

development of those districts warrants such course. No such transfers are, however, contemplated in respect of irrigation and water supply districts as it is intended that the whole of the capital costs of these districts shall be borne by the State as in the past. The clauses of the Bill are, generally speaking, machinery provisions authorizing the expenditure itemized in the schedule. Approval of the Bill is sought so that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the other authorities referred to in various items in the Bill may be authorized to proceed with works under their control within the limits of the Bill and to the extent of loan moneys made available. It may interest honorable members to learn that with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board and the many waterworks trusts, river improvement trusts and sewerage authorities, no fewer than 175 separate authorities are concerned with this important measure.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Thursday, November 21.

### ADJOURNMENT.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—  
I move—

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

The motion was agreed to.

*The House adjourned at 4.55 p.m.  
until Tuesday, November 19.*

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, November 19, 1957.*

The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Clifden Eager) took the chair at 4.57 p.m., and read the prayer.

### ACTS INTERPRETATION (SERVICE BY POST) BILL.

The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Clifden Eager) announced that he had received a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments calling attention to a clerical error in this Bill.

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

That the error be corrected by omitting the word "is" after the word "by-law" in sub-clause (2) of clause 2.

The motion was agreed to.

It was ordered that the report of the Clerk of the Parliaments be transmitted to the Assembly.

### ESTATE AGENTS (AMENDMENT) 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.

### FORESTS (MOUNT BULLER LEASE) 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.

### RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

**MILDURA EXPRESS: PASSENGERS CARRIED:  
REVENUE: AIR AND ROAD SERVICES.**

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL** (North-Western Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

(a) How many passengers were carried "up" and "down," respectively, by the Mildura Express during each of the months September, October, and November in the years 1955, 1956, and 1957?

(b) What were the numbers of passengers carried for the same months and years by the Friday and Sunday trains?

(c) What was the revenue from passenger fares for the same months and years?

(d) Can the Minister supply any information as to the number of passengers carried by air and road for the same months and years?

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—The answers to this question cover several sheets of foolscap, including tabulated matter. I therefore ask that they be incorporated in *Hansard* without requiring to be read.

**The PRESIDENT** (Sir Clifden Eager).—I take it that the House is agreeable to that course.

The answers were as follows:—

(a) and (b) In reply to the above questions, the Commissioners have to report that particulars of the passenger traffic carried on the "up" and "down" express trains between Mildura and Melbourne during the months of September, October and November, 1955, 1956 and 1957 are shown on Appendix "A."

For the purposes of comparison with November of the current year, the figures quoted in respect of November, 1955 and 1956 in each instance represent only the first two weeks of that month.

As indicated, the totals shown on the statement relate to passenger tallies on departure from Melbourne and arrival at Mildura respectively and vice versa and it will be appreciated that a considerable number of passengers alighted or entrained at intermediate stations of which records are not available.

(c) It is understood that through traffic between Melbourne and Mildura is the subject of the inquiry and this information is shown in Appendix "B."

(d) The figures set out hereunder have been obtained from Pioneer Express Services and the Department of Civil Aviation respectively.

There is of course no direct road service between Melbourne to Mildura. As a result of relevant section 92 decisions a road service between Melbourne and Buronga, New South Wales (immediately across the border from Mildura) commenced in December, 1955. The service catered almost entirely for Mildura traffic, but has been held by the courts to be a legal interstate service as

operated. The service does not require to be licensed or submit any records of its operations but the company has furnished the following figures:—

ROAD SERVICE—

1955—Service did not commence to operate until December.

|                    |       |      |      |
|--------------------|-------|------|------|
|                    | Sept. | Oct. | Nov. |
| 1956—Ex Buronga .. | 423   | 249  | 245  |
| Ex Melbourne ..    | 444   | 309  | 316  |

Frequency—(September) 9 trips per week in each direction.

(October–November) 7 trips per week in each direction.

|                    |       |      |                              |
|--------------------|-------|------|------------------------------|
|                    | Sept. | Oct. | Nov.                         |
| 1957—Ex Buronga .. | 381   | 219  | (Figures not yet available). |
| Ex Melbourne ..    | 266   | 224  |                              |

Frequency—(4 trips per week in each direction).

The reduction in frequency from 7 trips to 4 trips occurred in the week commencing February 8, 1957.

