could be disposed of in five minutes. These concerns will make a major contribution to the welfare of the State. Are we going to impede their progress or to give them an opportunity to garner funds that would not be available otherwise? I have been employed by a bank and I know that often there is money in current accounts lying idle for many months and years because the depositors do not take the opportunity of transferring amounts into savings bank accounts. Their reason for not disturbing the deposits is largely that they think their money may be required at short notice. However, with the advent of the savings bank departments it will be very simple for such people to transfer deposits from their current account to a savings account, and thus their money becomes liquid.

Harking back to the charter, will it not be an advantage to the State and the Commonwealth if more money becomes available for Government and semi-Government loans, and also for housing? I cannot understand how anyone with an ounce of common sense could suggest that this new procedure is not for the benefit of the country, and lest there should be any doubt as to whether I intend to vote for or against the Bill I here say unequivocally that I wholehearted support it.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond).—At the outset I wish to make clear that in my view the concession being made to the trading banks has been largely brought about by the conservative policies of the State Savings Bank over the years. What people do with their savings is their own business. We should not attempt to direct them, but the Government, if it gives these facilities to the trading banks, should give to the State Savings Bank those trading facilities that the trading banks possess at the moment. In that way there would be provided the very necessary competition that will keep both the State institution and the private trading banks on their toes.

Competition is good and healthy. If the State Savings Bank showed the necessary initiative it could do, in Victoria, what the Rural Bank has done in New South Wales, and that has been a magnificent job in the giving of assistance to all sections of the community. So I say again, let the Government demonstrate its sincerity by giving to the State Savings Bank those facilities that it is entitled to.

I have heard some curious remarks in the course of the debate. The honorable member for Melbourne referred to the fact that he had a trading account. I asked him with whom he had it, and I expected him to be able to do as I do and be prepared to show a cheque book of the Commonwealth Bank and to say that his trading account is with that bank. If the honorable member and his left-wing Socialist colleagues believe that they should support the Commonwealth Bank, why is he ashamed to produce his cheque book and tell me that he has a trading account with that

bank? Does he support the private trading banks? He is welcome to see my own cheque book.

The constitution of the Labour party states that members of the party should use the Commonwealth Bank. Yet these extreme left-wing Socialists are not prepared to show their cheque books and make it known where they stand. I have in mind at the moment one of their number who in Canberra accuses the Commonwealth Government of being in the grip of the trading banks. I have found that he supports the trading banks. I refer to Mr. J. F. Cairns, and I have here one of his cheques drawn on the National Bank. This was submitted to the Labour party and acknowledged by Mr. Lovegrove in a letter dated 5th July, 1952. That cheque was drawn by a man who bleats so loudly to-day about Socialism and has accused the Commonwealth Government of being under the control of the trading banks, of which he himself is a supporter. Here is the cheque, if any member of this House wants to take a photograph of it. The honorable member for Port Melbourne appears by his interjections to be interested in it. If his proposal is to be given any consideration he can inspect the cheque.

I am always prepared to substantiate my statements with fact. When these extreme left-wing Socialists of the Evatt party bleat about Socialism and attack the private banks, I wish to make it clear that I have no sympathy with the trading banks, but that I believe in sincerity and honesty. I would expect that if those members were sincere and honest they would abide by the constitution of the Labour party, which states that accounts should be held with the Commonwealth Bank. We, who have remained true to the principles of the Labour party, have obeyed that rule; but those whose main claims to fame have been their continual support—

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—On a point of order, I wish to ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the honorable member for Brunswick West is in order in chewing gum and interjecting from other than his proper place in the House.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—The point is well sustained. I ask the honorable member for Brunswick West to speak from his usual place in the House.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—I would ask if the point of order raised by the Minister was itself in order seeing that interjections are out of order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I rule that the honorable member for Brunswick West is out of order on two counts—on the point mentioned by the Minister, and also for interjecting.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond).—I said earlier that I had heard some curious statements in the course of the debate. I agree that a lot of criticism can be made of the trading banks, but I emphasize that it should be honest and sincere. It is hypocritical on the part of those people who trade with and support the trading banks to attack them and still contend that they are true members of the Labour party.

Mr. TODD.—What is the date of that cheque?

Mr. SCULLY.—I have given the date, but it is irrelevant. I would be interested to know whether the honorable member for Port Melbourne has an account with one of the trading banks. I should be interested also to know whether Mr. Galbally trades in accordance with the principles of the Labour party or whether he also does business with a private trading bank. I should like to know whether the Socialists in this House generally have their trading accounts with the trading banks or with the Commonwealth Bank. It would appear from the chorus of interjections that there are many members on the Opposition side of the House with guilty consciences. A number of these so-called Socialists do have their trading accounts with the private institutions.

Mr. TODD.—What is the date of that cheque?

Mr. SCULLY.—The principle is whether or not the honorable member supports the trading banks or, in conformity with the constitution of the Labour party, has his account with the

Commonwealth Bank. In all his interjections the honorable member has never once said that he trades with the Commonwealth Bank. I should be interested to know with which bank he operates his trading account.

Mr. TODD.—I raise a family, not a banking account.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I suggest that the honorable member for Richmond reverts to the Bill.

Mr. SCULLY.—So far, the debate has proceeded rather curiously. I expected that some Opposition speakers would have suggested that the State Savings Bank should be afforded trading facilities that would enable it to compete fairly with the trading banks that are now entering the savings bank field. The criticisms voiced by Opposition members are insincere, because some of them bank with private institutions, which they are entitled to do. If those members were sincere, they would open current accounts in the Commonwealth Trading Bank. They should urge the Government to afford trading bank facilities to the State Savings Bank.

Mr. TODD.—You have not mentioned how you obtained the cheque to which you referred.

Mr. SCULLY.—That cheque came from Labour party records, which are in the possession of the true Labour party. Similarly, the relevant bank account and also the assets are in the possession of true Labourites, where they will remain. I have no sympathy with the trading banks. However, by the same token, I am not happy about the administration of the State Savings Bank. Examination of the annual reports of that organization reveals that, year after year, a stereotyped document is issued. Its form does not vary. It is always headed "The State Savings Bank of Victoria; established 1841." Then the address of the head office of the institution is stated, followed by an announcement of the total assets of the bank. The next paragraph states "Annual Report for the year ended 30th June, 1955, with the accounts and statements required by section 123 of Act No. 3777." One

reason underlying the bringing down of this measure is the lack of initiative on the part of the bank's management. Despite all the development that has taken place in Victoria, very few new branches of the State Savings Bank have been opened in the recently-constructed housing estates. I regard that neglect as gross dereliction of duty. The Commonwealth Savings Bank opened many new branches in temporary buildings for a start, and later erected fine permanent structures. Why did not the State Savings Bank do likewise?

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—The State Savings Bank asked other banks to act as agents for it.

Mr. TODD.—The State Savings Bank provides facilities for school children.

Mr. SCULLY.—That worthy service has operated for many years. I consider that the State Savings Bank has failed to provide services adequate to public requirements. The bank's report for the year 1955 does not mention the visit overseas of its general manager. Why did that gentleman go overseas? What was the cost of his trip? To what extent did it benefit the bank and the people of Victoria?

Mr. SHEPHERD.—One might well ask who paid for Charlie Murphy's trip overseas.

Mr. SCULLY.—If I thought some benefit would accrue from a visit by the general manager of the bank to overseas countries, I would support such a proposal. As a matter of fact, I think every member of Parliament should be given the opportunity of going overseas in order to broaden his outlook. For the past twenty years, this State has derived no benefit from the establishment of the State Savings Bank. Examination of the reports of the organization reveals that a large sum of money belonging to the bank is invested in Commonwealth funds. The 1955 report states that, in 1952, the State Savings Bank had £99,952,644 invested in Australian Consolidated and Commonwealth Inscribed Stock and Treasury bills.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—That money was invested at short call.

Mr. SCULLY.—There is no reference to that aspect in the report.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The former member for Brunswick frequently mentioned that fact in this House.

Mr. SCULLY.—If there was one man in this Chamber who high-lighted the shortcomings of the State Savings Bank, it was the former member for Brunswick, Mr. Peter Randles. It is a tribute to him that, despite the fact that he was a former employee of the organization, he fought to see that its funds were directed toward the building of homes. The State Savings Bank has had large sums of money invested in Commonwealth funds for more than twenty years.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The investment was made to assist the war effort.

Mr. SCULLY.—I agree that every member of the community should make his contribution during times of war, but the money to which I refer should not be allowed to remain with the Commonwealth authorities after the cessation of hostilities. The State Savings Bank should meet its obligations to the community and to the State. The bank advanced a large sum of money to the State Electricity Commission when that authority was suffering from the effects of maladministration. Had that instrumentality been well managed, the money advanced to it by the bank could have been directed to home finance. I believe that extreme pressure had to be brought to bear on the bank before it would assist the Commission. Those responsible for the maladministration of that authority should have been exposed, and appropriate action taken. Mr. Galbally was the responsible Minister at the time, and I tried hard enough to expose the maladministration.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I ask the honorable member for Richmond to relate his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. SCULLY.—The funds of the State Savings Bank that are still tied to the Commonwealth should be made available to housing societies because it is a function of the bank to assist the State in that regard. It should advance money

at an interest rate of 2 per cent. to young couples who want to build homes. That is the policy of the true Labour party. If the bank will not provide the money at 2 per cent, the Government should subsidize the difference between 2 per cent. and the ruling rate of interest. In that way, the workers of Victoria will be enabled to erect homes at reasonable cost. The State Savings Bank must share responsibility for the chaos that now obtains concerning home finance.

In a book written over a century ago by a Mr. Gooch, there are expressions which are similar to those which appear in the annual reports of the State Savings Bank. That fact indicates lack of initiative on the part of those responsible for the management of the bank. The Government should give the State Savings Bank the same trading facilities as are available to private trading banks and say to those banks, "We will allow you to enter the savings bank field, but we propose to confer trading facilities on to the State Savings Bank also."

Mr. RAFFERTY (Caulfield).—Exactly two hours and 45 minutes ago, members were issued with a document, and the copy that I received reads, "A Bill to amend the Third Schedule to the Stamps Act 1946." I read that title lest honorable members forget the purpose of the Bill now before the House. When he introduced this measure, and also in his second-reading speech, the Premier gave what I believe was a clear outline of the purposes of the measure. My summary of it would be thus: There are two private banks in this State which have been granted a charter by the Commonwealth Government to act as savings banks. The Commonwealth Treasurer, in announcing the formation of new savings banks in Australia, indicated that one condition would be the safeguarding of public interest, and another would be to the effect that the new savings banks were to be operated in accordance with traditional savings bank practice. Under existing legislation in Victoria, the savings departments of the two trading banks concerned must pay stamp duty on all transactions, whilst

the State Savings Bank of Victoria and the Commonwealth Savings Bank do not pay stamp duty. To that extent, the private savings banks are competing with Government savings banks on an unfair basis. The purpose of this measure is to afford the new banks the same facilities and conditions as those that are enjoyed by Government savings banks. In other words, the Bill purports to do what we, as Australians, expect in our community, namely, to ensure that, in honest competition, everybody is given a "fair go."

But the members of the Opposition will not have that position. When we study their contributions to this debate, we find that before the Bill was introduced during the discussion on the resolution authorizing an appropriation from Consolidated Revenue for its purposes, they had to rush in and give their views they were not able to wait until the Premier made his second-reading speech. It is interesting to note that at least eight members of the Opposition spoke at that time. I have read each of those speeches three times. I came to the conclusion that they were somewhat like the Income Tax Act. On the first occasion, the reader gets some semblance of what is meant; on the second occasion he thinks he knows; and, on the third occasion, he is back at the start. If any common contribution at all was made, it was the claim that it was a terrible thing for two new savings banks to operate in the community.

In four columns of *Hansard*, commencing at page 2660, the honorable member for Midlands managed to make two brief points. He expressed the view that the Commonwealth Bank and, in particular, the State Savings Bank of Victoria were being undermined, because funds would be withdrawn from them and deposited in the other banks. He stated also that such money would be used on luxury spending. Then he went on to make this very curious observation.—

Having regard to the fact that the deposits in the State Savings Bank are guaranteed by the Government, one would expect that the Premier would at least desire to maintain a basis of equality in the competition

between the State Savings Bank and other savings banks that may come into existence.

I should have thought that was the precise purpose of the Bill. I now refer to the speech of the honorable member for Ascot Vale. It will be recalled that he painted a graphic story of the day that the private savings banks commenced operations. He stated that as a reasonable citizen he went to see what was happening, and, to his amazement, he saw people paying cheques drawn on the trading banks into the savings departments of those banks. When he was asked why it was that people were taking that course, the honorable member stated that he thought it was probably because the people did not know that they could place their savings in the State Savings Bank. He then criticised the statement of the Premier that the State Savings Bank was being given a new look because there was some competition. It seems to me that it is high time the State Savings Bank was given a new look if the people of Victoria did not know they could deposit their savings with the State Savings Bank. The honorable member said also—

The Labour party did not set up that institution as a socialist organization about which the Government members speak. The State Savings Bank was established by the great and real Liberals of Victoria, who recognised the advantages which such a bank would provide for the people, and we agree that the State Savings Bank is doing a marvellous job.

Having given the real Liberals of Victoria credit for having established that bank, surely the honorable member will extend that credit to them again for having sufficient foresight to assist in the introduction of other savings banks in Victoria. Shortly, I shall illustrate the accuracy of the honorable member's statement of the foresight of the Liberals.

Six other members of the Opposition then spoke in quick succession. Not one of them dealt with the real purpose of the Bill. Each was intent on showing what a terrible thing was being done in Victoria and in Australia by permitting other savings banks to enter into competition with the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. Rafferty.

Yet, it is strange that the whole tenor of the speeches was, "We should have one savings bank." Members of the Opposition seemed almost to begrudge the operations of the State Savings Bank. In their view, apparently there should be only the Commonwealth Savings Bank, and that despite the fact that they themselves are happy to have two Labour parties.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—We are not so happy about that.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—Previously, I referred to the remarks of the Commonwealth Treasurer when the private savings banks were introduced, and the honorable member for Moorabbin informed the House of the terms and conditions under what those banks were to operate. I think it is unnecessary for me to repeat that information. It is, however, interesting to note the concern expressed by members of the Opposition, particularly the honorable member for Midlands, who stated that he was quite certain that the new banks would undermine the Commonwealth Savings Bank in Victoria and the State Savings Bank. The honorable member was as certain that the deposits made in the new savings banks would be used only for the purchase of luxury items.

If one takes the trouble to study statistics and the records of the operations of the trading banks in Australia, and in particular in Victoria, one finds that since their inception advances to the building industry in Victoria have amounted to £43,300,000, and the total lent in Australia has been £144,500,000. I suggest that is sufficient evidence to indicate, apart from what is set down in the charter for anyone to read, that we might well expect a similar contribution by the new savings banks. I now wish to cite figures presented in the March return of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics. Since the inception of the new banks there has been a considerable increase in savings per head of population in those States where private banks have been recently opened. In Tasmania and South Australia, where there is no competition from the private savings banks the increase, if there has

been one, has been markedly lower. For instance, in Victoria in September, 1955, the deposits per head of population amounted to £146.2; in December, £145.9; and in March, 1956, approximately 2½ months after the advent of the new savings banks in this State, there was an increase to £147.4. We find also that there has been a general over-all increase of deposits. In September, 1955, the overall percentage increase was 1.2 per cent. whereas, since December, 1955, it is 1.5 per cent. The curious feature about the next set of figures is that they apply to New South Wales which, unfortunately, has a Labour Government. We find that in that State there was a greater increase. In September, 1955, the deposits amounted to £103 per head of population; in December, 1955, £103.9; and in March, 1956, £106.8. The same position obtains in all States, except in the two where there is no competition from savings banks run by private enterprise. I suggest that the figures give a clear indication of a much healthier picture in the community as a result of competition.

In my opinion, the figures I have quoted illustrate that the people do in fact want the new savings banks. From the time of their advent in Victoria on the 19th January, of this year, until the end of March, a sum of just over £6,000,000 has been deposited by the people; the sum of almost £24,500,000 has been deposited throughout Australia in private savings banks. Surely everyone in the community cannot be wrong. Those figures supply evidence that citizens want to place their funds in the private banks. The purpose of the Bill is merely to give depositors the opportunity of helping in the development of Australia, to allow loyal citizens to make deposits in those banks which are pledged, by their charter, to use the money for development of this country.

There is no justification, in my opinion, in penalising people who wish to put money into these private banks. Everyone in the community is entitled to decide for himself the repository of his savings, and to know that in making his own choice there shall be no discrimination. I believe that the terms of the

Bill are clear and precise. I consider that much time has been wasted by members of the Opposition in not debating this measure.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—It is not my intention to delay the House for a long period. I thank the honorable member for Caulfield for rebuking us. In saying that members of the Opposition have not been debating this measure, he is actually disagreeing with the Speaker who, throughout the debate, has not found it necessary to request members to speak to the subject-matter of the Bill. To clear the air and to answer as briefly and as effectively as my limited capacity allows, I say that any statement by the honorable member for Richmond can be discounted as far as the Opposition side of the House is concerned. We have disowned him for ever in party politics, and we do not want to be associated with him. If he goes to the trouble of speaking in the House and charging any of our members because they will not indicate at which bank they place their business, he can take the responsibility. He asserts that we as members of a Socialist party should at least indicate that we bank with the Commonwealth Bank, a supposedly Socialist institution. This man is the greatest acrobat and liar I have struck in my political life. He produced a bank book of the Commonwealth Bank, which he called a Socialist bank, yet he is totally opposed to Socialism and Communism. He produced a cheque supposedly signed by the present member for Yarra in the Federal Parliament, Mr. Cairns. That cheque could have been a fake. It was three or four years old. The honorable member for Richmond produced also records from offices that formerly belonged to the official Australian Labour party. He produced a letter purporting to acknowledge this cheque, and said it had been signed by Mr. Lovegrove in 1952 or 1953. People who do things like that cannot expect to influence the electors of this State into believing that its representative-elect—the man who is the custodian of all those documents to-day—is a fit and proper person to go to Canberra and take the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty next July. That is what I

think of Mr. McManus, a man who will take records out of an office supposedly watched over by a non-unionist.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I ask the honorable member for Ascot Vale to confine his remarks to the Bill under discussion.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—When a man discloses banking activities in this House during a debate on banking by producing a cheque that has obviously been cancelled, I say that the organization he kicks around with and works for is bad. That organization in Richmond never hesitated to take money from the campaign fund of the same Federal member for advertisements published during the last Federal election campaign.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Order! I ask the honorable member for Ascot Vale to confine his remarks strictly to the Bill.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I appreciate the fact that I am a little wide of the mark. The man to whom I refer, when speaking to the same question in this House, was allowed a little latitude to make dastardly statements about members of my party. If you remember, Sir, firstly he said that he did not believe in inquiring or delving into the private banking affairs of any individual. Then he wanted a member of the House to disclose where he banked. I do not know whether the honorable member for Melbourne wanted to do so or not; he was within his rights, based on the earlier remarks of the honorable member for Richmond, not to give that information. I do not know whether the cheque produced was signed by Mr. Cairns or not. I should have taken the same attitude as was taken in the Federal Parliament by the honorable member for East Sydney, Mr. Eddie Ward, who obtained permission to have a map of Australia, showing the position of the so-called Brisbane line, printed in Federal *Hansard*. Anything produced in this House should be tabled for inspection. There is no happiness between the group to which the honorable member for Richmond belongs and our official Labour party. I can assure honorable members of that. There is no connexion whatever.

Mr. RYLAH.—That is self-evident.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—And the party to which the Chief Secretary belongs is benefiting from it at the present time. Its members should not forget that when their Liberal party colleagues in the Federal sphere make use of these people, as they did in the last session of the Commonwealth Parliament in granting them the call to speak over the air day after day on so-called matters of urgency. That was to suit their own ends.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! This is the third occasion on which I have asked the honorable member for Ascot Vale to confine his remarks to the Bill.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I shall accept your advice, Sir. I appreciate greatly the contributions made to the debate to-night by Government back benchers. I think the opportunity was given to them by the Premier so that they could speak on something they obviously had some connexion with—banking. The statements made were illuminating, though inconsistent. I am sorry that I had to say something last week that the honorable member for Caulfield stated to-night should not have been said. Last week I chided the Premier for having the audacity to criticize our State bank. To-night, Government supporters criticized the Commonwealth Bank. If there was any consistency or meat in their suggestions, I would not mind.

Last year the Minister for Housing brought down a Co-operative Housing Societies (Amendment) Bill. I have supported this movement for years, and I admit that in the last three years these societies have needed money from all of the banks. During his second-reading speech on that Bill, the Minister produced tables showing the finance provided by organizations to the co-operative housing movement. The report is at page 1328 of the current volume of *Hansard*. The figures reveal that the Bank of New South Wales advanced a little over £1,000,000 to nine societies, averaging £119,000 to each. The English, Scottish and Australian Bank supported 40 societies, a

total advance of £5,080,000, for an average of £129,000. The National Bank of Australasia supported 23 societies to the extent of £2,835,000, an average of £123,000. The State Savings Bank supported 81 societies, with a total loan of £16,309,000, or an average of £201,000 in round figures. The Commonwealth Bank, including the savings bank, advanced £16,755,000 to 93 societies, an average of £180,000. The Minister stated at page 1329 of *Hansard*—

Until recently, the State Savings Bank was the largest contributor but, as honorable members have learned from the registrar's recent reports to Parliament, the expansion of the scheme has, for a considerable time, been mainly dependent on the finance provided by the Commonwealth Bank.

He had no objection to the Commonwealth Bank then, and did not praise the private banks for what they had done for co-operative housing. He continued—

In making loans to co-operative housing societies, the Commonwealth Bank gives due regard to the capacity of the building industry to absorb loans, the view being taken that providing more money than the industry can absorb serves no useful purpose; in fact, it simply accelerates the inflationary spiral.

It is the so-called policy of the Liberal party to halt the inflationary spiral. The Minister went on to say—

This is an aspect to which the Government has given close attention and, with a view to having more money provided for the co-operative housing movement within the absorption capacity of the building industry, the Government, immediately on taking office, suggested to the Commonwealth Government that, in future allocations under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, portion of the money should be channelled to co-operative housing societies for home ownership.

Whether the money to be advanced will be enough to affect the inflationary spiral is something that will have to be determined. However, at the time, the Minister did not say that the Commonwealth Bank was preventing the Government from achieving its objects so far as co-operative housing was concerned.

I now desire to answer one or two matters that have been raised. I believe that playing with figures in a debate on this subject can be misleading, but I admit that, in presenting my case in the

same way, I am as guilty as any other member. However, the honorable member for Prahran said that the average loan granted by the State Savings Bank under the Crédit Foncier scheme was approximately £1,400. I consider that needs some explanation. The State Savings Bank lends money in five-yearly periods, and the interest rate is adjusted at the end of such periods. If one had an advance from that bank for eighteen years, three adjustments of interest would be made. Naturally, when the adjustment is made at the end of five years, the amount of the loan then outstanding is less than that at the previous adjustment and, for the purposes of averaging would thus affect the over-all picture. The maximum rate of advance by the bank varies.

I have knowledge of a particular case when £2,400 was advanced to a young couple last year. I think the maximum loan available then was £2,500. It has been reduced to £2,200 and £2,000 according to circumstances. In Victoria, the picture is different from that in New South Wales so far as co-operative housing is concerned. In New South Wales, there have been two phases—from 1936 to 1943, the old money period, and from 1945 onwards, the new money period. In 1923, the Parliament of New South Wales passed a co-operation Act, the provisions of which were later used for the financing of homes. The co-operative housing system was expanded gradually until an up-to-date scheme was introduced in 1936. Figures taken from a brochure prepared by the Association of Co-operative Building Societies of New South Wales show that their total assets at June, 1953, were £100,000,000. The Bank of New South Wales sponsored nine societies in Victoria and 93 societies in New South Wales up to the end of June, 1953. In New South Wales, the Australian Mutual Provident Society sponsored 37 societies and none in Victoria. As I stated previously, it seems obvious that the banks and insurance companies have an arrangement whereby they support co-operative housing to a large extent in one State and very meagrely in another.

MR. HOLDEN.—What is the reason for that?

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I do not know. I have asked the Minister of Housing to co-operate with me in an endeavour to ascertain the reason. The National Bank supported 23 societies in Victoria up until November, 1955, and in New South Wales, only nine. The system seems to be lop-sided. I have quoted the figures for the Australian Mutual Provident Society. I should say that, *pro rata*, it would do just as much business in Victoria as in New South Wales. It is a progressive assurance company. They are things which I can never ascertain about banking institutions. The facts concerning the charter quoted by the honorable member for Prahran are correct. Some references to the 1955 annual report of the Bank of New South Wales would not be out of order. The following comment appears on page 10 of the report:—

You will notice a new item in the bank's balance-sheet, "Shares in the Bank of New South Wales Savings Bank Limited, £1,000,000." As you are aware, the bank has registered a wholly-owned subsidiary company to conduct savings bank business in Australia with a nominal capital of £10,000,000 and a paid-up capital of £1,000,000.

The step has been prompted by the need to give more service to the public and to encourage a wider section of the community to use our bank. It will provide competition to other savings institutions—a healthy development—and in several States it will provide an alternative to the present monopoly. At a time when Australia's development requires huge investment, the encouragement of saving will help the bank to continue to play a significant part in the country's destiny.

The Premier referred to liquidity of funds. Apart from money at short call, why should not trading banks invest on a large scale in co-operative housing?

Mr. BOLTE.—The explanation is complicated, but it is impossible.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I agree that the Blackburn Co-operative Housing Society has been granted £200,000—if it draws on the bank to that extent. The money is not made available to a society except on overdraft, as required by the society. As payments become due, some portion of the amount is paid off the overdraft, which is a depreciating amount. The highest overdraft any one

of the three societies with which I am connected has had is £146,000. The round figure of £16,000,000 quoted is rather misleading, except that it is guaranteed by the Treasurer. Fortunately, up to date there has been no necessity for the guarantee to be honoured. The honorable member for Prahran stated that the average State Savings Bank loan was only £1,400, and in the case of co-operative housing it was about £2,100. That does not mean much because savings bank loans are re-assessed and re-arranged at five-year intervals.

It would be a good thing if Ministers discussing important subjects over radio stations used a script. For instance, recently the Minister of Housing mentioned many important aspects of housing, including finance, on a broadcasting programme. The honorable gentleman did it "off the cuff," but he assisted me when I sought information. The Minister was asked for his advice to a young couple without a family who wished to obtain a dwelling. His advice to them was to work hard, save £1,000, and then build their own house. Often I wonder how many people could save that amount, but I know some do.

I have always wondered why when one goes to New Zealand and obtains a letter of credit from the Commonwealth Bank, it is drawn on the Bank of New South Wales. My experience has shown that the Bank of New South Wales is a very efficient organization, which has treated me and other persons fairly and with great courtesy in matters of currency. I suppose that is true of all trading banks, including the Commonwealth Bank. The honorable member for Prahran mentioned the National Bank of Australasia Limited. The following quotation from its 1955 annual report is interesting:—

In response to questions by Mr. Arthur Lewis, the chairman said that the bank had a 40 per cent. interest in Custom Credit Corporation Limited upon which it received the same rate of dividend as other shareholders of that company, and that such dividend was included in the bank's income for the year. During a discussion

on the question of the establishment of savings banks, the chairman indicated that this was a matter for individual banks.

It appears that banks are not united on the question of establishing savings bank departments, like they were in 1947 when there was a proposal to nationalize the banks. One of the vital points cited at the Privy Council hearing on that occasion was that certain trading banks were incorporated in England. I accept the reprimand of the honorable member for Caulfield concerning the Opposition's desire to debate this matter last week, but point out that the Federal Government did not mention, during the recent election campaign, what it intended to do about the type of banking under discussion. Of course, there was no need to bring the matter before Parliament except in the form of regulations, as published in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of Thursday, 9th February, 1956. I think the charter was announced publicly on or about 16th January last. The Commonwealth Government made its decision; I do not know whether or not it is Liberal party policy. The Labour party is not inconsistent in its policy towards banking. It actually started one bank in the course of its nationalization policy. My party believes, rightly or wrongly, that the Commonwealth Bank could do all the banking. It advocates Government banks. The Opposition believes that ultimately the present proposal must have an effect on the deposits of the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

We all know that it is not possible for any savings banking institution to place all its branches in substantial buildings throughout the State to compete with trading banks which, in many cases, operate branches in leased buildings for one day a week. There is nothing to prevent people who wish to earn interest on their money from doing so. They can transfer it to the State or the Commonwealth Savings Bank. Competition might raise deposits one month, but they are just as likely to fall in another month. I am not impressed by the figures cited in respect of deposits in the last two months. There are two reasons for the rise. The first is that there has been a restriction in hire-purchase.

Some people, when they cannot buy what they want, place their money in the bank. The second reason is that many people desirous of acquiring a home are keeping their money in the bank because they cannot obtain the necessary collateral with which to purchase a home. The money in the bank may present a prosperous-looking picture but the real value of this money determines the solvency of the country. My party is opposed to the Bill on principle.

The passing of the measure will afford the private banks an opportunity to prove whether they are genuine. Every local governing authority in the State is unable to borrow sufficient funds to carry out necessary works. It is impossible for them to get from any source 33 per cent. of the money allocated by the Loan Council last year. The private trading banks, by their charter, are required to lend money to municipal authorities.

Mr. BOLTE.—Will you be satisfied if the private banks do as much as the State Savings Bank has done?

Mr. SHEPHERD.—No. The Labour party wants the State Savings Bank to do more, if possible, than it has in the past. By its charter, that institution must lend a certain percentage of its funds. The honorable member for Moorabbin resides in one of the most difficult municipal districts in Victoria, inasmuch as it needs hundreds of thousands of pounds for various purposes. It is not possible for the savings bank departments of the private banks to satisfy entirely the wants of that one municipality. The Labour party will keep a close watch on the situation. Members on this—the Opposition—side of the House have been consistent in their attitude to banking, and consider that the treatment meted out to the private banks must have been extended for some special reason.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—When the measure was introduced by the Premier and the "conspiracy" was exposed by the Leader of the Opposition, not one member of the Government party rose to support his Leader; in fact, they sat in stunned silence. The

honorable member for Caulfield stated that the Labour party feared competition. His suggestion is laughable. Not long ago he was connected with Australian National Airways Proprietary Limited, whose directors desired to have Trans-Australia Airlines put out of business because the latter organization, which is conducted by a Commonwealth commission, was affecting the profits of the private enterprise. Australian National Airways had to go "cap in hand" to the Government and ask for a loan of several million pounds with which to purchase new aircraft to equip itself against a Government organization which was, so to speak, pushing it into the ground.

Several noteworthy admissions have been made by members on the Government side of the House—in the main, by former bank officials. It is understandable that they should champion the cause of private banks, because their seats afford them only temporary shelter and it may be necessary for them to return to employment with the banks. Statements such as they made can be treated with the contempt they deserve. In 1947 a conspiracy was implemented in another place, as a result of which the Government of the day was defeated on an issue which had no connexion with this State.

The honorable member for Richmond is not concerned with the issue before the House, but with character assassination and attacking members of the official Labour party. He produced a cheque that he was not prepared to pass around. It could be a "dummy" one, for it is a simple matter to obtain a cheque form, fill it in, and back-date it. It was noticeable that he was on the side of the Government in that he attacked the State Savings Bank, but not the private banks. When he was a member of the Labour party, the honorable member for Richmond was scathing in his attacks on the private banks, just as we are, and for which we make no apologies.

The history of the private banks is a very dark one. Many honorable members, including those of the Country party, have reason to remember actions taken by the private banks years ago. It is well to reflect on what the Common-

wealth Bank and the State Savings Bank have done in regard to co-operative housing. I am directly concerned with three co-operative housing societies, and all their funds, totalling £450,000, have been obtained from the Commonwealth Bank, while not a single penny has been borrowed from the private banks. Members of the staff have endeavoured to obtain loans from the latter, but without success. Admittedly, those institutions have made some contribution to co-operative housing societies in Victoria, but it is infinitesimal compared with that made by the Commonwealth Bank and the State Savings Bank.

Members of the Labour party are consistent in their attacks on the private banks. Government members, who represent vested interests and, in certain instances, the banking institutions themselves, are now endeavouring to make conditions better for private banks generally to the detriment of the Commonwealth Bank and the State Savings Bank. Their action more or less constitutes a conspiracy. The Bill was introduced into the House quietly. Obviously, representatives of the Government were not prepared to have a searching debate into the question; it was intended to sneak the measure through. The facts I have enumerated constitute an indictment of the Government, which has been exposed.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald in the chair)—

Ayes ..	..	..	33
Noes ..	..	..	16

Majority for the motion 17

AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Porter
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Reid
Mr. Christie	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Cook	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Snider
Mr. Gainey	Mr. Stanistreet
Mr. Holden	Mr. Tanner
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Kane	Mr. Turnbull
Sir Albert Lind	(Kara Kara)
Mr. Loxton	Mr. White
Sir Thomas Maltby	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Wiltshire.
Mr. Mibus	
Mr. Mitchell	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Moss	Mr. Suggett.
Mr. Petty	Mr. Barclay

Mr. Fennessy.

NOES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Ring
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Schintler
Mr. Connell	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Crick	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Doube	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Drakeford	(Brunswick West).
Mr. Floyd	Tellers:
Mr. Holland	Mr. Fennessy
Mr. Lovegrove	Mr. Todd.

PAIRS.

Mr. Fraser	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Macdonald
	(Geelong West)
Mr. Guye	Mr. Ruthven
Sir George Knox	Mr. Towers
Mr. MacDonald	Mr. Mutton
(Burwood)	
Mr. Manson	Mr. Scully.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 5204, Third Schedule).

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—For obvious reasons, the Opposition has voted against the Bill at several stages. It intends to vote against this clause also, as well as the motion for the third reading, when it is submitted. Two Government supporters, formerly members of the staffs of banking institutions, who contributed to the second-reading debate spoke tonight rather than when this measure was previously before the House. During the intervening period they were enabled to get someone to prepare their speeches with the assistance of persons connected intimately with the banking system. They were perfectly entitled to adopt that procedure, to which no exception can be taken. However, now that the Committee stage has been reached, the Premier, who is responsible for the bringing down of this measure, should defend it.

Mr. BOLTE.—There is no need for me to defend it.

Mr. CAIN.—The proposal contained in this measure is tantamount to an inducement to private banking institutions which, because of the character of their operations, must ultimately become formidable competitors of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State

Savings Bank of Victoria. Half a century ago, the Labour party pioneered the establishment of the Commonwealth Bank. At that particular time, members of our party were accused of sponsoring legislation that would ultimately prove ineffective, but despite predictions to the contrary, the Commonwealth Bank has proved to be eminently successful. I point out that since 1911, when that bank was brought into being, no party has attempted to repeal the Act under which it was constituted, although, over the years, successive attempts have been made to "kill" the institution.

For the reasons I have stated, I believe the day will come when people will feel aggrieved that the Government has provided competitors for a bank that has done more to improve the social conditions of the community than any other similar institution. The honorable member for Prahran concluded his speech at the right time tonight. He knew when he was out of his depth. He realized he could not prove that the private banks had done anything to assist housing projects. The Bank of New South Wales has in that State made a bigger contribution towards housing than any other bank. Time alone will prove whether or not this legislation is justified. Opposition members have at least directed attention to the dangers and have shamed an ex-bank clerk, and bank officials, into attempting to defend the banks. They have also shamed the Premier into declaring to the world that he will get money out of these institutions in the future.

Mr. BOLTE.—Under their charter.

Mr. CAIN.—There have been charters for many years now, but it has not been possible to get much finance out of trading banks, and it will be interesting to see how much is derived from that source in the future. If this legislation is logical and sound and if, as the Government claims, it will facilitate the provision of additional finance, the Commonwealth Government should extend a similar privilege to every

associated bank in the Commonwealth. Of course, I do not believe that more money will be forthcoming as the result of the passing of this Bill. However, I am prepared to admit that at this stage it is a matter of opinion. I do not think that private enterprise can provide the solution we are seeking, nor, on the other hand, do I assert that State ownership is the ideal concept. However, looking back over events during the last half-century, it is apparent that the greatest weight of argument is on our side.

I understand that Country party members intend to support the Government, but I ask them what has been their experience over a long period of years. In the last five or six years, which have been particularly prosperous, primary producers have been in considerable difficulty, and it has been necessary to make available £5,000,000 at a low rate of interest, in order to assist them. Surely, therefore, they should be the last to champion private enterprise. They have received good service from the State and Commonwealth banks. Those are the facts. Members of the Country party, when it suits them, believe in a good deal of Socialism. That assertion applies with equal force to some members of the Liberal party who represent country interests. They know that they obtain certain concessions and consideration from socialistic enterprises. I appreciate the privilege that has been extended to me by you, Mr. Chairman, and I wish to say no more except to direct the attention of the House and the country to the fact that time alone will prove which arguments were sound—those of the Opposition or those of Government supporters. If, at the end of the next three or four years, it can be demonstrated that the private savings banks have achieved more for the mass of the people of this State than have governmental institutions, then I shall give them due credit. On the other hand, if the Government banks disclose a better record, I shall expect the Government and its supporters to praise those institutions accordingly.

Mr. Cain.

The Committee divided on the clause
(Mr. Christie in the chair)—

Ayes	32
Noes	16

Majority for the clause 16

AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Porter
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Reid
Mr. Cook	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Gainey	Mr. Snider
Mr. Holden	Mr. Stanistreet
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Tanner
Mr. Kane	Mr. Taylor
Sir Albert Lind	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Loxton	(Kara Kara)
Sir Thomas Maltby	Mr. White
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Mibus	Mr. Wiltshire.
Mr. Mitchell	Tellers:
Mr. Moss	Mr. Barclay
Mr. Petty	Mr. Suggett.

NOES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Ring
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Schintler
Mr. Connell	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Crick	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Doube	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Drakeford	(Brunswick West).
Mr. Floyd	Tellers:
Mr. Holland	Mr. Fennessy
Mr. Lovegrove	Mr. Todd.

PAIRS.

Mr. Fraser	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Macdonald
	(Geelong West)
Mr. Guye	Mr. Ruthven
Sir George Knox	Mr. Towers
Mr. MacDonald	Mr. Mutton
(Burwood)	
Mr. Manson.	Mr. Scully.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).
—I move—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).
—To-night, there has been much discussion about private banks being allowed to compete—successfully or otherwise—with Government banks. The State Savings Bank of Victoria suffers the disadvantage of being unable to trade right throughout Australia. It is not possible to place the State Savings Bank in the same position as either the private trading banks or the

Commonwealth Bank. As the Government favours competition. I suggest it should consider amending the State Savings Bank Act to enable customers of that bank to write cheques in the ordinary way.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Does the State Savings Bank want that?