Air Service:—(Operated as part of Melbourne–Mildura–Broken Hill route).

|                         |       |                          |      |
|-------------------------|-------|--------------------------|------|
|                         | Sept. | Oct.                     | Nov. |
| 1955 Melbourne–Mildura: | 556   | 540                      | 419  |
| Mildura–Melbourne:      | 696   | 606                      | 470  |
| 1956 Melbourne–Mildura: | 408   | 398                      | 336  |
| Mildura–Melbourne:      | 510   | 412                      | 407  |
| 1957 Melbourne–Mildura: | 515   | (Figures not available). |      |
| Mildura–Melbourne:      | 585   | (Figures not available). |      |

APPENDIX "A."

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING NUMBER OF PASSENGERS CONVEYED ON MILDURA EXPRESS TRAINS FOR SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, AND FIRST TWO WEEKS OF NOVEMBER, 1955, 1956, 1957.

Melbourne–Mildura.

| Section.            | 1955. |       |       | 1956. |       |       | 1957. |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                     | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov.  | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov.  | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov.  |
| Depart Melbourne .. | 4,200 | 3,612 | 1,426 | 3,377 | 2,869 | 1,109 | 3,162 | 2,795 | 1,016 |
| Arrive Mildura ..   | 1,987 | 1,672 | 634   | 1,417 | 1,422 | 451   | 1,718 | 1,821 | 580   |

Mildura–Melbourne.

| Section.            | 1955. |       |       | 1956. |       |      | 1957. |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
|                     | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov.  | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov. | Sept. | Oct.  | Nov.  |
| Depart Mildura ..   | 2,183 | 1,836 | 643   | 1,535 | 1,345 | 388  | 1,862 | 1,782 | 511   |
| Arrive Melbourne .. | 4,062 | 3,144 | 1,165 | 3,143 | 2,480 | 800  | 3,304 | 2,948 | 1,009 |

## APPENDIX "A."—continued.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT SHOWING NUMBER OF PASSENGERS CONVEYED ON MILDURA EXPRESS TRAINS ON FRIDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

*Melbourne-Mildura.*

| Section.            | 1955. |       |      | 1956. |       |      | 1957. |       |      |
|---------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
|                     | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. |
| Depart Melbourne .. | 2,413 | 2,033 | 784  | 1,880 | 1,417 | 723  | 1,782 | 1,565 | 794  |
| Arrive Mildura ..   | 1,062 | 945   | 333  | 819   | 671   | 295  | 940   | 964   | 453  |

*Mildura-Melbourne.*

| Section.            | 1955. |       |      | 1956. |       |      | 1957. |       |      |
|---------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
|                     | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. | Sep.  | Oct.  | Nov. |
| Depart Mildura ..   | 1,124 | 808   | 318  | 801   | 576   | 219  | 1,062 | 847   | 362  |
| Arrive Melbourne .. | 2,333 | 1,778 | 576  | 1,818 | 1,103 | 426  | 1,903 | 1,444 | 702  |

## APPENDIX "B."

*Spencer-street-Mildura.*

|             | 1955.  |        |        | 1956.  |        |        | 1957.  |        |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|             | Sep.   | Oct.   | Nov.   | Sep.   | Oct.   | Nov.   | Sep.   | Oct.   |
| Journeys .. | 1,654  | 911    | 968    | 794    | 990    | 839    | 1,218  | 1,120  |
| Revenue ..  | £6,396 | £3,138 | £3,488 | £2,939 | £3,603 | £2,984 | £3,978 | £3,586 |

*Mildura-Spencer-street.*

|             | 1955.  |        |        | 1956.  |        |        | 1957.  |        |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|             | Sep.   | Oct.   | Nov.   | Sep.   | Oct.   | Nov.   | Sep.   | Oct.   |
| Journeys .. | 1,505  | 1,865  | 847    | 781    | 1,536  | 1,339  | 1,078  | 1,073  |
| Revenue ..  | £3,575 | £3,925 | £3,360 | £2,795 | £3,066 | £3,653 | £3,112 | £3,353 |

## HOUSING COMMISSION.

MAIDSTONE AND FOOTSCRAY ESTATES:  
EVICTIONS.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister of Transport—

What was the number of evictions from Housing Commission homes in the Maidstone and Footscray area for the years 1955-56 and 1956-57, respectively?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER (Minister of Transport).—The answer is that there were five evictions in each of the two years.

SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION  
COMMITTEE.

## SUPREME COURT OFFICE FEES.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE (North-Eastern Province) presented a report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee on a regulation amending the Supreme Court office fees.

It was ordered that the report be laid on the table.