Mr. CAIN.—I do not know, but I am sure this Bill is against the wishes of the State Savings Bank. I suggest to the champions of free enterprise that customers of the State Savings Bank should be permitted to write cheques as do clients of trading banks.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—What prevents that at the moment?

Mr. CAIN.—The existing legislative charter under which the bank operates does not permit that. The State Savings Bank withdrawal form is not negotiable. It is only reasonable that the Bank should issue negotiable cheque books. I urge the Premier to confer with the general manager of the State Savings Bank on this matter.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer). I think the Leader of the Opposition has usurped the role of the State Savings Bank Commissioners, who comprise an autonomous body. I take it that no Government has ever instructed the State Savings Bank. Before I would even act on the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition I would need first to have received a recommendation from the State Savings Bank Commissioners on the point. As a matter of fact, I have been expecting recommendations from them in the way of proposed amendments of their Act. All honorable members are aware that the Commissioners have not been working within the scope of their Act for a number of years. It would be quite wrong for any Government to impose conditions on the State Savings Bank unless those conditions were initiated as firm recommendations by the bank. It is not for me to tell the State Savings Bank what it should do. If the Commissioners are good appointees—the right persons for the job—they should be alert to anything which will benefit the bank, the savings of the people, and this State. If the

Leader of Opposition believes the Commissioners have been neglectful or negligent, his proper course, I would think, would be to criticize them in this House, and not to suggest that the Government should do certain things which, in the interest of the bank, must originate with it. Such recommendations will receive the consideration of the Government, as will all other requests from bodies which are elected by the Parliament to perform a function on behalf of the State.

The House divided on the motion (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald in the chair).—

Ayes 33

Noes 16

Majority for the motion 17

AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Porter
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Reid
Mr. Christie	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Cook	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Snider
Mr. Gaine	Mr. Stanistreet
Mr. Holden	Mr. Tanner
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Kane	Mr. Turnbull
Sir Albert Lind	(Kara Kara)
Mr. Loxton	Mr. White
Sir Thomas Maltby	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Wiltshire
Mr. Mibus	
Mr. Mitchell	<i>Tellers</i>
Mr. Moss	Mr. Barclay
Mr. Petty	Mr. Suggett.

NOES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Schintler
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Connell	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Crick	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Doube	(Brunswick West)
Mr. Drakeford	
Mr. Floyd	<i>Tellers</i>
Mr. Holland	Mr. Fennessy
Mr. Lovegrove	Mr. Todd.
Mr. Ring	

PAIRS.

Mr. Fraser	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Gibbs	Mr. Macdonald
	(Geelong West)
Mr. Guye	Mr. Ruthven
Sir George Knox	Mr. Towers
Mr. MacDonald	Mr. Mutton
(Burwood)	
Mr. Manson	Mr. Scully

The Bill was read a third time.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BROADMEADOWS) BILL.

This Bill was returned from the Council with a message relating to an amendment.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—The amendment has been made, at the request of members of the Opposition, so as to facilitate the declaration of the Shire of Broadmeadows as a city, thus avoiding the necessity to repeat certain procedures. The passage in clause 2, commencing "under paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of section 35", to the end of the clause, has been deleted, and in lieu thereof the words "without any petition or request in that behalf" have been inserted. That alteration will enable the Shire of Broadmeadows to be declared a city on 24th May of this year. I point out that this amendment will not apply generally to other municipalities in the future. It relates only to a specific request by the Opposition in this particular instance. During the second-reading debate, I promised to examine the possibility of having such an amendment inserted in another place, and that undertaking was honoured. Accordingly, I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. KANE (Broadmeadows).—I support the remarks of the Minister of Public Works concerning the amendment, which is of vital importance to the Shire of Broadmeadows. As the honorable gentleman stated clearly, the amendment will not apply to other municipalities that desire to be declared cities. For twelve months past, the Shire of Broadmeadows has sought to become a city. The Bill, in its original form, did not fulfil the shire's requirements—hence the necessity for the amendment which the House has been asked to approve. The matter is one of considerable urgency. The Minister of Public Works has made it clear that only in this particular instance shall the amendment apply. I appeal to the Opposition to facilitate the passage of the Bill, as amended, because it is of vital importance to the Shire of Broadmeadows.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—When the Bill was before the House in its original form, I asked that the amendment which has since been made by the Council be considered by the Minister of Public Works. The Opposition is pleased that the honorable gentleman has seen fit to arrange for this action to be taken. The shire council desired that, if Broadmeadows were to be declared a city, its new status should be achieved on Empire Day; that is a laudable object. I could see no reason why the Local Government Act should prohibit the Governor in Council from having a municipality proclaimed a city between the months of April and August. I felt that nothing would be lost by complying with the wishes of the local council. It would then be enabled to order appropriate stationery and attend to other matters pertaining to the requirements of a large shire about to be created a city. I am pleased that the Minister of Public Works sponsored the amendment which was made in another place.

The motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow at half-past Ten o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.38 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, May 10, 1956.

The **SPEAKER** (the **Hon. W. J. F. McDonald**) took the chair at 11.9 a.m., and read the prayer.

LIGHTING OF ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition) (*By leave*).—In view of the fact that to-day the House is meeting during hours of daylight, I consider that the additional lighting furnished by the pendant lamps in the Chamber is both

unnecessary and undesirable. In my view, they are glaring, and must eventually have a harmful effect on the eyes of members. I favour their being extinguished. Perhaps the lighting problem could be solved by providing desk lamps to enable members to read in comfort.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—The Leader of the Opposition, with my concurrence, has made a statement by leave. For some time past I have thought of inviting comments from individual members concerning the lighting arrangements in this Chamber. As I explained to the House on a previous occasion, the installation of pendant lamps is experimental in character. It represents but one of several proposals that are under consideration. An alternative to the present temporary lighting would be the installation of three chandeliers capable of furnishing a degree of illumination equivalent to that provided by the pendant lamps. I, personally, have not noticed any offensive glare in the Chamber. The additional lamps have been installed for the convenience of members, and I invite limited comment as to the efficacy of the temporary lighting that is now being tried out.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—By leave, I make it abundantly clear that members of the Country party desire proper lighting of the Chamber, irrespective of the type of lamps used or their cost. Over the years, members have tolerated shocking lighting conditions, and my view is that the present temporary lights should be afforded a reasonable trial before consideration is given to extinguishing them so as to save money. I point out that the Leader of the Opposition, when Premier of this State, was not particularly keen on spending money. During his term of office he refused to sanction the repair of a path in the precincts of this House, although, because of its poor condition, I sustained an accident which involved me in the expenditure of hundreds of pounds on medical expenses. It was not until the present Government assumed office that remedial action was taken.

The SPEAKER.—Will the Leader of the Country party indicate clearly whether, on this occasion, he prefers the pendant lights to remain on or to be extinguished?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Definitely, I prefer that they should remain on.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer) (By leave).—Perhaps I enjoy particularly good eyesight, but I must say that, in the past, I did not notice that the lighting of the Chamber was particularly bad. Nevertheless, I concede that, during the summer months there appears to be a measure of glare. Moreover, the pendant lights generate heat, which is undesirable during that period. I believe that members could enjoy better lighting than has been provided in the past, but along lines different from those now being tried. The choice of the best means of lighting the Chamber is a matter for expert determination. The experimental lighting is not offensive to-day, but on a warm day conditions could become oppressive.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—By leave, I desire to say that I regard the present lighting of the Chamber as glaring and of some inconvenience to me. The Leader of the Country party completely misunderstood the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. Members on this side of the Chamber do not oppose adequate lighting.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Your party is opposed to any improvements about the House, and you know it.

Mr. DOUBE.—Members who work in this Chamber for long hours are entitled to the best possible lighting, and the criticism voiced by the Leader of the Opposition is valid. Personally, I favour the turning out of the pendant lamps, with the object of determining whether the lights installed in the ceiling provide illumination adequate to the requirements of members at this time of the day.

Sir GEORGE KNOX (Scoresby) (By leave).—Perhaps an experiment could be tried by extinguishing the pendant lights in pairs and observing results.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—By leave, I suggest that the desk lights that have been installed for the convenience of some members are effective, but an improvement could be made by lowering them slightly, thus obviating the glare that is now apparent.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—It is my desire that the lighting of the Chamber shall be as effectual as possible, and further experiments will be conducted with that objective in view. I have decided to act upon the suggestion of the honorable member for Scoresby. Accordingly, I suggest that the pendant lamps be extinguished forthwith, and afterwards be turned on, in pairs, at intervals of fifteen minutes. I shall be glad to hear the private comments of members, immediately after the conclusion of this experiment. The lamps have now been switched off.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—(*By leave*)—Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to strain my eyes and, if more lighting is not provided in the Chamber immediately, I shall reluctantly be compelled to withdraw.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—(*By leave*)—I think the experiment has already been successful and it is apparent to all that, since the pendant lights have been extinguished, the lighting in the Chamber is totally inadequate. I do not think the lights should be left off any longer.

The SPEAKER.—Further light will now be provided.

HOME FINANCE BILL (No. 2).

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. Recently, in reply to a question asked by the honorable member for Coburg, I informed the House that the Commissioners of the State Savings Bank had agreed to make available the sum of £500,000 for the purposes of the Home Finance Act. I fully appreciate the embarrassment of the State Savings Bank Commissioners in having to administer two different home finance schemes. This would lead to confusion

and it was a wise decision to ask the Government to introduce an amending measure. The Commissioners desire a special arrangement whereby loans under the Home Finance Act need not be undertaken by the Crédit Foncier department of the bank. I have every reason to believe that later an even larger amount than £500,000 will be made available for this purpose. Furthermore, I am confident that other financial institutions will follow that example in respect of loans required for the implementation of the Home Finance Act. Far from the scheme being a political failure, as claimed by the Leader of the Opposition, I believe that it will prove a tremendous success. Even if only 200 or 300 additional homes are provided by this means, some progress will have been achieved.

Mr. CAIN.—You are easily satisfied.

Mr. BOLTE.—It would mean an additional 200 or 300 homes that would not have been provided under Labour party administration. I do not mind admitting that this plan must begin to operate in a small way, but it must surely develop. Only this morning I had the pleasure of guaranteeing the first home constructed under the Home Finance Act.

Honorable members will recall that the co-operative housing system, even in years of adequate finance, proved a comparative failure. In 1949, the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies presented a most pessimistic report—justified at that stage—concerning the co-operative movement. Now, however, co-operative housing has grown, and eventually, it will be the principal method of providing homes, particularly for young couples.

Mr. CAIN.—They must first have the money.

Mr. BOLTE.—When we are dealing with the Home Finance Act, and any amendments thereto, the co-operative housing system must be considered. My Government, with the support of the Country party, amended the Co-operative Housing Societies Act, increasing the maximum loan from £2,600 to £3,000. Prospective home-builders were then

entitled to an advance of up to £2,850, provided that they could raise a deposit of 5 per cent.

With the increased number of co-operative housing societies, it is hoped to house a considerable number of people who would not have been able to get accommodation without an amendment of the Co-operative Housing Societies Act. In recent years, the average number of new societies registered each year has been 21. In the coming financial year, it is intended to register 70 new societies embracing 5,000 members who will be applicants for homes. Do those facts suggest dismal failure? Obviously, the Opposition is suffering from political jealousy. The Government believes that the home-finance project will be a huge success.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a trust consisting of the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies, an officer of the Treasury, and a person appointed by the Governor in Council. The trust will, of course, be simply a part-time body, similar to the Co-operative Housing Advisory Committee, except that it will have corporate status with power to make loans under the Act. The trust will control a fund, to be named the Home Finance Fund, into which all moneys received from lending institutions and other bodies will be paid, and from which all payments, including the making of loans, will be met. Furthermore, the trust will be empowered to invest the funds it holds in trust, although it may not be necessary to exercise this power. A large sum might have to be held for a few months or even a little longer before it could be utilized. Therefore, there must be authority to invest such funds until such time as they are required by prospective home owners. The Bill contains the enabling provision. Otherwise, there is little change from what was originally enacted. Under the Home Finance Act guarantees could be given on new homes or those with an age limit of five year; under our new proposal it will be possible only to give guarantees on new homes or those having an age limit of two years.

Mr. CAIN.—You are following the savings bank policy.

Mr. BOLTE.—Yes. A distinct change is that the fund will be administered through the Government itself, and all of the money available will be made available to the trust.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Will a private individual be able to lend money to the trust?

Mr. BOLTE.—Yes.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—In other words, the Government is setting itself up as a bank.

Mr. BOLTE.—I think the honorable member for Brunswick West is stretching his imagination. The Government intends to harness as much finance as possible in order to channel it into home ownership. I notice that the Leader of the Opposition is laughing. What he has to amuse him, I would not know. He has been proved to be absolutely wrong. Before the commencement of this sessional period he was reported as having said, "Wait until Parliament meets; we will thrash them on the floor of the House on home ownership and home building." Members of the Opposition have hardly dared to open their mouths on the subject in the House because they know that if they do they will have to repudiate statements they have made in the past. In the next financial year approximately £6,000,000 to £8,000,000 more money will be made available for home building than has been provided in the present financial year.

Recently I referred to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition claimed that when he was Premier he did a good job in providing finance for home ownership. In his last year as Premier he obtained an advance from the Commonwealth Savings Bank for the co-operative housing societies, and that was the sum total of his effort for that class of home building. The honorable member for Prahran last night proved in no uncertain manner how inadequate that contribution was as compared with the finance made available to the other States from that particular bank. This financial year an additional £700,000

will be provided for the co-operative housing societies, and greater sums will be made available next financial year. That is why the Government is confidently branching out into this field and seeking to provide finance for possibly 5,000 home seekers. This scheme will be operated on an equitable basis. In every reasonably sized country town in Victoria prospective home owners will be permitted to form a co-operative housing society. The scope of the scheme will not be confined to the provincial cities or even the big country towns.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—Already three societies operate in my home town.

Mr. BOLTE.—That is quite correct. The Government, in making provision for the formation of 70 new societies, intends to see that they are dispersed equitably throughout the State. The planning is on a five-year basis, but I suggest that it is not likely to take as long as five years to reach the objective. As more money is made available for co-operative housing it will be used to supplement the original scheme, thus enabling completion possibly in two years. I feel that the Government can approach this matter with a certain degree of confidence. The legislation is submitted to the House on the basis that it is essential in the interests of at least 180 people. It will be possible for 180 home seekers to obtain finance from the first £500,000 made available. However, on behalf of those persons it is essential that the Bill should have a speedy passage. Should Opposition members be thinking of stonewalling the measure or, worse still, knocking it out, I ask them to remember that there is a large number of potential home owners waiting to take advantage of the Government's proposals. Opposition members should also realize that in the near future that number will grow from hundreds into several thousands.

Mr. CAIN.—We will also have in our minds that the 180 persons to whom you refer have been waiting on action from you, and will still have to wait.

Mr. BOLTE.—I urge the Leader of the Opposition to examine the record of co-operative housing societies and study

the history of the scheme. He will observe that it developed slowly in the early stages. He will recall how the moaners and groaners—just like himself—the “knockers” in this community said that it could not be a success and hoped that it would be a failure. That is the approach of the Leader of the Opposition to this scheme. Politically, he hopes it will prove a failure.

Mr. CAIN.—This has been a failure, and you have been a failure with it. £4,000,000 was promised for the first year; you are down the drain already.

Mr. BOLTE.—I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition knows that what he is saying is incorrect.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order!

Mr. CAIN.—The Treasurer is bankrupt.

The SPEAKER.—Order! Last night I protected the Leader of the Opposition against interjections. This morning, he himself is offending. I ask him to refrain.

Mr. CAIN.—I was answering the Premier.

The SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. CAIN.—Do not make a fool of yourself.

The SPEAKER.—Order! I ask for an immediate apology.

Mr. CAIN.—I apologise.

The SPEAKER.—The honorable member should rise to make his apology.

Mr. CAIN.—Yes, Sir; I will apologise.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—The Leader of the Opposition is not himself this morning; that is apparent.

Mr. CAIN.—I am all right.

Mr. BOLTE.—Probably he has read in the press a report about a resolution the Labour party is handling.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Do not start it all again.

Mr. BOLTE.—I shall refrain. There is nothing further to explain. There is nothing to defend.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—There is nothing in the Bill; that is why.

Mr. BOLTE.—It is a straight-forward measure.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Everything will be contained in the regulations; there is nothing in the legislation.

Mr. BOLTE.—This measure will enable the Government to proceed with a scheme which in my opinion will confer great benefit upon hundreds of people in this State.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I should like an adjournment of the debate for one week.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday next.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—I hope there will not be any opposition to this legislation. People are hungry for finance for home building and I think it is our duty to pass this Bill as speedily as possible. Therefore, I move—

That the words "Wednesday next" be omitted with a view of inserting the words "Tuesday next".

Mr. CAIN.—The honorable member for Gippsland South will be voting against the Premier.

Sir ALBERT LIND (Gippsland East).—I second the amendment.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—This has created a most remarkable position. The Premier has agreed to an adjournment of the debate until next Wednesday. I suggested an adjournment until Thursday next, and the Premier altered that to Wednesday, with which proposition I concurred. Now members of the Country party, which is alleged to be supporting the Government, have fallen out with it on the matter of one day. They are the people who run the Government, but they are not happy about the Government's view on the adjournment of this debate. This legislation has been promised for twelve months, but nothing has happened until now. The Leader of the Country party does not know anything about the Bill.

The Premier has been reasonable in this matter and it is ridiculous to move an amendment of the motion before the Chair. If this is carried to its logical conclusion, we will see what a pitiful lot Country party members are when the Opposition crosses the floor to vote with the Government.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) (*By leave*).—We are a recognized party in this House under the laws of the State. We have every right—irrespective of the views of the Leader of the Opposition, who is smiling sarcastically—to move an amendment on the motion relating to the length of the adjournment of the debate. We do not care if the Leader of the Opposition continues his "whispering baritone" act or what Mr. Dedman said about small capitalists. The session is drawing to a close and we wish this legislation to be passed. We realize there will be a number of slaughtered innocents, but we are not slavishly trying to please the Government.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—The honorable member for Gippsland South has started a sham fight.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—I demand a withdrawal of that insulting statement. We are serious on this matter.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—If my words offend the Leader of the Country party, I withdraw them. In my opinion, the honorable member is merely endeavouring to gain credence for himself and is not worried about those who wish to obtain homes. He knows nothing about the legislation. The Government does not expect it to operate immediately, or even on the day it receives the Royal assent. A delay of a week or a fortnight will not matter one iota. The Bill does not show how the scheme will operate; that will be governed by the regulations made under it. The Opposition is quite happy to have the debate adjourned until Wednesday next and will not move to change that. My Leader asked for an adjournment of a week and the Premier mentioned Wednesday. For once, we are prepared to accept the Government's suggestion. If all the information was

contained in the Bill, we would probably require a fortnight in which to consider it, but it contains the principle only. Power to make regulations was not included in similar legislation passed not very long ago. It does not matter when this Bill is passed; probably it will not operate before 1st July. No doubt the Government will now speed up the drafting of the regulations.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I think I should explain to the House that I suggested next Wednesday when the Leader of the Opposition asked for an adjournment of a week. I remind the Leader of the Country party that Supply has been introduced, and that I gave the House to understand that next Tuesday would be devoted to debate on that subject. I think an adjournment until next Wednesday is reasonable. The Government's intention is that the legislation should pass through all stages in this House next week, so as to allow it go before the other House at its first sitting in the following week.