## REVENUE DEFICIT FUNDING BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 13) on the motion of Sir Arthur Warner (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY** (Melbourne North Province).—This is one of those measures that are so dear to the heart of the Government. It has become an annual event to fund a deficit—at hire-purchase rates of interest. If the Government is distinguished for one thing more than another it is that it is the only Ministry in the history of Victoria that has had three record State deficits. I have before me the relevant Budget figures since the year 1902. I shall not read them all, but they emphasize that the present Government easily holds the record for incurring deficits; no other Government has come within a mile of it. The deficit for the financial year 1955-56 was about £3,245,000. In the preceding year—1954-55—there was a surplus of £1,300,000.

**An HONORABLE MEMBER.**—What Government was in office then?

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—That was the Cain Administration, about which Mr. Bolte and his Government of businessmen had the temerity in another place to move in a want-of-confidence motion—

That as the Government accepts direction from sources which in the opinion of this House endanger the security of the country and the welfare of the State . . .

But from whom does this present Government take its orders? From pawnbrokers, hire-purchase money lenders, the City Development Association, the Victoria Racing Club and the appointees of the Melbourne City Council.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—And, according to your paper—the *Guardian*—from me also.

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—How does this delightful procedure work? It is a kind of jack-pot totalizator. Under the jack-pot tote, many people put in and one person takes all. The procedure under this Bill is a compulsory

jack-pot tote; there is no option about it. It is not a question of whether one goes to the races or stays at home. Every citizen is compulsorily levied, and the Treasurer takes all. There is another subtle difference in that the jack-pot tote is to be a weekly event; the action of this Government in bringing down a Revenue Deficit Funding Bill is an annual event. From time to time we hear from the present Government that never again should the Socialists be permitted on the Treasury bench. We often hear this remark: "Leave it to the Government of businessmen to protect Victoria." But what is the result of that procedure? This year the funding of the deficit is costing about half a million pounds. As soon as the Treasurer receives loan funds they disappear with the speed of the Sputniks. Of course, the money could be very well used on housing, hospitals, education and for other purposes. But this Government prefers to send it off at Shylock rates of interest.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—Who is the Shylock in this particular case?

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—My reply to the honorable gentlemen is: "You people are the Shylocks and members of the community are the sufferers. They are the people who have to pay the Shylock rates of interest under your system of finance." But let us be reasonable. Perhaps when Mr. Bolte came to office, he did not have much assistance from his Cabinet. Its members were young in their task; none of them had expected to get there. One could pardon a slip or two. We could all understand that. When the first deficit was sustained, Mr. Bolte said, in effect, "Perhaps it was a big slip, amounting to about £3,500,000; but let us have a little time. After all, Rome was not built in a day." Then what happened in the next year? The deficit amounted to £4,300,000.

I read the delightful speech by Mr. Bolte when he submitted the Budget which broke Victoria and sent it down the drain. Then in the following financial year he asked for the funding of a deficit of £3,500,000. So we can say that as an outcome of the administration

of this Government—which went into office to save the Victorian community, whose health and welfare, apparently, were being endangered—we are £10,000,000 worse off; and presumably, if the Government is returned to office for a further term, the deficits will go up and up and up. The Government consists of businessmen, but their methods are strange. Perhaps we ought to reconsider our ideas of these strange businessmen.

**The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.**—Hear, hear!

**The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.**—Being assured now of the support of Mr. Gawith, I suppose there is little more for me to say. I have never found him very easy to convert to my ideas, but I am sure he must carry a lot of weight in the counsels of the Government party, and deservedly so! This Government has been a tragedy to Victoria. The Cain Government left the State in a prosperous condition as a result of the old-fashioned virtues of good husbandry and prudent management. In the space of two years, this Government of businessmen has been able to upset all that and has put the position of Victoria—a State which over the years has been considered a model for prudent administration—in a condition worse than that of any other Australian State. From being the best-managed Australian State, Victoria has receded to the position of being the worst-managed State. Let the Premier and his Ministers tell that fact to the people of Victoria during the election campaign next year.

**The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE** (North-Eastern Province).—This is the second occasion since the Government came to power that it has been necessary to pass a deficit funding measure. At some time, over the years, we all realize the State must live beyond its annual revenue to meet its needs during that period. However, as Mr. Galbally pointed out, in three years, deficits totalling about £11,000,000 will have been incurred, and it seems that a time will come when over-spending must cease. The funding of deficits is a costly procedure, which imposes an interest liability at the rate of about 9 per cent. per annum for a period of seventeen years.

From time to time, in former years, various Governments have incurred small deficits because of changing economic circumstances but, during the last two or three years, there has been a period of relative economic stability. Presumably, the Government regards as an excuse for incurring huge deficits the argument that certain developmental works are urgently necessary. There may be some justification for that approach. I know that each and every member of this Chamber at some time or other seeks his pound of flesh from the responsible Minister with respect to a developmental project in his province. The point that disturbs me is whether the State can afford to continue to over-spend at the rate of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000 annually. It must be borne in mind that, if a deficit of £3,500,000 is budgeted for, the deficiency will probably reach £4,500,000 by the end of the financial period.