The House divided on the question that the words proposed by Sir Herbert Hyland to be omitted stand part of the motion (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald in the chair).—

Ayes ..	..	..	41
Noes ..	..	..	6

Majority against the amendment	..	35
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AYES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Petty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Porter
Mr. Cain	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Christie	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Schintler
Mr. Connell	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Doube	Mr. Stanistreet
Mr. Drakeford	Mr. Stoneham
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Fennessy	Mr. Tanner
Mr. Floyd	Mr. Todd
Mr. Fraser	Mr. Towers
Mr. Holden	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Holland	(Brunswick West)
Mr. Kane	Mr. Turnbull
Sir George Knox	(Kara Kara)
Mr. Lovegrove	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. Loxton	Mr. Wiltshire
Mr. MacDonald	
(Burwood)	
Sir Thomas Maltby	<i>Tellers</i>
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Gainey
	Mr. Rossiter.

NOES.

Mr. Barclay	<i>Tellers</i>
Mr. Cook	
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Cochran
Sir Albert Lind	Mr. White.

PAIRS.

Mr. Crick	Mr. Moss
Mr. Macdonald	Mr. Mitchell
(Geelong West)	
Mr. Ring	Mr. Stirling

Mr. Bolte's motion was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, May 16.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY
(BORROWING) BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The Country Fire Authority is a body corporate created under the provisions of the Country Fire Authority Act 1944, and is charged under the law with control of the prevention and suppression of fires in the country area of Victoria. Section 58 of that Act enables the Authority, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to borrow such moneys as it deems necessary in order to carry out and perform the powers, authorities, and duties vested in it by the Act, and to issue debentures at interest rates not exceeding 5 per centum for the moneys so borrowed.

Over a period of five or more years the Authority has experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining loan money, and with the recent increase in interest rates on Commonwealth loans and semi-government loans to 5 per centum and 5 1/2 per centum respectively, it will be virtually impossible for the Authority to obtain loans to enable it to carry on its work which is so essential to the community. The maximum interest rate payable on debentures by the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board is 6 per centum. This Bill, by raising the maximum rate of interest to 6 per centum, will enable the Country Fire Authority to compete for loans with other public bodies, and will make the rate consistent with the maximum provided for the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board.

Clause 1 contains the short title, construction, and citation. Clause 2 substitutes the words "Six pounds per

centum" for the words "Five pounds per centum" in sub-section (1) of section fifty-eight of the principal Act.

On the motion of Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

OPERATION GRATITUDE RACE MEETING BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—
I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this measure is to authorize the holding of a mid-week race-meeting on the 15th August next to help a special non-recurring appeal to house and care for aged war nurses and veterans. An appeal, which has been named "Operation Gratitude," is being launched by a combined Returned Sailors Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia and citizens committee under the chairmanship of the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor of Melbourne (Councillor Sir Frank Selleck). The target is £250,000, which will be allocated as follows:—

- (a) To the War Veterans' Homes Trust of Victoria, to complete its urgently needed veterans' housing schemes at Frankston and Cheltenham, and the "Darby and Joan" cottages at Heidelberg.
- (b) To the building, furnishing, and maintenance of a new hostel at St. Kilda for the accommodation and care of aged or needy war nurses and returned ex-servicewomen.
- (c) To provide facilities at R.S.L. (Burnewang) House, Elmore, for the care of war veterans suffering from age disabilities, who at present cannot be accommodated.
- (d) To extend the free services of the returned soldiers' league children's health bureau (which specializes in "preventive" medicine) to country areas; to establish a permanent country holiday camp for city children;

and to establish youth clubs at league branch rooms, to combat juvenile delinquency.

Probably no other Bill could have four more worthy objectives.

The appeal is a registered patriotic fund. It has been registered in such a way that the appeal will be finalized in February, 1957, by which time all of the proceeds will have been distributed to the beneficiaries. With a view to providing personal care and attention to war veterans, the returned soldiers' league has planned, with great care, a housing project for aged war nurses at St. Kilda and for aged war veterans at Frankston, the expansion of the existing war veterans' trust home at Cheltenham, and the provision of extra facilities at the existing returned soldiers' league war veterans' home known as Burnewang, at Elmore. The scheme embraces the establishment of a permanent holiday camp for children of metropolitan returned men and women. The services of the league's children's health bureau will be extended to the country areas so that many more ex-servicemen's children shall benefit from this free service. In addition, the league has asked its sub-branches, where suitable club rooms are available, to set up youth clubs to help combat juvenile delinquency.

The pressing need to-day is to provide assistance to first world war nurses and war veterans, especially those who need care and attention, and this is particularly so when it is realized that no hospital and very few hostels will accept for admission any person suffering from purely age disabilities. In course of time, the assets provided by this great appeal will pass on to the second world war men and women and eventually to those who took part in the Korean and Malayan campaigns. Honorable members will realize that this is no ordinary appeal. It is non-recurring in every sense of the word. The returned soldiers' league is sure that with the money from this appeal and from the additional £200,000 odd that the Commonwealth Government will provide in respect of buildings erected to house the aged, the problem will be settled this

year for all time, and that the league will not need to approach the public again in any way for assistance. I should like to emphasize, too, that the returned soldiers' league, from its own resources, is determined to raise a large proportion of the money. Already much is in hand, and the branches will work the whole year to contribute at least half the required sum. To assist the public appeal the Government proposes, by this legislation, to permit an extra race-meeting to be held at the Moonee Valley racecourse on Wednesday, 15th August. Although the Moonee Valley Racing Club will stage the meeting, the project has the full support and co-operation of the three other main racing clubs in the metropolitan area. To ensure that the maximum result shall be yielded from the meeting, the Government and the Moonee Valley Racing Club proposes that on this day the percentages payable from the totalizators shall be channelled into the profits of the race-meeting itself. The Government feels that it is endorsing the personal wish of every member of the House in supporting this great project in gratitude for those gallant first world war nurses and returned men now in need of a quiet corner and a friendly hand in their twilight years, and those who will follow them from the ranks of the second world war men and women.

Sub-clause (1) of clause 2 provides that notwithstanding any provision in any other Act, a meeting may be held at Moonee Valley racecourse on the 15th August or other suitable day not later than the 30th September to assist in raising funds for "Operation Gratitude."

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Why was the 15th August nominated if provision is to be made for the meeting to be held not later than the end of September? Is not August a bad month to choose, from the point of view of the weather?

Mr. RYLAH.—The clubs and the returned soldiers' league conferred and submitted a proposal to the Government. Apparently, there are certain attractions in conducting a race-meeting at the time proposed because of the type of horses then available, and I understand that it will take place about the

middle of the period of the special public appeal. Sub-clause (2) requires the net proceeds to be paid over by the Moonee Valley Racing Club within two months of the meeting. Sub-clause (3) provides that the meeting will be additional to and not in substitution of race-meetings authorized by the Police Offences Acts.

Section 5 of the Police Offences (Race Meetings) Act 1929 requires certain clubs to pay to the Victoria Racing Club each year an amount equivalent to one-half per centum of its gross revenue. Sub-clause (4) of clause 2 of the Bill exempts the revenue from this race-meeting from such payment. The appeal will benefit as a result. Sub-section (1) of section 8 of the Totalizator Act 1930 provides for a deduction as commission out of moneys paid into a totalizator in respect of each race of 12 per cent. of the money so paid into the totalizator. Normally a share of this percentage is paid to the race club concerned and the remainder to Consolidated Revenue. The proviso (b) to sub-section (1) of section 10 of the Totalizator Act 1930 provides for the payment of fractions of a shilling not paid by way of dividends into the dividends adjustment fund in the Treasury. Sub-clause (5) of clause 2 of the Bill provides for the payment to "Operation Gratitude" of commission and fractions deducted pursuant to the Totalizator Act.

Sub-clause (6) stipulates that, except as expressly provided in the measure, the meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the Police Offences Acts and the Totalizator Acts. I could not imagine a more worthy type of Bill that the House could facilitate, and I commend it.

On the motion of Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES (LIABILITY OF PATIENTS) BILL.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The purpose of this Bill is to permit hospitals to charge fees to patients according to their ability to meet those

fees. The ability to pay will be determined, not according to means, but by a test based upon the patient's income, after liberal allowances have been made for dependants and for other family expenses such as rent and house-purchase repayments.

Until the 31st December, 1945, public hospitals in Victoria were permitted to charge every public in-patient and out-patient fees in accordance with his or her means, and, if necessary, the means of his or her parent, guardian, husband, or wife. A means test was employed as the basis of assessment of the fees charged. On the 1st January, 1946, the hospital benefits scheme came into operation, and the Hospitals and Charities Act was amended to prohibit the use of the means test in respect of public in-patients, who were also relieved of any liability to pay fees. The old means test still applies, of course, to out-patients and to patients generally in institutions that are not public hospitals.

The hospital benefits allowance was, in 1946, 6s. per day per in-patient. Subsequently, it was increased to 8s. per day. In 1952, it was increased to 12s. per day in respect of every insured in-patient, and remained at 8s. per day for an uninsured in-patient. At this time, the Act permitted a charge of 18s. per day for every public in-patient. This charge is met—

In the case of an insured patient—

	s.	d.	s.	d.
Commonwealth benefit ..	8	0	}	12 0
Commonwealth additional benefit ..	4	0		
Organization (insurance) ..	..	..	..	6 0
Patient paying ..	..	..	..	nil.
				18 0

In the case of an uninsured patient—

Commonwealth benefit ..	..	8 0
Patient paying ..	..	10 0
		18 0

Payment is not required of a pensioner or indigent patient. Under section 4 of the Hospital Benefits Act 1952 No. 5662, the fees charged may be increased with the approval of the Governor in Council.

The need for this measure becomes evident from an examination of hospital costs and their rise since the war, and of the methods open to the Government to meet those costs. In 1945, the daily average cost of a hospital bed in Victoria was 16s. 2d.; in 1950, it was £1 14s. 11d.; and in 1955, it had risen to £3 15s. In the same years, the total costs of the Victorian hospitals, together with the amounts allocated by the State Government were as follow:—

	Total Cost.	Government Grant.
	£	£
1945 ..	1,950,000	677,000
1950 ..	4,650,000	2,350,000
1955 ..	11,500,000	6,800,000

The increasing cost of providing a hospital service is not confined to Victoria. Our experience is in conformity with an Australia-wide and even a world trend.

The hospitals have three sources from which to meet the cost—first, from contributions from patients; secondly, by charitable contributions; and, thirdly, by Government grants. In 1945, patients' contributions amounted to 39 per cent. of the total hospitals costs; in 1950, they comprised only 17 per cent.; and in 1955, 25 per cent. Despite the rapidly increasing cost of hospitals, the patient's contribution has diminished. Towards meeting the average daily cost of £3 15s. a hospital bed in Victoria to-day, the public patient is required to pay a maximum of 10s., the Commonwealth subsidy taking care of a further 8s. A person can cover the charge of 10s. by paying a hospitals benefits premium of 3d. a week for himself, or 6d. a week for himself and family. Voluntary contributions to hospitals are not increasing. In fact, the proportion which voluntary contributions bear to the total cost diminished from 16 per cent. in 1954 to 4 per cent. in 1955. The Government can attempt to bridge the gap between rising costs and income by increasing the State allocation, or by increasing the patient's contribution, or by both. In fact, the State allocation has increased steadily over the years.

The Government will continue to make the maximum possible allocation to hospitals for their maintenance, but the problem is not as simple of solution as that. Experience here and abroad shows that those hospitals which lean most heavily on the State for their income are worst served, the reason being that the State, with the best intentions in the world, cannot meet the increasing cost. As it cannot bridge the gap, it takes the line of least resistance by pruning the hospitals' budgets.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—That would depend on the general purpose of the hospitals. It would not apply in every case.

Mr. PORTER.—That is what usually happens. The result is a lowering of hospital standards, according to the amount which the State can afford to provide. The Government will not allow this to happen. It proposes, therefore, to assist hospitals to maintain the highest standard of service by allowing them to supplement the State grant by income derived from those patients who can afford to pay. We believe firmly that the result of this action will be to the benefit of hospitals and patients.

There are other factors to be considered. One of these is the medical service in our public hospitals. Since the inception of Victorian hospitals, doctors have given, without payment, medical service to public patients. This was a reasonable arrangement when honorary medical service was given to the needy. To-day, any patient, whatever his income, can demand public hospital accommodation with honorary medical service. Is it reasonable to expect a doctor to give honorary attention to any patient, irrespective of the patient's income? The Government believes that it is not, and that honorary service should be given only to those who cannot meet the fees. Under this legislation, patients who can afford to pay will not receive honorary medical service. The income test which the Government intends to implement will not deny hospital service to anyone in the community. Public patients will be provided for and those ineligible for public treatment may take an intermediate or private bed in a public hospital.

The Government proposes to accept the basic wage as the base level of income to determine eligibility for public hospital treatment, but this base level of income is determined only after deductions have been made for dependants, for rent of home, or for house-purchase repayments. The allowable deductions will be £1 for wife and each adult dependant; the same amount for the first two children; increasing to 30s. a week for the third child; and £2 a week for the fourth and each subsequent child. The Government will allow up to £4 per week to be deducted for house rent or home-purchase repayments. A married man with three children, paying £3 per week, could have an income of £1,066 equivalent to about £20 a week—before becoming ineligible for public hospital treatment.

In devising the test, the Government has endeavoured to help the family man, and particularly the man with a large family. Accordingly, the allowable deductions increase from £1 per week for the first child, to 30s. for the third and to £2 for the fourth and each subsequent child. The family man benefits twice from deductions made under this test, because the basic wage is designed to cover the needs of a man, his wife and two children. The Government allows these deductions again.

The Administration will not legislate against the thrifty person. It proposes, therefore, not to take into account the value of a patient's home or other assets up to £2,000. The adoption of this procedure will remove much of the injustice to the frugal man which obtained under the former means test. Incidentally, the means test has never been removed from the Victorian hospital system. It still operates for out-patients in all public hospitals. The Government will replace it by the proposed income test.

Special considerations other than those associated with income must influence the decision whether or not a patient is ineligible for public hospital treatment. They are—

- (a) probable length of stay in hospital;

(b) period or periods spent in hospital and the cost of the illness; and

(c) unemployment or loss of wages through illness.

The Government will ensure that these factors will be taken into account when a patient's eligibility for public hospital treatment is being determined. Concurrently with the passing of this amending measure the Government will promulgate a regulation, under the Hospital Benefits Act, to increase public hospital fees to 36s. a day. A patient's ability to pay this rate will be assessed according to his income and such other factors as those I have mentioned. Accordingly a patient who is eligible for public hospital treatment may be declared exempt from any contribution, or he may be assessed at any rate up to £12 12s. a week.

I commend the Bill to the House, as a means of overcoming the increasing financial difficulties that are being experienced by public hospitals.

Mr. DOUBE (Oakleigh).—I move—
That the debate be now adjourned.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I suggest that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday next.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—The Honorary Minister in charge of this Bill furnished the House with scant information. He said little more than that the measure was submitted in an effort to overcome financial difficulties.

Mr. PORTER.—That is partly so.

Mr. CAIN.—Before the second-reading debate is resumed, members are entitled to know what additional sum of money the Hospitals and Charities Commission estimates will be derived under the proposals contained in the measure.

Mr. PORTER (Honorary Minister).—I shall arrange for the Minister of Health to supply the Leader of the Opposition with the information he desires.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascol Vale).—Although I appreciate the remarks of the Honorary Minister, I desire to say that, within the last week or so, an undertaking was given to me by another

Minister to the effect that, if an amendment which I suggested should be made to a small Bill was rejected by the Government, I would be informed of the relevant reason before the Bill was discussed in another place. I have since ascertained that the Bill has been dealt with by the Upper House, but no communication, either written or verbal, has reached me. Accordingly, the undertaking given by the Minister concerned, and which is recorded in *Hansard*, has not been fulfilled.

Mr. RYLAH.—To which Bill are you alluding?

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The Keilor (Unimproved Rating Poll) Bill. When the Bill was in Committee in the Upper House a member of that House submitted an amendment similar to the one I suggested in this Chamber, but it was defeated, thus indicating that my proposal was not accepted by the Government.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—I think that matter is scarcely relevant to the debate on the motion now before the Chair.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—It is, Mr. Speaker, to the extent that an undertaking has been given by the Honorary Minister to the effect that information requested by the Leader of the Opposition will be furnished to him by the Minister of Health before the second-reading debate is resumed. I point out that, on a previous occasion, a somewhat similar undertaking by another Minister was not honoured, and I trust that in this instance the information promised to my Leader will be furnished at the appropriate time.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, May 16.

RETURNED SERVICEMEN'S BADGES BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—
I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.
This short Bill is being introduced by the Government after considering representations made by the Victorian branch

of the Returned Sailors Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia. Its purpose is to make it unlawful for any person to wear or have in his possession the league's badge unless it was issued to him in accordance with the rules of the league. The badge of the league is highly esteemed in the community, as all members of the league are citizens who have served their country well. My Government believes that a person who wears the badge of the league without being entitled to do so is guilty of one of the grossest forms of deception because, in effect, he thus claims for himself the esteem which the community reserves for its returned servicemen.

At first sight, this Bill might seem to be designed to protect the interests of the league, but upon reflection, I think members will agree that it will serve an even more important purpose in protecting the public from imposition by unscrupulous, fraudulent persons, who seek the esteem of their fellow citizens by wearing this badge.

Legislation similar to that embodied in this measure has been introduced in Western Australia and Tasmania. Although the misuse of the league's badge may not be widespread in Victoria, it is considered proper that some degree of protection should be given to that emblem, which means as much to the general public as does the official badge issued by the Commonwealth authorities. The latter, of course, is protected by Federal legislation.

The Bill proposes that offences shall be punishable summarily and on conviction. For a first offence, the penalty shall be not more than £10; and, for a second or any subsequent conviction, a penalty of not more than £25 may be imposed. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. TOWERS (Collingwood), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

MOTOR CAR (REGISTRATION FEES) BILL.

The House went into Committee of Ways and Means.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—
I move—

That the fee payable under the Second Schedule to the Motor Car Acts shall be payable subject to the following amendments proposed to be made by the legislation to give effect to this resolution, namely, that in the Second Schedule:—

(a) Under the heading B.—Motor-cars other than motor-cycles—

(i) for paragraph (d) there shall be substituted the following paragraph:—

“(d) for a motor-car or a motor-tractor which is the property of any municipality and marked so as to indicate the ownership thereof £1 0s. 0d.”;

(ii) sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (g) shall be repealed;

(iii) in sub-paragraph (iii) of paragraph (g) after the words “other than” there shall be inserted the words “a motor-car owned by a municipality and marked so as to indicate ownership or”;

(b) in the heading C.—Trailers attached to motor-cars (other than motor-cycles) after the word “Trailers” there shall be inserted the expression “(not being trailers owned by a municipality and marked so as to indicate such ownership)”.

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

Leave was given to Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary) and Mr. Bolte (Treasurer) to bring in a Bill to carry out the resolution.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) brought in a Bill to amend the Second Schedule to the Motor Car Act 1951, and moved that it be read a first time.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a first time.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—
I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a short measure to amend an anomaly which was first brought to my notice by the Shire of Waranga, through the representations of the honorable member for Rodney.

A peculiar position had arisen in that the shire had acquired a new mechanically-powered road grader which was considerably larger than the tractor-drawn grader previously used. Had the new grader been of the tractor type, the normal shire fee of £1 would have applied, but it did not come within the definition contained in the Second Schedule to the Motor Car Act, and consequently, the shire was required to pay a fee of £92. The payment of such a fee would not encourage shires to acquire modern road-making equipment.