If the Government asserts that developmental works within the State are sufficiently urgent to justify substantial deficits at this time, the position must be accepted, but I am seriously considering whether there is a real need to over-spend at the present rate, which results in an increasing accumulated deficit. Any prudent businessman would adjust his expenditure to his anticipated revenue. Every year the Premier currently in office visits Canberra and, after indulging in much wishful thinking, submits to the Loan Council particulars of his State's financial needs. Upon returning, he discovers that expenditure of many Departments must be pruned and that direct and indirect taxes must be levied to obtain money to meet commitments. A decision must be made whether the present policy of funding deficits at an interest rate of 9 per cent. per annum for a period of seventeen years will be continued. If that policy is persisted in, some Government in the future will find that it will derive very little revenue from loan funds. The Government should be frank about the State's financial position and earnestly consider proper means of meeting its obligations.

Any proposal to increase taxes is regarded with disfavour, but I am wondering whether, in the best interests of the State in the future, the imposition of a measure of taxation would not be preferable to funding deficits at a high rate of interest over a considerable number of years. If effective action is not taken, the State will be confronted with serious financial difficulties, possibly in times when economic conditions are not as bountiful as they are to-day. The Government should strive to meet its financial needs out of each year's funds. The State cannot continue to operate at a loss. If the Leader of the Government in this House were to attempt to conduct his organization in that fashion, shareholders would soon want to know what was going on. The Government is adopting very poor business methods to finance the affairs of State. Over the years, I have discovered that to have a good name is a much better security than to have many tangible assets. Victoria should earn for itself the reputation of stability of management in the affairs of State, and it is high time that that aspect was seriously considered. I warn the Government that, if the present procedure of funding deficits is continued, a day of reckoning will come and the result will be to the detriment of the State as a whole. We must be prepared to make sacrifices, as other countries have done, so as to avoid mortgaging the future by the funding of successive deficits out of loan funds.

**The Hon. J. A. LITTLE** (Melbourne North Province).—Every loyal Victorian must view this measure with considerable concern. As Mr. Swinburne correctly stated, it is impracticable to continue indefinitely the funding of State deficits in the manner adopted by the Government. Some rather ingenious suggestions have been advanced to obviate that procedure. Mr. Swinburne mentioned the levying of taxation. In my view, the deficiency in State accounts is not due to the expenditure incurred as a result of embarking on developmental works. The State could well afford to continue at the present rate of development without budgeting for a deficit. Mr. Galbally adverted to the

last occasion when Victoria's accounts showed a surplus. If the true reason for the more recent deficiencies in State finances is sought, it will be discovered that the railways are mainly responsible. The Hon. P. L. Coleman, who was Minister of Transport in a Cain Administration, stated that Victoria was not losing money on the railways at that particular time, and that the transport industries of this State were in a stable position for the first time in many years. Mr. Coleman said also that he was able to paint a very promising picture of the Victorian transport industry, because he was then obtaining complete co-operation from the unions, from the management and from the employees.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—Yet, the Government of which he was a member increased freights and fares.

**The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.**—I am citing reasons stated by Mr. Coleman for the stability that then obtained in the transport industry. His views were supported publicly by Mr. Galbally, who stated that efficiency had been attained in an industry that had previously been conducted inefficiently because of lack of co-operation by the Communist-controlled railways union. The leaders of that organization had been deposed from office by the organization of the Australian Labour party, under the leadership of Mr. Jim Neill. As is well known, Communist interests, wherever possible, dominate trade unions, for political purposes. Honorable members need not take only my word for that; they may rely upon the assertions of those who are most likely to know, namely, the leaders of the trade union movement in this State. Such statements have been made by Mr. Albert Monk, and similar pronouncements were made by the late John Cain. I have heard even Mr. Galbally assert that the underlying reason for the deficiency in State accounts is the lack of co-operation by unions in the railway and tramway industries when they were under Communist control.

The Communist control of the railway and tramway unions is right back in the saddle, and the position has changed completely from that which

obtained when Mr. Coleman was Minister of Transport. Mr. Galbally attributes Victoria's present financial situation to the fact that the Cain Labour Government was defeated. He may be right because it was the late Mr. Cain himself who dismissed Mr. Coleman from office and, as a result, the railway industry was placed in a most unfavourable position. It should be noted, however, that Mr. Cain had to abdicate his Government to get rid of Mr. Coleman, who refused to resign from office. The Cain Administration, which was responsible for the last surplus recorded in Victoria, was not dismissed because of instructions received from sources that were endangering the security of the State, as was alleged by Dr. Evatt; it was abdicated by Mr. Cain himself, who handed in his commission and formed an entirely new Government. The new régime was unacceptable to the majority of members of Parliament, who decreed that it should face its masters—the people of the State—and, as a result, the present Administration assumed office.