Under the Second Schedule to the Motor Car Act 1951 a registration fee of £1 is payable for the following vehicles—

For a motor-car which is the property of any municipality and marked so as to indicate the ownership thereof, and which—(i) being a motor-tractor, is used exclusively within the municipal district of that municipality; or (ii) being a motor-car other than a motor-tractor, is used exclusively—within the municipal district for making maintaining repairing cleansing or watering streets or roads or for collecting garbage; and outside the municipal district for disposing of garbage or for procuring materials for making maintaining and repairing streets or roads and other similar purposes.

In other words, if a shire uses a road grader exclusively for road-making purposes a fee of £1 is payable. However, if the equipment is used for flood prevention or for work on the edges of the road, to prevent soil erosion—as is the intention of the Shire of Waranga in connexion with the new grader—a much higher registration fee must be paid. The Government examined the position and its first thought was to extend the schedule in such a way as to embrace all classes of vehicles which were used by shires for certain purposes. On reflection, however, it was decided that the simplest way to handle the matter would be to cut red tape and provide that all vehicles which were the property of municipalities and used exclusively for municipal purposes should be exempt from the full registration. The problem was approached from the point of view that some members have expressed in the House in regard to the payment of Commonwealth payroll tax by the State of Victoria—that it

is money taken out of one pocket and placed in another. It was felt that the Government of Victoria should not take money from the pockets of municipalities and then hand it back later in the form of a road grant or other general assistance. Some honorable member might raise a query about a mayor's motor-car. Under this proposal, the registration fee for such a car will be £1 only, in line with all other municipal vehicles. If the vehicle were used for the cartage of garbage there would be no alteration in the fee. The Bill also provides that trailers belonging to a municipality will not be the subject of the payment of any registration fee at all, provided that in each case the vehicle is marked to show that it is municipal property.

Clause 1 is the usual citation clause, and clause 2 amends the Second Schedule of the principal Act to provide for the payment of a fee of £1 for a motor-car or a motor-tractor which is the property of any municipality. Then there is a consequential amendment dealing with trailers. To avoid any confusion I point out that the words "motor-car or motor-tractor" as defined in the Motor Car Act 1951 cover all types of motor vehicles, for which the owner is liable to pay a registration fee.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, May 15.

THE VICTORIA RACING CLUB BILL.

The debate (adjourned from April 17) on the motion of Mr. K. H. Turnbull (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—This is a short Bill. The second-reading speech of the Minister of Lands was delivered in the House on April 17 last, and when securing the adjournment of the debate I suggested that as certain vital matters of principle were involved a fortnight should be allowed to elapse before the discussion of the Bill by the House was entered upon. The Minister stated that he thought a week's interval would be sufficient, but that a further period would be granted if necessary. As events have shown, the adjournment has lasted much longer than a week. The

Opposition felt that in presenting the Bill the Minister of Lands had provided insufficient information and had made an inadequate explanation of its terms. Such was the character of the honorable gentleman's remarks that the honorable member for Gippsland East was constrained to ask this question, which is reported at page 2490 of *Hansard* of the current session.

Would the Minister then be able to give the House some idea of what the plan envisages?

The Minister replied in the affirmative. In other words, he admitted that in submitting the Bill he had not given the House sufficient information. Apart from a nice dissertation about the importance, status and value of the Victoria Racing Club, and a reminder that the Melbourne Cup was run at Flemington, he said little more than that the Victoria Racing Club desired to provide further facilities and improvements designed for the use and comfort of its patrons, which were estimated to cost approximately £750,000. An interjection by the honorable member for Port Melbourne was—

Has the club given the Minister of Lands any indication as to where it proposes to spend the money? Does it merely propose to improve facilities available to members?

The Minister of Lands said—

I understand the club proposes to build a stand on the hill section.

Apparently he was not certain. The Victoria Racing Club is an important institution in the community. Apparently the club is able to obtain ready acquiescence from the Premier and Minister of Lands to any request it makes. Therefore, I think honorable members should be acquainted with the club's background. Legal recognition of the conditions under which the club operates is laid down in The Victoria Racing Club Act of 1871. In effect, that legislation provided for the ratification of a lease granted to the club in 1859 which, in the normal course of events, would have expired in 1880. The Act set out certain conditions under which the land was to be vested in the chairman of the Victoria Racing Club as its trustee. It was provided also that the Crown may demise lands to the

chairman; that the land was to be used for the purpose of a racecourse only; and that the committee of the club was empowered to make by-laws, with the proviso that the Government had power, if necessary, to refuse registration of such by-laws. It was also laid down that the committee could fix tolls and charges for admission to any portion of the course.

The vital provision in the principal Act, with which we are now concerned, is section 26, which empowered the club to borrow up to a total of £15,000, apparently for the purpose of re-erecting or restoring an old stand then in existence. At that time it was recognized that, in giving the club legal status and vesting in it 300 acres of land in what even then was regarded as an important part of the city of Melbourne, the matter should be thoroughly examined. For that purpose the Government appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the proposals after the second reading had been moved. I have here a copy of the committee's report. Apparently the records were not as well kept in 1871 and there was no index of the report of the Select Committee in the Assembly Papers Room. Nevertheless, the report was traced and handed to me a few hours after I had asked for it. I pay tribute to the staff. I understand further copies of the report are available if required by honorable members. It is interesting to note that the original proposal, in the Bill of 1871, was to "demise to the chairman in fee simple" the 300 acres of land. The Select Committee recommended deletion of those words. I have not been able to ascertain why the lease did not run its full term of 21 years. Shortly after the enactment of the 1871 legislation, a new lease, dated 8th January, 1872, for a term of 99 years was granted to the Victoria Racing Club at a peppercorn rental for the land.

The Bill now before the House proposes to amend section 26 of the principal Act by raising the borrowing powers of the club to a limit of £750,000. In 1931 the limit was altered from £15,000 to £100,000. The enabling Act,

Mr. Clarey.

which was introduced by a Labour Government, clearly set out the reason for the increase as follows:—

And whereas in order to enable The Victoria Racing Club to install any totalizator or totalizators in accordance with the Totalizator Act 1930, and to provide for the construction of the necessary buildings to be used in relation thereto it is expedient to amend the said first-mentioned Act . . .

This Bill gives no indication of the purpose for which the increased borrowing power is granted. The Minister of Lands can merely say, "I understand so and so." I have inquired into the matter and ascertained from the secretary of the club that the main reason for the proposed increase of borrowing power to £750,000 is to enable a new stand to be erected in place of the old bluestone stand in front of the hill. So the Minister's understanding is correct. I was assured that the height of the new stand would be such that it would in no way interfere with the view of patrons on the hill. The old stand was condemned by the health authorities, and recently an amount of about £3,000 was spent to make it reasonably safe. There is no party issue in this matter; we can all agree that as the stand has been condemned it is necessary to reconstruct it. In view of the importance and prestige of the Victoria Racing Club no objection can be raised to the proposal.

Mr. MUTTON.—Has any provision been made for the "dead-un's?"

Mr. CLAREY.—No doubt the club will heed the suggestion of the honorable member for Coburg when it is dealing with the matter. I understand extra totalizator windows and so forth will be provided for the benefit of punters who are interested in "dead-un's." Several points in this measure are worthy of note. Even as far back as 1871 a member of this institution at that time recognized the value of the land in this area. At page 892 of *Hansard* of 16th August, 1871, the following report appears—

Mr. VALE observed that this Bill had reference to a very large section of public land—some 300 acres—which was close to a large and growing population on either side, North Melbourne on the one and Footscray—which was important by reason

of its manufactories—on the other. Now it was proposed to give to this club certain rights and privileges, and in doing so they ought to extract from them a recognition of the claims of the general public. There was no reason why a certain portion of the land which was not required for the purposes of the racecourse should not be a free place of public resort when the races were not on. The racing ground itself might be left perfectly intact, but it was too much to expect that for that sport alone 300 acres of land in such proximity to the city should be virtually locked up. He quite admitted the wisdom of the club in asking for control over the whole of the ground during the time that the races were going on, and also that they should have blocked out to them the special portion of it which was the running course; but he was persuaded the Bill would receive a considerable amount of opposition unless the point he had mentioned was called attention to and satisfactorily dealt with.

No safeguard of the type referred to by Mr. Vale is contained in the existing lease, and now the Minister of Lands is asking this House to agree to the surrender of that lease and the issue of a new one for an indefinite period. The Minister stated in his second-reading speech that the Victoria Racing Club desired an assurance of tenure for the next 50 years, and suggested that the existing lease be surrendered and a new one for a period of 50 years be granted by the Government. There may be some good reason why the Government proposes, under this measure, that the new lease be for an indefinite period, but one would have thought that if the 1871 Act gave the then Minister power to demise land and if, as appears to be the case after the passing of that Act, the then existing lease was surrendered and a new one issued for 99 years, the same procedure could have been adopted on this occasion without the necessity of a Bill being brought before Parliament. The Opposition's complaint is that the Minister did not fully explain the circumstances to this House.

The sitting was suspended at 1.4 p.m. until 2.7 p.m.

Mr. CLAREY.—Before the luncheon adjournment, I was pointing out that the Minister of Lands, in his second-reading speech, gave the House no explanation of why it had been necessary to bring forward this Bill. I

inquired also why the Government did not follow the procedure that was adopted when the present lease was granted in 1872. However, by adopting the course that it has, the Government has enabled Opposition members to raise certain points and has given us an opportunity to make a few suggestions. My first point is that the Victoria Racing Club asked the Government for a new lease for a period of 50 years, yet the Bill proposes to authorize the granting of a lease for an indefinite period. I do not suggest there is an ulterior motive behind this provision, but I do not understand why the Government did not incorporate the club's suggestion in the Bill. My second point is that if the Government proposes to grant a new lease, members should be informed of the precise form that will be adopted. If a new lease is to be granted along the same lines as the existing one, I suggest that the Government reconsider the matter because the present lease gives the Victoria Racing Club complete power over the land in question, to do as it wishes except for certain qualifications specified in the principal Act.

The Act provides that the Victoria Racing Club shall utilize the land solely for the purposes of a racecourse. When the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly upon the Victoria Racing Club Bill 1871 was making its enquiries, there appeared to be some doubt whether sporting or other fixtures could be held on the ground. The following statement by an official of the club was reported in the evidence—

The committee have invariably refused all sorts of running matches and pigeon matches on the ground, considering it would be a breach of the conditions of the lease; not that it would hurt the ground, but it would be a violation of the lease.

I express no opinion as to whether that would be so. The Victoria Racing Club has granted the use of the course for other purposes. Sporting and other bodies in the district are eager to obtain the use of the land on days other than race days. The secretary of the Victoria Racing Club has advised that his organization will offer no objection to reasonable use of the property when races are not being held. But a new

committee may be elected and conditions may change: in that event, there will be no means of safeguarding the undertaking given by the present secretary. It is not unusual for policy changes to be made when the personnel of a committee is altered.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I think you are quite right.

Mr. CLAREY.—I realize that I am often wrong, and I am glad the Leader of the Country party considers that my view is correct on this occasion. A clause embodying my suggestion should be inserted in the lease. It might have been wise if the Government had provided in the Bill that the terms of the lease should be ratified by Parliament. Perhaps the Minister of Lands will make an explanation on this point.

Apparently, the Victoria Racing Club is fearful that unless the proposed new lease is granted it may not be able to raise the sum of £750,000 which it proposes to borrow. I do not share its doubts. If the Government desired to help the club and place the minds of members of the committee at ease it could allow the existing lease to continue and announce that it would guarantee this particular loan. The Government would not be undertaking any risk if it gave such a guarantee. I am sure that nobody in a position to take out a debenture or make a loan to the Victoria Racing Club would fear that the amount of the capital would be endangered.

Over the years the Victoria Racing Club has made substantial profits. According to information in my possession, its establishments—including stands, cafeterias, tea-rooms, bars, turnstiles, training establishments, and other buildings and equipment—are valued for insurance purposes at £288,936, and doubtless that figure is conservative. With the profits it has earned, the Victoria Racing Club has been enabled to erect the buildings to which I have referred, but year by year it has written them off against revenue.

According to the club's balance sheet, at the 30th June last, the fixed assets consisted only of its office properties in

Bourke-street, and St. Kilda-road, Melbourne, the freehold land at the race-course, and certain land at Footscray. The sum of £926 was paid for the Footscray land, but to-day it is worth considerably more. No other asset in the nature of buildings is listed. The cost of the new hill stand, which was £111,605, is completely written off to revenue in the balance sheet. Improvements at the course were effected during the year 1955 at a cost of £15,500, and included refitting of the terrace tea-rooms in the bluestone stand at a cost of £3,575. All such capital items have been written off to revenue, and even so, last year there was a net profit of £11,183.

The club need have no fear regarding its financial stability or of the possibility that people will be reluctant to invest money with it unless a new lease for 50 years is granted. Section 43 of the Victoria Racing Club Act 1871 prescribes that if the Government decides at any time to resume the Flemington race-course, the club must be compensated for the value, at the date of acquisition, of the stands and other buildings on the course. Whatever happens, the club can be assured that it will not be left lamenting.

Verbal advice has been given to the effect that if the club were to go out of existence, the total sum realized following a dissolution of the committee would have to be devoted to charitable purposes. However, I cannot find a rule of the club to that effect, except rule 23(a), which states—

The club is prohibited from making any distribution, whether in money, property or otherwise howsoever to its members. Provided, however, that this rule shall not prevent any payment in good faith of remuneration to any officers or servants of the club or benevolent payments for which provision may be made in the rules.

That is a standard wording inserted by non-profit-making concerns, such as lodges, in their rules so that the income-tax liability will be lower than it would otherwise be. That is a club rule—it is not one of the by-laws to which reference is made in the Act. In my opinion, that rule could be waived at any time.

I do not doubt in the slightest the word of representatives of the club on this matter—I accept it unreservedly—but a differently constituted committee could be elected. Doubtless, in 50 years' time there will be an entirely new committee. A provision of the sort I have discussed should be incorporated in the lease, or perhaps the Act could be amended along the lines I have suggested.

I referred to the possibility of provision being made to safeguard the rights of the public to be admitted to the course under certain circumstances. I emphasize the point. Apparently, it was considered some years ago that the club had no right to charge the public for admittance to the flat. About the year 1922, a charge of 1s. was made for entry to that part of the course. Although there was a public outcry, it was established that under the Act the committee had power to fix tolls and charges for admission to any part of the course. At the moment, we are not vitally concerned whether it is justified in continuing to charge for admission to the flat. The interests of the public must be safeguarded. Attendances at race-meetings, particularly on the flat, have declined considerably. According to figures supplied by the Victoria Racing Club, improvements over the last few years, including the new hill stand, have cost £271,174. Of that amount, only £2,000 has been expended on the flat for the rebuilding of turnstiles and public toilets. In effect, no improvements have been made to the flat. I understand that the decrease in attendances is responsible for that position. It is considered likely that in the not distant future the flat may be closed. In other words, only the paddock and hill sections of the course, and perhaps what is known as the "little flat" will be available for the public. It should be written into the lease that if that action is taken, the flat—which comprises an area of 150 acres, and which is approximately one-half of the land leased by the club—should be converted into a public park and made available to the public.

I do not know whether the Government takes steps to ensure that the

by-laws of the Victoria Racing Club are strictly administered. For instance, by-law No. 39 provides, *inter alia*—

Any person who has been convicted in a court of law of felony or larceny or of any attempt to commit a felony or larceny or of obtaining money by false pretences or of an attempt to obtain money by false pretence or who is a reputed thief, pick-pocket, balancer, welsher, or prostitute shall not enter or remain upon the said land

If that by-law were enforced, I am sure that the revenue of the Victoria Racing Club would show a considerable decline. The Opposition does not oppose the principle of the Bill but its expresses concern that the Minister of Lands, when making his second-reading speech, gave an inadequate explanation and supplied insufficient information.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—The Country party offers no objection to the Bill. I am delighted to know that at long last the Victoria Racing Club has come to its senses and applied for a further lease. On several occasions during the last three or four years I have suggested to the chairman that an extension should be sought, as a tremendous number of improvements were required at Flemington, particularly to give patrons of the flat a better deal, and that improvements could be made only if the club had a long term lease. At one time, I toyed with the idea that a fairly substantial annual rental should be charged for the use of the land, but, as racing attendances are declining, probably the club would be overloaded if that course were adopted. The racing clubs are not commanding the following that they had in years gone by.

Although I attend race-meetings at Flemington perhaps only once in two years, I am satisfied from inspections I made that the club could give the public a much better deal. The admission charges are such that patrons should be given good service. I recall that years ago there was at Flemington, in the members' reserve, a large milk bar for those who did not drink intoxicating beverages. However, that facility is no longer provided and at present very little provision is made for non drinkers. Proper amenities should be supplied in

all sections. If this Bill is passed, the Victoria Racing Club will be granted a lease of the area for 65 years. Victorians are proud of the Flemington racecourse, which is known throughout the world. We want to see Victoria continue as the leading racing State in Australia. However, that will be possible only if the Victoria Racing Club makes the course more attractive to the public.

In my opinion, the Government should present other measures relating to racing. For instance, I consider that there should be a re-organization of the Victoria Amateur Turf Club. The Caulfield racecourse is controlled by trustees, some of whom were appointed many years ago. Several former members of Parliament are trustees.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The late Squire Reid was a good trustee.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—That is so. All the trustees may be in that category but, in my opinion, the Caulfield racecourse should, like Flemington, be controlled by a committee, which would be responsible for providing all the necessary facilities. Again, it is time that steps were taken to amalgamate the Moonee Valley and the Melbourne racing clubs. The land upon which the Moonee Valley racecourse is situated is too valuable to be used for racing. In my view, it would serve a better purpose if it were used for housing. Eventually, the management of the Moonee Valley Racing Club must realize that it will become necessary to transfer its activities to another site. Possibly that club would like to operate on the site which has been selected for the Sandown Park racecourse. I claim that, in a Bill of this character, every effort should be made to put racing on a worth-while footing, so that the community may become proud of the sport.

The facilities for racing in this State should be second to none in the Commonwealth. It may be claimed in some quarters that there is nothing to be proud of in that aspiration but, after all, racing is a sport that is legalized by Act of Parliament. Accordingly, I should like the Government to heed my representations concerning the trustees of the Caulfield racecourse and

the committee of the Victoria Amateur Turf Club, and also to inquire whether anything can be done toward amalgamating the Moonee Valley Racing Club and the Melbourne Racing Club. The Country party commends this Bill.

Mr. HOLLAND (Flemington).—The Minister of Lands, in his explanatory speech, described this measure as a simple one. In some ways I agree with the honorable gentleman but, in other respects, I consider the Bill is too simple. What it proposes is to place into the hands of an autocratic, anachronistic and ultra-conservative body, for the next 50 years, an extremely valuable tract of land. I point out that the Victoria Racing Club has not been outstandingly successful in its primary task of controlling racing in this State or in administering the land under its control. Instead of making the Bill as simple as it is, I should have thought the Government would have reviewed the original Act, passed in 1871, with the object of bringing down a consolidated measure which would have excluded some of the outmoded provisions and, at the same time, provided better safeguards than those which now obtain.

To me, a layman, it appears that section 8 of the Act empowers the Governor in Council to lease land to the club for as long as it desires, and as many times as it wishes. Section 10, however, which was referred to by the honorable member for Melbourne, ties down the purpose to which the land is to be put and specifies that it shall be used for a public racecourse.

Section 22 provides that any member, officer, or servant of the committee, and all persons called by him to his assistance, may seize and detain any person who shall have committed any offence against the provision of the Act or of the by-laws made under the Act. Then follow certain requirements concerning the giving of an offender into the charge of a police constable, and so forth. Section 23 stipulates that liability to penalty under the Act shall not relieve an offender from any other liability to which he would have been subject had the Act not been passed.