I regret the return of this Government. Over the last few years I have continually opposed the policy enunciated by the Liberal and Country party on basic principles. However, I do not blame this Administration for the deficits in the railway industry, although I would do so if I were thoroughly convinced that its activities were responsible for the unsatisfactory financial position. During the debate in this House on the Masonite corporation Bill, the Government, in line with Labour policy, endeavoured to direct business through the railways of this State, but it was defeated by the Evatt Labour party and the Country party. The Government was endeavouring to implement a policy identical with that adopted by Mr. Coleman, under whose administration the Victorian railways recorded a surplus. Unfortunately, control of the railways and other important industries in this State has fallen into the hands of the Communist party, and in those particular industries there has been a deliberate policy to sabotage the welfare of this State. It is

the duty of all members of the community to assist the Government to reverse the situation in the trade unions concerned. Members of my party, who seek decent, democratic control of all unions, have fought towards that end.

I do not agree with Mr. Galbally that Victoria will continue to be the worst-managed State in the Commonwealth. I remind him that charges of the type that were responsible for the defeat in Victoria of the last Government that recorded a surplus were levelled also at the Queensland Labour party Government, and, as a result, that Administration was smashed. The Queensland Labour Government did not abdicate; it was defeated on the floor of the House and it went out of office. In Queensland, where the Government of the day reflects the political ideologies of the Government of this State, the same concerted attacks to which I have referred were made against decent, democratic, trade union leadership. As has happened here, union after union will revert to Communist control because those people, who are sufficiently interested in the well being of the workers to sacrifice their own personal comfort and much of their own private time to fight the issue at financial loss to themselves, are being placed at a tremendous disadvantage by having smears and slurs cast at them to the effect that they are controlled by some nebulous, mythical, outside influence that was not known in the Victorian Labour movement. It was certainly not known when Mr. Coleman was Minister of Transport. Of him Mr. Galbally said, "Do not ask me to stab my friend, Les Coleman, in the back." I let him answer for his own actions.

When considering the deficit of this State, honorable members should remember that about three years ago, when a great political force was split asunder by a disgraceful charge that has not yet been proven, they were warned that the Communist party would take control of union after union. We, who had the privilege of being in the trade union movement—we were not High Court Judges or wealthy solicitors—knew from personal experience what

would happen to the trade union movement immediately the only successful force that had ever opposed the Communist party in the last twenty years was sabotaged. A great tribute should be paid to the energy and courage of the members who have opposed the Communist régime. Despite the concerted and co-operative action, in trade union ballots, by the Communist party and the Evatt Labour party, the groupers "went down" by only a handful of votes in both the Australian Railways Union and Waterside Workers Federation elections. We may expect an improvement in the finances of the railways when the Australian Railways Union is again controlled by decent, sensible persons, who work in the interests of the workers and the people of the State. I regret that this House should be considering another deficit, and hope that the Government will do everything possible to improve the situation.

**The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD** (South-Eastern Province).—I propose to discuss the deficit. Nobody likes a deficit, and it is not easy to defend, as a method of finance, the procedure of budgeting for a deficit. Indeed, as Mr. Swinburne pointed out, that practice cannot be continued indefinitely because an accumulation of deficits soon catches up with a Government. It is of no use our "having a bit of fun," as Mr. Galbally does—he is always entertaining—unless we are willing to accept one of the two methods by which a deficit may be overcome, namely, either to spend less or to raise more. I do not think many people would support the suggestion that the Government should spend less and, if they did so as a general principle, they would not be prepared to stipulate in which particular field expenditure should be curtailed—where certain schools should not be built or specific roads should not be constructed. We believe that community services should not be restricted, but rather extended, and that policy would be adopted if additional finance were available. The Labour party no doubt agrees with this policy, and consequently it is useless to pursue further the method of bridging a deficit by reducing expenditure.

Obviously, therefore, the only solution is that of raising more money, but, unfortunately, the two flexible methods of taxation—sales tax and income tax—are closed to State Governments. The only avenues of taxation which are available to the State Government are comparatively inflexible, and they have reached the point of diminishing returns. For example, if probate duties were increased, people with considerable estates would seek legal residence elsewhere. Even if other avenues of taxation were open to Victoria, I doubt whether they should be exploited, because already Victoria is paying much more in taxation than is any other State. Unfortunately, the tax paid is not being used for the benefit of community services—our hospitals, schools, and so on—but to assist other States, less provident, or with greater political influence at Canberra.