It seems to me that, in this enlightened age, when there is a multitude of policemen and Victoria Racing Club staff, there is no necessity for power to be vested in a member of the committee to detain a person for reasons that may be considered sound. That function might well be discharged by members of the Police Force or servants of the club on duty at the course at the time of the incident. Moreover, the principle enunciated in the Act of fining an offender twice is "beyond the pale," particularly if the person concerned were to break only one by-law.

Section 33 provides that the Board of Land and Works may, when it thinks fit, authorize any proper persons to inspect the whole or any part of the land for the time being vested in the chairman of the club and, at all reasonable times to enter upon and examine the land and buildings erected thereon. Section 34 empowers the Board of Land and Works to give notice to the club concerning the need to repair buildings, and so forth. When the original Act was passed in 1871, the Board of Land and Works was probably the only authority that had any control over such matters, but, since that time, racecourses have become registrable under the Health Act as public buildings, and they are subject to the requirements of that legislation in two or three different ways. Although it is improbable that there would be any conflict, it could be that the Board of Land and Works would require the Victoria Racing Club to do certain things whereas the Department of Health would require other action to be taken.

Section 44 of the Act stipulates that if the Crown resumes possession of the land vested under the Act, compensation will be paid to the party concerned. Normal commercial practice, when leasing property for a period of 99 years or thereabout, is to charge a ground rental, and also there would be a stipulation to the effect that any buildings remaining on the land at the end of that period would become the property of the lessor. The land vested in the Victoria Racing Club has been valued at about £1,000,000 if it were to be used for an industrial purpose, but I concede

that it is unlikely to be subject to that use. I mention that aspect merely to point out that no rent is charged for the land occupied by the club.

I should have imagined that, before bringing down this Bill, the Government would have investigated the sections of the original Act to which I have alluded. Of course, it may have done so, and then concluded that there was no necessity to do anything about them. Alternatively, I may have read the Act incorrectly and there may be no necessity for alteration, after all. Nevertheless, my belief is that the Government should have submitted a measure that would meet present-day requirements more adequately than the Bill which is now before the House. For the reasons I have stated, and also because there is no urgent necessity to place the measure on the statute-book, I submit that it would be desirable for the Government to review the position, bearing in mind that the term of the proposed lease is 50 years. Members are aware that racing provides an exceptionally lucrative source of taxation.

Mr. TOWERS.—Not from the punters' angle.

Mr. HOLLAND.—That is so. Racing taxation provides a lucrative form of revenue for the Government and consequently, the success of the Victoria Racing Club, which more or less controls racing in this State, is of importance in so far as revenue is concerned. Taxation is obtained from various sources such as the totalizator, entertainments tax, bookmakers' turnover tax, and so on. Attendances at metropolitan racecourses have declined in recent years, notwithstanding the fact that during the same period the population has considerably increased. Such a state of affairs may be regarded as indicative of the general public's reaction to the inadequate amenities provided at racecourses, particularly Flemington.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—Attendances may decrease still further with the advent of television to this country.

Mr. HOLLAND.—If that is so, the Government will have to look for other sources of income. However, for the

time being, we must adhere to the facts available, which indicate that the Victoria Racing Club has not been outstandingly successful in recent years. The "forward look" in racing was first adopted by other racing clubs. They instituted open enquiries, photo finishes, starting stalls, and more interesting types of racing such as International stakes. The Victoria Racing Club followed suit later. The conduct of race meetings, from which the State derives considerable revenue, should be a matter of vital concern to the Government.

All regular racegoers must realize that the amenities provided at Flemington are inferior to those at other metropolitan racecourses. Certainly, the club has preserved the privileges of members, but that has been done at the expense of the racing public generally. I have lived in the Flemington district all my life. In my boyhood days I used to jump the fence in order to taste the forbidden fruits of playing on the "flat." As I grew older and had more money, I was able to indulge in the luxury of paying the admittance fee to the hill, and no doubt I augmented the Government's revenue by losing my money, as most punters do. A little later, on achieving the eminence of a certain office, I was able to join the members for whom the racing clubs provide reasonable facilities. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

It is very well laid out, with fine buildings, beautiful flower beds, well kept lawns and attractive trees.

An artist, viewing the course from the members stand, would paint such a picture. From the hill, however, an altogether different view is obtained. Some of the weeds that may be seen growing there must surely have been in evidence when the lease was first granted to the club. The lack of amenities, particularly on the flat, has been the subject of considerable publicity in the press, and Government members should be conversant with the position. The hill has changed somewhat radically during the last couple of years, primarily because of one or two accidental fires which, fortunately for the Victoria Racing

Club, burnt down an old grandstand—this possibly provided some revenue by way of insurance—and enabled the club to proceed with a scheme that was certainly worthwhile.

Dealing now with the economic aspect of racing, I emphasize that racing dates each year are divided between three clubs. At Flemington this year will be conducted approximately seventeen meetings by the Victoria Racing Club, and four meetings on behalf of some other club—a comparatively small number—yet it is proposed to empower the Victoria Racing Club to borrow £750,000 for the purpose of providing an additional grandstand. At the same time, the Victoria Amateur Turf Club is spending large amounts and the Melbourne Racing Club intends to spend £1,250,000 at the Sandown Park course. Improvements are also being carried out at Moonee Valley. Surely, at a time when there is an acute shortage of man power and materials for use in the building of hospitals and schools, the Government should consider whether it is reasonable to allow lavish expenditure on a racecourse that will be used somewhat infrequently.

It was pleasing to hear the Leader of the Country party suggest that there should be some sort of amalgamation of racing clubs. The Government should ascertain whether there could be a sharing of the Flemington racecourse; there is sufficient room on the course to enable two separate clubs to utilize it, and great economy would thus be effected. Possibly either the Melbourne Racing Club, which proposes to spend a tremendous amount of money at Sandown Park, or the Moonee Valley Racing Club, whose course will be closed down under the Town Planning Act, could be incorporated as a separate club using, under proper supervision, the existing facilities at Flemington.

Sir ALBERT LIND.—It is a large area to be a close preserve for one body.

Mr. HOLLAND.—That is so. It is far too big an area to remain a close preserve for one organization. That is another reason why this Bill should be reviewed by the Government. The Public Works Department and other

governmental bodies are experiencing difficulties with regard to the provision of necessary facilities and, therefore, I again suggest that the Government should re-examine this measure in order to ascertain whether there are alternatives to what has been proposed. It will be of no use granting the Victoria Racing Club a lease of Flemington racecourse for a further 50 years and then asking it to review the position. It has been an autocratic body for a long while and will not surrender any of the privileges it possesses. When any question arises as to the best use to be made of the course, the Government should be concerned not merely with the Victoria Racing Club but with the racing public. If a study of the position were undertaken by some impartial authority it is quite likely that a decision would be made that the Victoria Racing Club should share the course with another club.

I consider also that greater use should be made of the area at Flemington which is known as the "flat." We all know that its future as a spectator reserve for racing is doomed. Fewer people use the "flat" for that purpose than ever before, and because of the economics of the situation the Victoria Racing Club will not spend any money on improvements and alterations to that area. The secretary of the club informed me that bookmakers and the catering contractors consider that the facilities provided are out of date. The buildings cannot be registered by the Department of Health, despite the fact that regulations under the Health Act make such procedure mandatory. The caterers are asking for a reduction of 50 per cent. in the rental charged as they are finding it difficult to meet expenses. I suggest that it would be far better for racing generally, and the economic position of the Victoria Racing Club, to close the "flat" to spectators. If people cannot afford to pay the 5s. or 6s. admission to the hill reserve these days, they cannot afford to attend race-meetings.

The Opposition is of the opinion that if the matters brought forward to-day were studied by the Government, a plan would be formulated to give the racing public a fairer deal. If better facilities

are provided, the racing clubs will reap the benefit in larger attendances on race days. If people living in Footscray, Essendon, and other areas close to the course, were given the opportunity, I am quite sure they would express a desire that the "flat" area should be made available for the playing of games. They would be the persons most affected by any change of that nature. As there is no need for haste, the Government should, before the Bill is finalized, give heed to the suggestions put forward to-day.

Mr. WHITE (Ballarat North).—Two main principles are involved in this measure. One is the extension of the lease of Flemington racecourse by the Victoria Racing Club for another 50 years, and the other is to extend the borrowing powers of the club from £100,000 to £750,000. All honorable members were interested in the remarks of the honorable member for Flemington. He covered a tremendous field and gave the House information that should have been supplied by the Minister of Lands. It must be realized that we are considering the control of 300 acres of Crown land which to-day would be worth nothing less than £1,000,000. I should like some information from the Minister of Lands immediately. What is the rental basis? Does he know what the peppercorn rental means?

Mr. TURNBULL.—Yes, one peppercorn if demanded.

Mr. WHITE.—That means that for another 50 years, plus the 99 years already granted, the Victoria Racing Club will not have paid one penny rental for an area of land valued at more than £1,000,000. The honorable member for Flemington stated that he considered better and more use should be made of the racecourse.

Mr. MUTTON.—Maybe it could be used as a dairy farm.

Mr. WHITE.—If that were done, the production of dairy produce would be increased, but it might limit the pleasure of a number of Melbourne people, so I do not think we should adopt the suggestion. I should also like the Minister of Lands to indicate the inten-

tions of the Government in regard to exercising some influence in the control of its Crown land. At present, the committee of the Victoria Racing Club is completely autonomous. Members of the public who pay entrance money at the turnstiles do not have any voice in the control of Flemington racecourse or of the Victoria Racing Club. Incidentally, the club is the body controlling horse-racing in Victoria. The average racing man has no voice in that direction. At least the Government has one nominee on the Trotting Control Board. I am surprised to find that in 1956 the Government of the day is attempting to follow a precedent established in 1856. Surely Government opinion is a little more advanced than it was 100 years ago!

When control of the Flemington area was first vested in the Victoria Racing Club, the land was not worth £10,000. To-day, it is situated near the centre of a great metropolitan area. One can imagine what will be said in the future of the members of the Bolte Government if this proposal is given effect. They will be regarded as a hopeless lot, if they allow a practice 100 years old to continue for another 50 years. What undertaking has the Government that the average racing man will be provided with better amenities at Flemington if the borrowing authority of the club is extended to a limit of £750,000? The land on the flat is probably the most valuable of all—certainly it would be for grazing.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The animals would get footrot!

Mr. WHITE.—Probably some of the patrons on the flat will get footrot on the damp ground there. The people of Victoria should have some say in the control of their land. Is there a need in the metropolitan area for as many as four valuable racecourses? As the Minister of Lands stated, the Flemington racecourse is one of world repute, but it is used only fourteen or sixteen times a year. It should be used more often and those who make it possible for racing to continue should have more amenities. At present, certain people, including members of Parliament, have

the best use of the Flemington course, because they are admitted to the members' reserve, where every possible amenity is available. But tens of thousands of racegoers are afforded no privileges and few amenities. I believe the Government has let down the people of Victoria by not ascertaining the club's intentions and making them public. I do not think the Minister of Lands knows what those intentions are. I do not think the chairman of the Victoria Racing Club—who is bigger than the present Government—has told him. Perhaps the great Country party, which has saved the State of Victoria hundreds of times before, might be able to do so again in another place, by making sure in some way that the property of the people of Victoria is protected properly, and that the people shall have some say in the control of their own sport and their own property.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg).—I wish to give credit where it is due. I am satisfied that the Bill will be supported on this (the Opposition) side of the House, because it provides for improvements in the interests of racing. Some years ago I advocated the running of the Melbourne Cup on a Monday. I re-submit that view on behalf of the industrial section of the community, which keeps racing going in this State. Conditions have changed and, as all industrial workers are not punters or people who believe in horse racing, they should have the right to enjoy a long week-end at Cup-time. I have followed the sport for many years and have here an heirloom—one of the last of the old-type racecards printed in 1917. In those days the entries for a race included up to about 74 horses. It was a long time before it was decided to close acceptances on a Thursday, so that people would know in advance what horses were likely to be running. The *Age* reported during the last day or so that the Victoria Racing Club is considering taking action to curtail the broadcasting of races. That is an insult to the people. Broadcasting is of great benefit to mankind, and to reduce race broadcasting would interfere seriously with the enjoyment of thousands.

Apparently the reason for the club's proposal is that attendances at race-meetings have declined. The patrons who give racing its main support are better judges of inconsistent running than are the so-called stewards. Therein lies one of the reasons for the reduction in attendances. Frequently, one reads newspaper reports of demonstrations against the running of certain horses. On such occasions, many people become hostile, and, as a result, some decide not to attend meetings. Another aspect is starting-price betting. The Government is reported to be in favour of introducing off-course totalizator betting. In my view, that has little to do with horse-racing. As long as horses are raced, people will bet on them. For the greater part of my life I have followed racing, and I am greatly interested in the wonderful advances made by racing clubs in the interests of those who attend their meetings. I agree that Flemington does not offer as many amenities as other courses, but it should. The Leader of the Country party has suggested—the idea possesses merit—that the Moonee Valley racecourse should be closed and the land subdivided so that homes may be erected on it. Some land for housing has been acquired at Somerton in the area known as Roxburgh Park.

The honorable member for Flemington suggested that one course would be sufficient to cater for the needs of the racing fraternity of Melbourne. In the western suburbs there is the Flemington racecourse, and Sandown Park is being developed east of the city, so I contend that it would be in the interests of the public to eliminate the courses at Moonee Valley and Caulfield. Honorable members have already heard of the arguments concerning the trusteeship of the Caulfield course.

Mr. FLOYD.—The honorable member for Coburg has omitted to mention the Williamstown course which was closed down some time ago.

Mr. MUTTON.—That is so. That course was in difficulties during the last five years of its existence. A point about racing that causes me grave concern is that the Melbourne Cup is not

run on a Monday. In Victoria, some workers are given a paid holiday on Cup Day and others are not. I suggest that it would be better to hold the Cup on Monday instead of Tuesday, thereby avoiding a break in the working week. The Government would gain the respect of the community if it were able to influence the Victoria Racing Club to hold this major event on the Monday.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order!

Mr. MUTTON.—I know.

The SPEAKER.—In that case I will leave the matter to the honorable member's discretion.

Mr. MUTTON.—I have two remarkable records during the period that I have rendered service in public life. I was a member of a municipal council for 28 years, during which time I moved more motions for which I did not obtain a seconder than any other person in the world. Concerning my service in this institution, on every occasion that I have spoken I have been called to order by the Speaker. I know that you have a duty to perform, Mr. Speaker, and I do not blame you for what you have done.

I agree that the Victoria Racing Club should be given authority to borrow up to £750,000, but I do not know where it will obtain the money. I have no doubt that the Government will give the club a guarantee, together with its blessing. I agree also with the honorable member for Flemington that the Victoria Racing Club requires more money in order to bring Flemington racecourse up to the standard of other courses in the world. I have taken an interest in racing for many years and I can well remember the Melbourne Cup day in about 1912 when a welsher of a bookmaker by the name of McLeod was kicked to death. As I said, I have been interested in this sport for a long time.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—Successfully?

Mr. MUTTON.—Not necessarily; if I knew as much about law books as I know about race books, perhaps I would be a Philadelphia lawyer. In fact, another unique record of mine is that I can tear bookmakers' tickets into smaller pieces

than can anyone else in the world. I ask the Government to give consideration to bringing pressure to bear upon the Victoria Racing Club with a view to making what is but a logical change in the interests of the public—holding the Melbourne Cup on a Monday instead of a Tuesday.

Mr. SCULLY (Richmond).—I do not think the Victoria Racing Club should be given the privileges that would be bestowed upon it by the passage of this Bill. As has already been explained by other honorable members, the Government intends to grant the club authority to increase its borrowing powers to £750,000 and a new lease of Flemington racecourse for an indefinite period. The Victoria Racing Club has failed to provide adequate facilities for the public and also to serve the best interests of racing. It is scandalous to suggest that this body, which does not pay rent for a valuable area of land, has been protected in other ways, and has substantial assets, should be given authority to increase its borrowing powers. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Lands said—

Now the Victoria Racing Club desires to provide further facilities and improvements designed for the use and comfort of its patrons, which are estimated to cost approximately £750,000.

What amenities are to be provided by the club? I would point out that the substantial assets of this body have accrued because of public patronage, so surely the public is entitled to expect some return for the entrance fees they pay week after week. Members were informed that the club proposed to build a stand on the hill, but to-day it was revealed in the debate that the stand had been condemned.

Mr. CLAREY.—The stand is to be built in front of the hill.

Mr. SCULLY.—That matter has no relation to this Bill. What other works are proposed to be carried out by the club? The amenities provided on the flat at Flemington are so poor that people should be allowed into that section free of charge. That practice was adopted by the Western Australian Turf Club with beneficial results. The

Victoria Racing Club pays no rent for the land on which the course is constructed and, therefore, the patrons of the flat should be allowed admittance free of charge. Possibly attendances would improve if that course were adopted. In addition, the small punter would have a little bit more money to bet with and, therefore, may get a better "go."

I consider that this Bill should not be passed unless the Government obtains an assurance from the club that it will provide amenities for flat patrons comparable with those available to its members. In 1937, the public paid £12,988 in admission fees to the Flemington racecourse and membership fees totalled £19,144. In 1955, the people who make racing and are its backbone—those who pay for admittance each time they attend—contributed £384,206.

Mr. CLAREY.—That sum includes totalizator commissions, and so on.

Mr. SCULLY.—Victoria Racing Club members in that year paid £23,420. Since 1937, the Victoria Racing Club has derived from its membership fees an increased revenue of approximately £4,000, but the sum paid by the general public has increased by £372,000. Those figures constitute sufficient argument to justify any claims that the racing public makes for improved amenities. In my opinion, the facilities available at the Caulfield racecourse are inadequate. The cocktail bar there is of no real benefit to persons who patronize the course; stands and other facilities should be provided for them. Because of the current shortage of money, many more persons will be patronizing the flat in future.

In 1937, the liquid assets of the Victoria Racing Club—that is, apart from buildings—totalled £55,975, consisting of loans amounting to £54,307 and cash in the bank of £1,668. In 1954, its loan investment was £349,157, and cash in hand totalled £43,241—an increase of more than 700 per cent. Efforts have been directed at providing every conceivable amenity for the privileged few members, to the detriment of the great majority who actually make racing and pay for it. These persons are entitled

to some consideration, which the Victoria Racing Club has not extended to them. The club should not expect Parliament to grant an extended lease for a further 50 years, with the expectation that no rent will be payable, unless it is prepared to cater for all sections of the community.

The club has not acted in the best interests of racing; in the main, it has catered for the big owners and breeders, not for the racing industry itself. Insufficient supervision is exercised over meetings conducted by country racing clubs. In many instances, starters, supervisors and stewards are not provided, whereas they should be. Country racing associations, as well as the people who attend the meetings, are just as much entitled to protection as are metropolitan clubs and those who attend fixtures in the city of Melbourne. Action should be taken along the lines I have indicated to protect not only the racing game but also the public. In recent years the Victoria Racing Club purchased for £5,787 a property in St. Kilda-road, Melbourne, which is intended to be the central administrative office for racing in Victoria. In 1951-52, the Victoria Racing Club made a profit of £2,187, but in 1954-55 it had risen to £11,183, an increase of 500 per cent.

Mr. FRASER.—What did the club do with the profits?