Statistics in my possession indicate that 54 per cent. of Victoria's total non-business budget revenue is provided by the Commonwealth Government. In other words, Victoria raises 46 per cent. of its revenue, as opposed to the 54 per cent. derived from the Commonwealth. New South Wales derives 60.5 per cent. of its revenue from the Commonwealth and the figures for the other States are as follows:—Queensland, 58.6 per cent.; South Australia, 56.3 per cent.; Western Australia, 68.6 per cent.; and Tasmania, 56.2 per cent. Victoria contributes by far the highest amount of any State. The answer to our budgetary deficit is not to spend less, or to tax more, but to try unremittingly to obtain a rearrangement of the financial relationships between the State and Commonwealth Governments. Before the last world war, the Commonwealth spent 42 per cent. of the total governmental expenditure, and the remaining 58 per cent. was expended by the States.

To-day, the position is that the Commonwealth spends 61 per cent. and the States combined expend only 39 per cent. Those figures are calculated after the Commonwealth has made the reimbursements to the States under the uniform tax formula. So that the dire

consequences to Victoria of this change of taxing practice may be clear in the minds of honorable members, I propose to discuss them separately under these four headings: Moneys raised by the Commonwealth and spent by it; revenue raised by the Commonwealth and handed back to the States, under the uniform tax formula, free of conditions; revenue raised by the Commonwealth and handed back to the States for a specific purpose, or with specific conditions attached as to how and where it shall be spent; and loan money.

In regard to the first item, Commonwealth expenditure is 61 per cent. of the total expenditure by all Governments in Australia and amounts to £990,000,000 annually. This money is spent on national projects such as defence, foreign affairs, social services and capital works, regardless of State boundaries and of the origin of the money. We accept the view that in regard to such matters a national outlook must be adopted, but it should be noted that as Victoria is the richest State it makes by far the biggest contribution to this source. The best example of that is in regard to social services, which cost £244,000,000 a year. Of that sum, Victorian residents contribute about 31 per cent, or £76,000,000. However, Victorian age and other pensioners receive back £61,000,000, which is less than *pro rata* to the population. Therefore, Victorians contribute each year £15,000,000 towards the social welfare of residents of the other States.

Much the same story applies to the remainder of Commonwealth expenditure, which amounts to £746,000,000 annually. Of that sum, Victorians pay in more than *pro rata* to the population, but do not receive back any more than *pro rata*—probably a little less. The difference is in the vicinity of £45,000,000. I do not complain about that situation because the money is spent on national projects and is accepted as such. However, that fact should be noted by those who use the catch cry that Victoria's attitude in contesting the uniform tax legislation is parochial or what we must think as Australians. We do think as Australians, and we contribute

large sums which are spent in other States and which have nothing to do with State Budgets.

The formula used for reimbursement of money to the States is a more familiar item. The position in that regard is that Victorians pay in by far the highest amount per head, and the money received back by this State as reimbursements by the Commonwealth is based on a population formula, which is modified to some extent against Victoria, according to the density of population and the number of children in a State. Members are aware that Victoria is the most densely populated Australian State. Victoria does not get a quick enough credit for its heavy population increase and for its migrant intake, because one year elapses before a migrant is included in the demographic returns and another year before he is considered under the formula.

The amounts which each of the States paid in and received back per head of population for the year 1956-57 are as follows:—Victoria, £21 15s. paid in and £18 18s. received back; South Australia, £19 12s. paid in and £20 1s. received back; Western Australia, £20 12s. paid in and £21 15s. received back; Tasmania, £14 5s. paid in and £20 8s. received back; Queensland, £14 8s. paid in and £21 10s. received back; and New South Wales, £20 6s. paid in and £19 13s. received back. Those figures indicate that Victoria contributes the most per head and is reimbursed the least. Accordingly, each year this State loses not less than £6,000,000 or more than £11,000,000. That position has obtained for many years. Indeed, the figures are even worse for the preceding ten years. Until recently, Victoria received reimbursements not on a population basis but under a different formula. Victorian Governments, having been thrifty in the past, have been condemned to poverty for at least the last ten years, despite the fact that during that time adjustments of the formula have improved the position. However, owing to the lag in the demographic returns and the density of population, Victoria still receives less per head than any other State in Australia.

The position in regard to other reimbursements is just as bad. I shall cite the figures in regard to petrol tax. The amount which the Commonwealth Government collects from this source is £48,000,000, of which it keeps £17,000,000 for its own purposes and returns £31,000,000 to the States for roads. Victorians contribute £15,000,000 annually towards this total of £48,000,000 and this State receives back £5,400,000, or 17 per cent.—a loss of nearly £10,000,000 a year. The net result is that Victoria receives £2 per head from this money for road construction and similar works, whereas Western Australia receives £9 per head. From its own revenue, Victoria contributes 82 per cent. of the cost of maintaining our roads, the other 18 per cent. being financed from petrol tax reimbursements. The relevant figures for the other States are: South Australia, 70 per cent. and 30 per cent.; Tasmania, 69 per cent. and 31 per cent.; Queensland, 76 per cent. and 24 per cent.; New South Wales, 77 per cent. and 23 per cent.; Western Australia, 35 per cent. and 65 per cent. We do not seem to do very well anywhere.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—We are on the wrong end all the time.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—That is so. The Commonwealth contributes £1,500,000 towards the upkeep of Victorian hospitals and the total amount distributed to all States is £6,300,000. Of this total, Victorians pay in 31 per cent. or £2,000,000, and consequently this State loses £500,000 annually. That is the story of Commonwealth aids to Victoria, if they can be called aids. We would be much better off without them.

In regard to loan moneys, the position is even crazier and Victoria suffers from two disabilities. First, it contributes much more to the loan pool than it gets out of it. Indeed, over the last six years Victoria has received £317,000,000 from this source. Assuming that Victorians contribute to loans in about the same proportion as they contribute to income tax, then they have put into the pool approximately £365,000,000 in that time. Thus they have raised about £50,000,000 more

than their own loan programme, which sum has been used for public works in other States. The second disability is that Victoria is forced to pay interest to the Commonwealth on loans made available by the Commonwealth, in support of the loan programme, out of taxation raised in this State. It is difficult to understand this position, and almost impossible to believe what happens. We pay interest on our own money. It is quite clear from the figures I have cited that Victorians have not failed to contribute their share to the loan market. In fact, they have over-subscribed to the extent of £50,000,000 in the last six years. The Commonwealth has priority in regard to taxation.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—It has not priority now.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—It did have in the past. As a result of the Commonwealth Government lending back to Victoria money which was taken from the taxpayers in this State, this State has acquired a debt to the Commonwealth of £120,000,000, on which sum interest amounting to £4,500,000 is paid annually. That sum is far larger than any deficit ever incurred in this State.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—The thimble and pea merchant is honest as compared with the Commonwealth Government.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—The Commonwealth is indulging in tricky, financial double-dealing. We are forced to accept the position that Victoria has to pay interest and incur mounting deficits on money lent by the Commonwealth but raised in this State.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—I cannot understand why you assist Mr. Menzies and his Government to be re-elected.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—I shall mention that matter later. I now intend to summarize the figures that I have mentioned. First, Victoria contributes to national projects far more than on a *per capita* basis. In fact, this State pays in about £45,000,000 more than its share.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—The strong must help the weak.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—I agree, and I do not think I have said anything to the contrary. Secondly, owing to the transfer of social services to the Commonwealth, Victoria contributes about £15,000,000 to the social services of other States. Thirdly, owing to the operation of the reimbursement formula, Victoria loses from £6,000,000 to £11,000,000 a year. Fourthly, owing to the previously accumulated iniquities of the uniform tax formula, this State has already lost £90,000,000, which could have been spent on public works in this State. Interest on that sum amounts to £4,500,000 annually.

Fifthly, on other moneys which come to the State via the Commonwealth, we lose similar amounts. For example, in petrol tax we pay in £15,000,000 and receive back £5,400,000, and in connexion with hospitals we pay £2,000,000 and receive in return £1,500,000. Those two items represent a combined loss of approximately £10,000,000.

Sixthly, as to loans, over the last six years Victoria has subscribed about £50,000,000 more than its rightful share. Seventhly, over the same period, Victoria has acquired a debt to the Commonwealth of £120,000,000, and an interest bill of £4,500,000 for loans underwritten by the Commonwealth out of what was really Victoria's own money.

All this boils down to the fact that even if we ignore Victoria's extra contribution to Commonwealth revenues, amounting to about £45,000,000; ignore this State's extra contribution to social services, of about £15,000,000; ignore the amount that Victoria has already lost due to the unfairness of the reimbursement tax formula, about £90,000,000; ignore the interest bill on the latter sum of about £4,500,000; and ignore the capital debt now owing by Victoria to the Commonwealth, amounting to £120,000,000, we still cannot conceivably ignore the other disabilities from which we still suffer and which I shall now list.