Mr. SCULLY.—I am anxious to find an answer to that question. The club provides every conceivable amenity for its members, but none for the general public. It is scandalous that for so long the club has had the use of the land on which the course is situated at a peppercorn rental. In 1951-52 the Victoria Racing Club paid Federal entertainments tax amounting to £73,647, and in 1954-55 only £38,361. However, the general public, including the paying racegoer, has not witnessed the provision of improved facilities. A further benefit was gained by the Victoria Racing Club in the payment of reduced totalizator commission. In 1952-53, the sum of £230,175 was paid, but in 1954-55 the amount was only £196,645.

Mr. CLAREY.—The club received no benefit on that account—the reverse was the case.

Mr. SCULLY.—Parliament passed legislation giving the clubs an extra share in the totalizator percentages, and now they are anxious to obtain a slice of the bookmakers' turnover tax. Although they have been assisted and protected all along the line, the general public has not benefited. If a person travels by train to attend a race-meeting at Flemington, the combined return rail fare and admission ticket to the stand costs 19s. 6d. For admittance to the hill, the comparative figure is 11s., and if the racegoer travels second class the cost is 10s.

A club member is entitled to admission to every meeting, to two ladies' tickets, and to the use of all facilities; this works out at approximately 9s. or 10s. a meeting. Compared with the charges made to the public, this is unfair and unjustifiable. The worst form of privilege is being extended to a selected few who have no right to enjoy, on land owned by the people, the advantages I have detailed while others are deprived of its use. If the Victoria Racing Club decided to take similar action to benefit the general public, I would applaud its action. I have the strongest objection to affording the club all the advantages and assistance it seeks, particularly in view of its record, until it is prepared to improve conditions for the public.

The building of a new stand is desirable, but the best way to help those who make racing pay is to reduce the attendance fees. A stage is fast being reached when people who regard racing as a sport cannot afford to participate, and consequently attendances are dropping. I take the utmost exception to the introduction of a measure which will give racing clubs further assistance and protection unless an assurance is obtained that they will arrange for benefits to be conferred upon the people who pay and really make racing.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Ascot Vale).—The House in general—and members of the Government in particular—should be indebted to the honorable member for

Melbourne for the concise manner in which he presented the historical background of the Victoria Racing Club, and for his review of the legal difficulties that could arise and suggestions about how they could be avoided. It is unnecessary for me to speak further on that aspect. As a municipal councillor and a member of Parliament representing an area that surrounds approximately two-thirds the perimeter of the 300 acres of Crown land comprising the Flemington racecourse, I wish to offer certain comments that may interest members. It would not matter if this measure was rejected, because the lease held by the Victoria Racing Club does not expire until 1971. At any time prior to that year, the club could surrender its lease or the Government could extend it. Probably the only reason why the club is seeking an extension of its lease at this stage is that it desires to obtain a guarantee concerning loan money being sought to make certain extensions. Perhaps the honorable member for Coburg hit the nail on the head when he mentioned that this Bill indicated that the Government intended to guarantee the club up to £700,000 so that it could undertake the provision of all or some part of the proposed improvements. Of course, if the Government had been prepared to give that guarantee, the club would not have worried about requesting an extension of its lease for a further 50 years.

I support the remarks of the honorable members for Melbourne and Flemington. As a former chairman of the parks and gardens committee of the City of Footscray, I know how valuable any portion of the racecourse could be to the Melbourne, Essendon and Footscray city councils whose areas abut the racecourse. It would be extremely helpful if on 35 or 40 Saturdays a year additional land was available for planned amateur sport. Each Saturday throughout the cricket season, the Footscray council has to provide about 86 wickets for various clubs. During the football season, it is not possible to provide as many playing fields, despite the fact that the council has planned

well over the years and has been dealt with kindly by interested organizations and persons. Perhaps the most notable is Sir William Angliss, who sold 65 acres of land at South Kingsville—at practically half price—to the council, stipulating that it should be used for sporting purposes. Now, the Footscray High School occupies portion of that area and a new primary school has been planned for the same district. Moreover, inquiries made by the Public Works Committee concerning the proposed tunnel under the Yarra river indicate that if a tunnel is constructed at the recommended site the provision of access roads may split that area of 65 acres in two, thus depriving our citizens and posterity of the use of a further portion of it.

For many years the Melbourne and Footscray councils have hoped that the areas of land running east and west between the Moonee Ponds creek and the Maribyrnong river and north and south between Dynon-road and the new Melbourne road, when filled with garbage and cultivated, would provide at least twenty full size playing fields for amateur sport of all types—Australian rules, Rugby, soccer and other games. Gradually the area available is diminishing. The Railway Department had first selection and has taken a large tract of land to duplicate the north-eastern railway goods yards. That area is now known as Dynon. The Department has taken up certain land also to the south of Dynon-road. We are aware that the Government and others, particularly the Melbourne City Council, are interested in the ultimate transference of the Queen Victoria Market to that area. Probably over a period of years a large sum of money will be needed to effect such a transfer. Also, the Trotting Control Board has a total area of 27 acres in two blocks under lease and licence for different periods. It is probable that ultimately that land will revert to the Crown for further development. There is always the possibility, of course, that it will not be used for sporting purposes. In future, the cities of Williamstown, Footscray, Essendon and Sunshine, and the Shires of Broadmeadows and Keilor will find

that, although their populations are expanding and the density is becoming greater, playing areas are diminishing. In my opinion, whether racing is carried on in perpetuity or for a further 50 years, some part of the Flemington racecourse must ultimately be made available for the people, because it belongs to them. The secretary of the Victoria Racing Club has agreed to meet representatives of the three councils to see what can be done in that regard.

On the northern side of Ballarat-road, and overlooking the Flemington racecourse, is the Footscray Park, very often wrongly referred to as Scotsman's Hill. At one time that area of land was owned by the Victoria Racing Club. No one knows why the club purchased it, but at one stage it was proposed to build residences for members of the staff of the Victoria Racing Club. It was suggested that the houses should overlook the racecourse, with the result that the toilets would have been close to Ballarat-road—it must be remembered that at that time there was no sewerage. Frequently councils are chided with being the sponsors of bad subdivisions, but, on this occasion, an observant council could foresee the problem and entered into negotiations to purchase the land from the Victoria Racing Club. With some assistance from the Government of the day, the land was acquired from the club for the purposes of public recreation and parks. At the time the whole of the area was not purchased, but later the Victoria Racing Club handed over to the council an additional area. It is now known as Footscray Park and contains many playing fields. I bring this matter to the notice of the House because it is obvious to me that had the racing club remained adamant and proceeded with a housing settlement scheme, the whole face of the area could have been different to-day. The citizens of Footscray would have been deprived of what is an up-to-date and very modern park, which is a great credit to the municipality.

I have been entrusted with the original minute book of a committee that was formed at the request of the council after it had purchased this site. It

belongs to Mr. David Matthews, the city curator at Footscray. He is a highly respected and knowledgeable person, and is regarded as outstanding in the field of horticulture. He cares for this book with great reverence because it records many of his own ideas which he was enabled to implement in establishing the park.

A perusal of it discloses that in former days public-spirited men raised money, with which trees and materials were purchased. On Saturday afternoons and holidays they devoted their time to labouring with wheelbarrows and spades, to lay the foundation of this fine area. This minute book ought to be preserved in perpetuity by the municipal authorities at Footscray so that, in years to come, citizens may inform themselves of the history of development of this area.

When possession of the area that is now Footscray Park, passed to the hands of the council, the intention was that it should be used as a free grandstand by people from all parts of the metropolis. The committee of management decided that shade would be required for those who used the area as a picnic ground, and so many beautiful trees and shrubs were planted. However, they have grown to such an extent that the park has become practically useless as a vantage point from which to view horse races. The only open space left is so small and so far away from the racecourse that it is relatively unpopular as a stand from which to view the races. Nevertheless, the area is still the city park. The honorable member for Footscray, Councillor Schintler, who was formerly mayor of that municipality, knows the history of the park as well as I do. I am sure he will agree that it is fortunate that, in years gone by the racing club "came to the party." The Government of the day was induced to provide much of the money required for the purchase of the land which is now dedicated to the people of the district. When the Flemington racecourse is not being used for race-meetings I should like to see a portion of it made available for the parking of motor vehicles. Some persons

Mr. Shepherd.

have suggested that ultimately the main flat and the tan track could be used for that purpose.

Without doubt, the honorable member for Moonee Ponds will support my contention that, other than on race days, the Flemington racecourse could be used for the parking of cars that are now left in adjacent streets. I appreciate that those who availed themselves of this facility might find some difficulty in making their way to the Royal Agricultural Society's showgrounds. Ultimately, however, something must be done to clear the adjacent streets of parked cars, particularly on nights when trotting-meetings, tattoos and other functions are staged at the showgrounds. On these occasions, cars are parked in gutters, on nature strips, and even in private driveways. Although the parking of motor vehicles is regulated by the city council, I believe the question of utilizing portion of the Flemington racecourse should be investigated thoroughly—even to the extent of considering the construction of a sub-way under the railway line to enable persons to walk from the racecourse to the showgrounds direct, instead of having to walk a distance of one-half or three-quarters of a mile from the point in Ascot Vale-road where their cars would otherwise be parked.

I understand that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works is seeking an open space in that area, which must ultimately become either a sports-ground or a parking area for motor-cars. The Opposition intends to support this Bill, with certain reservations to which previous speakers have alluded. The municipalities of Essendon, Footscray, and Melbourne desire that the racecourse shall be used for sporting purposes, without prejudice to the racing club. Opposition members appreciate the assistance that has been given, at all times, by the Victoria Racing Club to the municipality of Footscray. The club has sanctioned a long-term lease to enable the local rowing club to erect its own club rooms. Without the assistance of the club, the improvements that have taken place since 1916 could

not have been effected. In that year, the river flats were flooded, and I recall that, because of unfavourable weather conditions, the Melbourne Cup race was run on a Saturday instead of a Tuesday. The area concerned has been flooded on two or three occasions, but with advantage to the soil, because the floods have caused natural deposition of silt, which has improved the playing spaces. When I first saw that land, it was surrounded by a dilapidated three-rail fence and was covered with docks and thistles. However, it has been improved out of recognition and, for many years past, it has been known as "The Park." It has played a major part in developing physically the youth of the district and I trust that it will continue to serve that purpose for many years to come.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—I support the Bill, subject to the reservations voiced by previous Opposition speakers. The Minister of Lands, in his explanatory second-reading speech, claimed that if the Victoria Racing Club intended to spend the sum of £750,000 on improvements to the racecourse, it was entitled to reasonable tenure so as to ensure that its members might enjoy those improvements for a substantial period. Recently, when I visited Flemington, I took up a position on Scotsman's Hill, although I, like other members of this House, enjoy certain privileges while on the course. One aspect of racing procedure that intrigues me is the mysterious "ring." Although I have sought it, I have never discovered it. Operating at Flemington, however, are certain gentlemen who might aptly be described as "ringers." They are competent "shearers," but the cost of being shorn at their hands is considerable.

I enjoy racing, although I find that my interest in the horses I back usually departs at the turn into the straight. Honorable members appreciate that there must be a headquarters of racing in Melbourne and the location should be near the centre of the metropolis. The Flemington racecourse is ideally situated for that purpose. It also provides much needed breathing space for a large industrial area.

I cannot see any real need to extend the lease of the Victoria Racing Club. If the Government is anxious that a huge sum of money should be expended on improving the course, this could be facilitated by a guarantee of the cost of the improvements to be effected. Generally speaking, the amenities provided at Flemington are good. Facilities at the flat are primitive, but patrons there are usually wet, broke and poor, and completely disinterested in this aspect of racing. The Minister of Lands and I exemplify the two types of people who take an interest in racing. He has the money and goes to the races to bet; I have no money and cannot afford to bet. People in my class who attend race-meetings do so with the idea of supplementing their incomes; they are not interested in enjoying themselves.

The Flemington racecourse covers a large area of land, situated in the midst of an industrial district, and in my opinion, the flat could be used for recreational purposes. If converted into gardens, people living in nearby tenements or rooms could really enjoy this area. It is interesting to note that in America admittance to racecourses is free, the idea being to encourage people to attend and invest on the totalizator. This produces more revenue than would be paid in admittance charges. If the Flemington flat was converted into gardens, many persons would be attracted to the course and, as in America, the State's revenue would benefit.

The honorable member for Richmond stated that the Victoria Racing Club paid only a peppercorn rental. He overlooked the fact that through the medium of racing, the Treasury benefits. This argument is enhanced by the following statistics showing in round figures the amount of revenue derived from racing in Victoria last year:—

Totalizator	..	..	£196,000
Entertainments tax, admission charges, members' subscriptions, land tax, book-makers' turnover fees	..	..	163,000
Permit fees	..	..	40,000
Betting tickets	..	..	106,000
TOTAL	..	..	£505,000

His criticism, on this occasion, as it is frequently, was unfounded. He was merely painting a word picture, trying to win back votes, which he has lost for ever. After making his speeches he usually disappears so that he will not hear the answer to his allegations.

I urge the Government to encourage the Victoria Racing Club to make this land available, in some way, for the benefit of the people residing in the locality. Many of these residents do not own motor-cars and their recreation is usually confined to walking. A good deal more use could be made of the area than at present, and if a beautification programme was undertaken, many thousands would be attracted there. Furthermore, it would have the effect of attracting those who invest with starting-price bookmakers in back lanes, thereby curtailing the activities of this type of operator who, when in financial difficulties, moves to another suburb. For those reasons I support the Bill.

Mr. SCHINTLER (Footscray).—As an unsuccessful punter for approximately 40 years, I naturally have some interest in the mecca of racing in the metropolitan area. Generally speaking, the Victoria Racing Club has rendered good service to racing in Victoria. However, I believe that, as a matter of principle, Crown lands should be used for the benefit of the community.

I have been a councillor of the City of Footscray for thirteen years and in all dealings with the club a friendly atmosphere has prevailed. I hope that continues. I believe, however, that where land belongs to the Crown serious consideration should be given to any proposal to grant a long extension of a lease. One of the principal problems relates to the provision of reasonable breathing space within the confines of the industrial suburbs. As an indication of the cost of developing and maintaining areas of land as public reserves, the Footscray City Council spends approximately £60,000 per annum in this connexion. It has been stated by previous speakers that the implementation of the Greater Melbourne plan will interfere greatly with long-range proposals in my district for

the development of parks and playing areas. Therefore, I was pleased to hear at a recent interview with the secretary of the Victoria Racing Club that any reasonable request by neighbouring councils for the use of the flat area of the Flemington racecourse for the playing of sport of any kind would be given favourable consideration. Despite the fact that I have been a member of Footscray City Council for thirteen years, that was news to me, and when I contacted our town clerk I discovered that he had received no official intimation in that connexion from the Victoria Racing Club or from any other authority. Of course, we were aware that from time to time gymkhanas have been held there for charitable purposes. It is good to know that an area of land comprising approximately 300 acres, which is utilized for racing on only about sixteen days a year, will be made available if needed for the recreation of people living in the immediate locality.

I believe that we should not live in the past but in the future. In the not far distant future, large areas of what are now playing fields will be taken over by developmental projects, and the concession granted by the Victoria Racing Club—only verbally up to this stage, it is true—will be most useful to the people of Footscray and surrounding municipalities.

The honorable member for Ballarat North attacked the Victoria Racing Club on the ground that it was paying only a token rental for the land under its control. To be fair, it must be pointed out that over the years the committee of the club has developed the course to its present standard. From what one can hear from overseas visitors no other racecourse in the world can compare with it. Somebody must be given credit for that development. I realize that probably much remains to be done, and I hope the Victoria Racing Club will be able to raise the finance required so that it may proceed with its plans. The committee of the club has been described as an autocratic body, and I suppose it could reasonably be said that at least in the past it has represented the "squattocracy" of the State. Doubtless when

considering plans for the further development of the course it could take a more modern and broader view of the requirements of the ordinary racegoer. The Opposition supports this Bill, subject to the reservations of speakers from this side of the House who have made a contribution to the debate.

Mr. TODD (Port Melbourne).—As my colleagues have stated, the purpose of this Bill is to enable the Victoria Racing Club to obtain finance to proceed with developmental work at Flemington for the comfort of members of the public who patronize the more substantial parts of the racecourse. In the light of the public criticism of the Victoria Racing Club that is expressed from time to time, and in view of some of the statements made in the House to-day. I should have thought that the Minister of Lands or some other Government supporter would have made a contribution to the debate. When one examines the control of racing, one realizes that headquarters must be provided. Although colleagues of mine have called the Victoria Racing Club an arrogant, autocratic and egotistical body, at least it has exercised some control over racing in Victoria. Anybody with a knowledge of sport where handicapping is necessary realizes that where there is loose control decay sets in.

In the main, the debate on this Bill has centred around the question of amenities at racecourses. The Victoria Amateur Turf Club proposes to make substantial alterations to the Caulfield course and intends to link two grandstands.

The cost of that work will be considerable. The proposals of the Victoria Racing Club for improvements to Flemington will also be costly. As cash is not at present readily available, if one wants to spend large sums on development works one must have recourse to borrowing. To do this, a security must be offered. The increase in the tenure of the lease of Flemington racecourse proposed in the Bill, will give the Victoria Racing Club reasonable security to offer to induce people to lend money. It has been said that fewer racecourses

should be maintained in the metropolitan area. However, I point out that it is not desirable to use a racecourse for 52 weeks in the year. It must be realized that more use is made of a course than Saturday afternoon racing. Horses must be trained and educated and tracks prepared. All those things are bound up in the big industry of racing, which contributes materially to the revenue of the Government. I suggest to the Premier that it might be worthwhile reviewing the taxes imposed on racing activities because ultimately the bottom of the barrel is reached. The turnover tax should be examined with the view of ascertaining if its imposition is fair to the racing community. However, to return to the use of a racecourse, I point out that training of horses is carried on every morning in the week except Sundays. Horses are exercised, galloped, schooled over hurdles and steeples, and so on. Each morning any damage to the track has to be repaired. When racing is held in winter months on a waterlogged track extensive damage can be caused. When meetings are conducted, three and four times a week in the winter, such as during the Grand National meetings, the tracks must be given a considerable time to recover from any damage. I suggest that the number of racecourses maintained in the metropolitan area should never be less than four, and that they should not be concentrated in the one area, forcing many patrons to travel long distances in order to enjoy their sport. Representatives of the Government could discuss with the Victoria Racing Club some of the criticisms made by honorable members.

The honorable member for Coburg mentioned demonstrations which occur on racecourses from time to time. Some of the worst of those have taken place at Flemington. I can recall an ugly scene when the horse Cromis, owned by the vice-chairman of the Victoria Racing Club, was narrowly defeated by Sailor's Guide. The Government should induce the Victoria Racing Club to take stock of the inquiries held by stewards into the running of horses. The club should consider making such hearings open to the public. Apparently it does not like

accepting advice and wishes itself to pioneer everything in racing.

Mr. BOLTE.—The last Government did not take such action.

Mr. TODD.—That is a poor excuse. Once the Minister of Public Works was approached on behalf of the City of Port Melbourne with a view to obtaining funds with which to assist unemployed persons, but the request was refused; I do not blame every Minister of Public Works for that. The Government should also suggest to the Victoria Racing Club that it should not delay much longer in installing barrier stalls at Flemington, which are favoured by 99 per cent. of those who attend race meetings. I shall cite the example of one particular horse, Tradfield. It had never been known to be left at the post on courses where starting stalls were in operation, but when it started favourite at Flemington, with thousands of pounds invested on it, it was left at the barrier. It has been rumoured that on one occasion when barrier stalls from Caulfield were tested at Flemington, the ground was watered so that the tests would not be successful and the club would have an excuse to refuse to provide such stalls. When the club asks Parliament for an open cheque, as it is doing on this occasion, it should be asked in return to answer some of the criticisms levelled at it from time to time, and to state what it is prepared to do for the benefit of racing.

One facility in particular which should be investigated with a view to improvement is the betting ring. I do not enter the members' reserve because my friends do not possess that privilege. In that reserve one is not pushed around as are members of the public elsewhere on the course when they endeavour to move in the betting ring to obtain the best possible odds. More space should be provided in the betting rings. The misery of punters struggling in a confined space should not be perpetuated indefinitely. The Victoria Racing Club is a secret body; its stewards do not inform the public of what is going on. The club could learn much from the activities of the Trotting Control Board, whose stewards are frank and have done a remarkably good job. Such questions as

why certain horses finish down the course one day and win the next, and why the vice-chairman's horse is soundly beaten and then just loses in a photo-finish to a champion, should not remain unanswered.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Power to borrow money).

Mr. HOLDEN (Moonee Ponds).—I had intended to speak on the second reading but, unfortunately, was absent from the Chamber when the debate closed. Realizing that the Speaker allowed some latitude in the debate, I trust my remarks, although somewhat general, will not be out of order at this juncture. I support the observations of the honorable members for Footscray, Ballarat North and Flemington concerning the development undertaken by the Victoria Racing Club and the general improvement of the Flemington racecourse to the benefit of the general public. As the honorable member for Flemington suggested, I agree that the land known as the "flat" should be open for public use on other than racing days, especially for school purposes. In my district, the schools at Moonee Ponds West and Ascot Vale possess no facilities for conducting sporting activities within reasonable distance from the school. The playgrounds are confined within four streets, and when main sporting days are to take place the school authorities must approach the Essendon council or the Essendon Football Club and request permission to use a sports ground. Often they experience great difficulty in obtaining permission.

Mr. TODD.—The honorable member could probably obtain the use of sports grounds in the Port Melbourne area.

Mr. HOLDEN.—The schools to which I have referred have gone as far as Coburg in an endeavour to obtain the necessary facilities. A suggestion, with which I agree in principle, was made that the flat at Flemington could be used as a car park. During Show Week, many cars which are parked on streets

and lanes in the vicinity of the show-grounds constitute a public nuisance, cluttering up the streets and damaging nature strips. I trust that some consideration will be given by the Victoria Racing Club and similar bodies to making their grounds available for parking purposes.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I think the Moonee Valley Racing Club allows some schools to use portion of its grounds.

Mr. HOLDEN.—I believe that is so, but still more use could be made of these areas.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—The Moonee Valley course is controlled in a manner different from that at Flemington.

Mr. HOLDEN.—That is so. I trust that the Flemington course will be made available for sporting activities as well as for a car park. An Opposition member suggested that some of the grounds at present used by sporting bodies in various suburbs may be taken over for future industrial and housing development. If I am a member of this House when such an attempt is made, I will fight strenuously to ensure that such land is not alienated in that way, but is retained as a heritage for our children. People who live in crowded inner suburbs must have breathing space and opportunities for playing sport. I know that I shall have the unqualified support of every honorable member in any action that I may take in that regard. I support the clause, and trust that the matters raised during this debate will be taken into consideration.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—This clause will extend the borrowing powers of the Victoria Racing Club, and I presume those extended powers are connected with the new lease that is to be granted. The club has asked for a new term of 50 years, because it considers that it will be in a better position to borrow the money that it requires if it has a long security of tenure. However, I do not think it will be practicable for the club to borrow anything like the amount authorized under present conditions. No doubt the club has a certain sum of money in hand and will not, therefore, seek to borrow the full amount of £750,000. At present the club

will encounter difficulty, as it has no permanent security to offer. The Royal Agricultural Society was similarly placed when it endeavoured to borrow money, and the banks flatly refused to make advances to that organization because it had no security. If the Victoria Racing Club were "wound up" to-morrow, the proceeds from the sale of its assets would be devoted to charity, as would also those of the Melbourne Racing Club in similar circumstances. The proceeds would not go into the pockets of members of the committee of the club, as some people believe.

In view of the difficulty that will be experienced by the Victoria Racing Club in raising the money authorized by the Bill, I ask the Government to seriously consider whether it will guarantee the loan.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The club has not approached the Government in that regard.

Mr. CAIN.—I think the club will eventually be forced to approach the Government. When I was Premier, I guaranteed the Royal Agricultural Society when it was experiencing difficulty in raising money. I suggest that the stand at Flemington will not be built within the next ten years unless the course I advocate is adopted. If I were Premier, I would not have introduced this Bill, but would have allowed the existing lease to continue and would have guaranteed any loan raised by the club. The Government would not be running a risk in so doing, because at least £600,000 a year in revenue is derived from the club. This measure will not help that body in any way. Even the financial standing of the present chairman of the club will not induce people to subscribe to any loan that it floats. Of course, he may be able to induce his friends to invest some money in the loan. I suggest that the Victoria Racing Club is in no better position to borrow money than was the Royal Agricultural Society. The person who occupies the office of president of that body is Mr. T. N. Mitchell, who is an active member. His predecessors included the late

Mr. A. G. Hunter, Mr. C. N. McKay, and the late Sir Charles Merrett, who occupied the office for many years. The society was unable to borrow money because it could offer no security. All the banker-members on the Government side of the house should realize that fact. If a request is made in the terms previously indicated, what does the Government intend to do?

Mr. WHITE (Ballarat North).—I ask the Minister of Lands whether it is definite that the Victoria Racing Club will build a stand for £750,000? Is that the object of conferring upon it extra borrowing powers?

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The club proposes to build a stand which is estimated to cost £750,000.

Mr. WHITE.—It is possible that a practice adopted by the Royal Agricultural Society will be followed. The trotting promoters pay £600 a night for the use of ground, for which the Society pays a peppercorn rental, and £120 a night for cleaning. The Society is building a new stand but the trotting interests will be forced to pay half the cost, and then the Society will charge a higher rent. The people of Victoria should have a voice in the expenditure of money on ground owned by the State and worth £1,000,000. I should like to ask: Who appoints the trustees of this public property?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—The members of the club.

Mr. WHITE.—I understand that it is difficult to become a member of the Victoria Racing Club. The Bill proposes to empower that body to spend £750,000 on public land.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Do you intend to vote against it?

Mr. WHITE.—I seek information, and ask the Minister of Lands to inform members how the club will raise the sum of £750,000 to erect a stand, and whether it will be for extra convenience for club members or will be constructed on the flat for the benefit of the people who make racing pay. It is time the Minister furnished the Committee with more information about the intentions of the Victoria Racing Club

regarding this enormous sum of money that is to be spent on a remarkably valuable piece of ground belonging to the people.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Carlton).—I have been moved by the way in which the conscience of members has been disturbed by the Bill. It is an agonizing spectacle to see Government and other members torn between conflicts relating to the financial attraction of a lucrative source of revenue to the State, loyalty to the Victoria Racing Club, and concern for the jockeys, turf advisers, caterers, bookmakers, punters, and welshers. Although no direct statement to this effect has been made, I assume that some concern is also felt for the horses. Members on both sides of the Chamber have met in consultation with representatives of the Victoria Racing Club, but apparently from the mountain there came forth a mouse.

An amendment to be submitted deals with another part of the Bill and relates to a subject raised by the honorable member for Ballarat North. As members are emotionally disturbed about this question, why should we be asked to vote for the clause? The honorable member for Moonee Ponds stated that his constituents and other persons had been wrongfully deprived of certain amenities, liberties and rights. The honorable member for Footscray indicated that, for the first time, favourable consideration will be given to making available the big flat at Flemington for certain purposes. I do not know whether it will be used for Sunday school picnics.

If there are so many and diverse reservations about the wisdom of trusting this oligarchy with power to raise money, with a lease, and with the provision of amenities for the public, it might be wiser for the Government temporarily to withdraw the Bill and obtain for the honorable member for Ballarat North and the Leader of the Opposition all the information they desire, satisfy the conscience of the honorable member for Moonee Ponds, and eventually develop some method of maintaining a lucrative source of revenue for the State.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 3—

It shall be lawful for the chairman to surrender to Her Majesty the lease of any land demised to him by Her Majesty and for Her Majesty to grant to the chairman in trust for the club a further lease of any land so surrendered for any term of years.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I intend to propose an amendment as an addition to the clause. It will not be submitted with the intention—on my part, at least—that the lease should contain such onerous conditions as would make the efficient operation of the Club impracticable. If the Bill is passed in its present form, the Government will be given what amounts to a blank cheque. Members have not been informed whether it is proposed that the new lease shall be identical with the existing one, or whether certain other conditions will be imposed.

I have in mind particularly the point I stressed in my second-reading speech, namely, the utilization of a large portion of the land at times when it is not required for racing purposes. I mentioned also that no money is being spent on the flat. The reason advanced was that attendances on that section were declining so rapidly that it might soon be closed to the public on race days. If that situation arises, we should ensure that the land is made available for recreational and public usage.

The amendment I propose will safeguard the position, as Parliament will be enabled to consider the terms of any proposed lease and make any necessary amendments to it. If it were thought that the lease contained onerous conditions, they could be removed, and the Club would thereby be given a "fair go." The existing lease gives practically a blank cheque to the Club to use and administer 301 acres of land as it thinks fit, provided that it is used only for racing purposes. I am not in possession of a copy of the existing lease, but from a perusal of it at the Lands Department recently I should think that, except for alterations of names and dates, it is in terms that are identical with those embodied in the preamble to the 1871 Act. It provides, *inter alia*, that the members of the committee shall

hold upon trust the land and maintain it for a public racecourse or ground under and subject to any lawful and reasonable rules and regulations. Section 10 of the Act reads—

The lands by this Act vested in or authorized to be demised to the chairman shall be held by such chairman and his successors in office only for the purpose of being maintained and used as a racecourse.

A witness before the Select Committee on the original Bill pointed out that at that time the committee of the Victoria Racing Club was not granting the use of the land for other purposes. During his evidence, he said—

The committee have invariably refused all sorts of running matches and pigeon matches on the ground, considering it would be a breach of the conditions of the lease, not that it would hurt the ground, but it would be a violation of the lease.

It is possible that later it may be claimed that the section of the Act providing that the course shall be used only for a racecourse prohibits its use for other purposes. I do not profess to pose as a lawyer, but it is possible that some member of the Victoria Racing Club may say, "I do not know why these recreational and sporting bodies should be permitted by our committee to use that land. I will take court action to restrain the committee from giving such permission."

We have the assurance of the secretary of the Victoria Racing Club that the present committee is prepared to afford every reasonable facility to bodies or organizations that may wish to use the land on other than racing days. However, later there may be a change in the personnel of the committee or officers of the Club, and the new members may say, "We do not see why we should be bothered with these people. We will not allow them to use the land for their purposes." If that action were taken there is no provision in the Act or in the conditions of the existing lease that would empower the Government to point out to the Victoria Racing Club that, when the lease was granted, an assurance was given that the land would be made available for public use. I appeal to the Government to give consideration to the amendment I shall

move to this clause. If accepted, it will not be binding in any way, but it will permit members of Parliament to consider any new lease and ascertain whether it contains necessary safeguards to ensure that the Victoria Racing Club, during the tenure of its lease, honours the assurances that it has given verbally. I move—

That the following sub-clauses be added to clause 3:—

“() Such further lease shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament within fourteen days after the execution thereof if Parliament is then sitting, and if Parliament is not then sitting then within fourteen days after the next meeting of Parliament.

() If within thirty days after the said lease has been laid before both Houses of Parliament either of such Houses passes a resolution disallowing the lease such lease shall thereupon cease to have effect.”

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL (Minister of Lands).—The Government is not prepared to accept the amendment, as it considers it to be unnecessary. I undertake that, before the lease is signed, it will be available for inspection by any member, and, if he considers it does not contain sufficient safeguards, it will be competent for him to discuss the matter in the House.

Mr. CLAREY.—How could that be done if the lease were not tabled?

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The matter may be discussed on a motion for the adjournment of the House, and in other ways. During the second-reading debate, the honorable member for Ballarat sought certain information, but I do not think it is necessary for me to reply to his questions, as I am sure he knows the answers. The Leader of the Opposition has asked whether the Government has decided to guarantee a loan to the Victoria Racing Club. If a request is made, it will be considered.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (**Mr. Cochrane**).—I ask the Minister to confine his remarks to the amendment. The clause may be discussed when the amendment is disposed of.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—The purpose of the amendment is to make it mandatory on future committees to pursue

the same course that the present committee has indicated it will follow. I cannot envisage any difficulty in including such a provision in the lease.

Mr. CAIN.—Will the Club make the land available to interested councils?

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—During their speeches, members of the Opposition have indicated that the committee of the Victoria Racing Club has intimated to some councils that the land is available for their purposes. When a lease is drawn, a clause may be inserted to safeguard the position for the next 65 years, so that any future committee will be unable to reverse the decision of the present committee. That proposal will solve the difficulty, and will have the effect of making the area available to local sporting organizations on days other than race days.

Mr. HOLLAND (Flemington).—I was gratified when the Minister of Lands conceded that the Opposition had advanced several useful suggestions during the second-reading debate but, judging from his attitude toward this amendment, the Government intends to disregard the Opposition's representations. Apparently the Victoria Racing Club is prepared to go only a short distance towards meeting the wishes of Opposition members. It is all very well for the Minister of Lands to assert that a suggestion will be made to that body to the effect that the proposed lease should contain certain provisions but, if the matter is left to the Club for determination, it might well say, in effect, “We shall make available a small part of the flat or the tan track, but, since we may need the rest of the land for our own use it cannot be released for public purposes.” In those circumstances, the only course of action open to the Government would be to resume the land and to pay compensation. I cannot accept the Minister's assurance that the Victoria Racing Club will bring forth anything that will be satisfactory. I emphasize that this Bill relates to valuable public property, and all aspects should be examined carefully. It is obvious that expert advice has not been sought by the Government and that Opposition members have

wasted their time in advancing suggestions because the Government has no intention of heeding them.

The Committee divided on Mr. Clarey's amendment (Mr. Cochrane in the chair)—

Ayes	15
Noes	30
	—

Majority against the amendment .. 15

AYES.

Mr. Cain	Mr. Holland
Mr. Clarey	Mr. Mutton
Mr. Connell	Mr. Shepherd
Mr. Crick	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Doube	Mr. Todd.
Mr. Drakeford	<i>Tellers:</i>
Mr. Fennessy	Mr. Lovegrove
Mr. Floyd	Mr. Schintler.

NOES.

Mr. Balfour	Mr. Porter
Mr. Bloomfield	Mr. Rafferty
Mr. Bolte	Mr. Reid
Mr. Christie	Mr. Rossiter
Mr. Cook	Mr. Rylah
Mr. Dunstan	Mr. Snider
Mr. Fraser	Mr. Suggett
Mr. Gainey	Mr. Tanner
Mr. Holden	Mr. Taylor
Sir Herbert Hyland	Mr. Turnbull
Mr. Kane	(<i>Kara Kara</i>)
Sir Albert Lind	Mr. Wilcox
Mr. MacDonald	Mr. Wiltshire.
(<i>Burwood</i>)	<i>Tellers:</i>
Sir Thomas Maltby	Mr. Loxton
Mr. Meagher	Mr. Stanistreet.
Mr. Petty	

PAIRS.

Mr. Macdonald	Mr. Mibus
(<i>Geelong West</i>)	
Mr. Ring	Mr. Gibbs
Mr. Ruthven	Mr. Guye
Mr. Scully	Mr. Manson
Mr. Stoneham	Mr. Barclay
Mr. Towers	Sir George Knox
Mr. Turnbull	Mr. Stirling
(<i>Brunswick West</i>)	

The clause was agreed to.

The Bill was reported to the House without amendment.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL (Minister of Lands).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a third time.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I understand it was the intention of the Minister to reply to questions asked by Opposition members, but, under Standing Orders, he was precluded from doing so. I should like to ask if, at this stage, the honorable gentleman will furnish the information desired.

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL (Minister of Lands).—Several of the matters raised by Opposition members in relation to the administration of the Victoria Racing Club are domestic in character inasmuch as they affect the Club rather than this Government.

Mr. CAIN.—Will the Minister arrange a meeting between municipalities in the region of the Flemington racecourse and representatives of the Victoria Racing Club, with a view to discussing the future use of the flat on days other than race days?

Mr. K. H. TURNBULL.—I shall be pleased to do that.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE—POLICE PENSIONS ACTS: ANOMALIES.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next at half past Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. CAIN (Leader of the Opposition).—I should like to ask the Premier what business the Government intends to proceed with on Tuesday next.

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—When the House meets on Tuesday, the Government is anxious that the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Bill should take precedence. It is not expected that the debate on this measure will be concluded on Tuesday but we are anxious to have it commenced. We will then deal with Supply.

Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).—I should like a direction from you, Mr. Speaker, as to whether, at this stage, I may raise the question of anomalies in the Acts relating to police pensions.

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—That would be in order.

Mr. FLOYD.—Anomalies sometimes arise when two separate Acts dealing with one subject come into operation.

This occurred in connexion with Act No. 5897, passed when the previous Government was in office, and Act No. 5673, passed recently by this Parliament. Both measures concern police pensioners of whom there are 750. The intention of the legislature was to increase pensions by 16½ per cent., but unfortunately, only a small number of pensioners benefited to that extent. For example, those on a pension of £7 a week received an increase of only 10s. and, because the Government allowed the new Act to apply to those retiring during the interval between the proclamation of the two Acts, those men who were receiving £12 a week under the old Act are entitled to no increase whatsoever under the new legislation, the relevant reason being that the increase of 16½ per cent. had to be ratified by this Government.

I understand that the measure brought in by the previous Government was for a trial period and had to be confirmed. Since the passing of the second amending Act, the increase of 16½ per cent. has been granted to those persons who retired on a pension of £20, but those who retired on a pension of £12 a week did not receive the same consideration. My remarks may not have been quite clear, but as the relevant details will be recorded in *Hansard*, the Chief Secretary will be able to investigate the position.

Another aspect is that it was stated that widows of members of the Force were to be granted an increase of 25 per cent. in their pensions. Although that has proved to be true in some cases, because of maximum levels set by the most recent Act, certain pensioners have been denied that benefit. So far as I can gather from information furnished to me, approximately 305 pensioners received no benefit at all from the Government's action, and I hope that the Chief Secretary will examine the position with the view of rectifying any anomalies that may have been created.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—Through the good offices of the honorable member for Elsternwick, the anomalies that may have been caused by the legislation referred to were discussed

with me about two hours ago when I interviewed two officers from the Retired Policemen's Association. As has the honorable member for Williamstown, I encountered some difficulty in understanding just what members of that organization thought was the position, I asked them to place before me a full statement. I understand they intend to ask their solicitors to assist in the preparation of that statement and, when it is furnished, it will be examined fully. I point out, however, that when the Premier was explaining the amending legislation that was brought down last year, he warned retired public servants that some pensioners would derive no benefit from any increase granted by the State of Victoria, because the Commonwealth Social Services Department would reduce its contribution accordingly. That real problem confronts persons who are on low rates of pension. I do not want anybody to construe my observations as meaning that relief will necessarily be extended to pensioners who believe they are suffering because of anomalies in the legislation, but I shall certainly examine the information that is placed before me in an endeavour to clear up any inconsistencies that might exist.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 5.13 p.m. until Tuesday, May 15.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, May 15, 1956.

The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Clifden Eager) took the chair at 5 p.m., and read the prayer.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. A. G. WARNER (Minister of Transport), was read a first time.