First, there are our present disabilities under uniform taxation, which I put conservatively at £8,000,000 a year;

secondly, our losses on other Commonwealth grants—for example, petrol reimbursements, hospital grants, and so on, which I place at £9,500,000; thirdly, losses on loans subscribed by Victorians and spent in other States, a total of £50,000,000 over six years, or say £8,000,000 a year; and, fourthly, the interest bill on loans made by the Commonwealth to Victoria out of what was really Victoria's own money, say, £4,500,000. It is impossible to ignore any of these items, which amount to £30,000,000 each year.

It is very difficult for the brain to understand thoroughly how much £30,000,000 is. It becomes a figure, a mathematical cipher, rather than something that is really understood. To appreciate just how great are Victoria's sufferings, let us remind ourselves what £30,000,000 in one year—next year, perhaps—would enable us to do. We could build four times as many schools as were built last year; it would enable us to spend on roads twice as much as was spent last year; we could build more hospitals than have been built in the last ten years; and so on. Alternatively, after all reasonable demands for social services had been satisfied, taxation could be reduced.

Calamitous though this financial juggling is to Victoria, it is probably not the worst part of the story. The really bad thing is the disastrous effect it has on the efficiency of government in Australia, both State and Federal. The States have the responsibility of discharging certain functions, but they do not have to face the odium of raising the money themselves by imposing their own taxation, or a substantial proportion of it. The effect of this aspect on State Governments has been expressed by one important public man who, no doubt, was thinking of other States, when he said—

I consider that a State that handles money without having the responsibility of raising it is like a man who wins money at the races. It comes easily and goes easily.

The late Mr. John Cain made that statement when he was Treasurer. While the States do not have the responsibility

of raising the money, and thus perhaps have too ready an excuse for blaming the Commonwealth for lack of funds, their real problems commence when they come to divide the money. Little by little, they are forced into the position where they simply cannot stretch their pounds far enough to do all the things they want to do, which their citizens want them to do, and which they are constitutionally empowered to do. We have seen many examples of this over the last few years.

Then the Commonwealth, with a great show of generosity, makes grants to the States, and each succeeding grant is accompanied by a little more Commonwealth influence and pressure as to how the money should be spent. For example, education, domestic health and power supply were the unchallenged responsibilities of the States before the operation of uniform taxation, and undoubtedly they should still be. However, the Commonwealth denies to the States the right to obtain enough funds to carry them out, and it gradually extends its influence in this underhand way. An example is the University of Melbourne, which now accommodates about 9,000 students, whereas 4,000 is recognized as being a reasonable limit. Everybody wants to do something about it, but the State is simply denied the money, and the position will no doubt get worse, until eventually the Commonwealth, with considerable publicity, will say to Victoria, "All right, we shall help you, but there will be the usual conditions."

Even to-day, the Prime Minister is reported in the press as gently admonishing State Governments for seeking more money from the Commonwealth. He says that this practice threatens the continuation of the Federal system. Let him be told that the only threat to the Federal system comes from the continuation of the uniform tax system, which is slowly throttling the States. Let him not further admonish the Victorian Government. We do not want a penny from Canberra. We prefer to raise money from our own taxation rights, and to look after our affairs in

*The Hon. C. H. Bridgford.*

our own way. If any decision is to be made on this subject, it should be made by the Prime Minister—not by us.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—Do you propose also that the State should defend itself from its own resources?

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—I have referred to the money raised and spent by the Commonwealth on defence, and have commented that this was a national problem, properly handled by the Federal Government. Maybe some State Governments are willing to shirk their responsibilities and hide behind the Commonwealth, but the Victorian Government is not one of them. We prefer to shoulder our own responsibilities, raise our own moneys, and spend them for the benefit of our citizens. Undoubtedly, we would be better off if we did so. When we again get the right to do this, there will be no more deficits, and there will be some tax reductions. Some day we will do that.

The policy of the Liberal party on the subject of uniform taxation is quite clear. We have challenged the legislation in the High Court, with partial success; we did not succeed in having the legislation declared invalid, and were unable to compel the Commonwealth Government to return the States' taxing rights, but we at least made it abundantly clear that the Commonwealth can return these rights at any time it wishes; that is well within its power. It is only a matter for the Commonwealth Government's decision, and probably in the end it is really only a matter of public opinion. The Country party has also often expressed its views and, in fact, most of the fight on this question years ago was carried out by a Country party Premier.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—He started it.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—That is true. I think I know the views of Mr. Little's party—I have read them in the press—but I should like to hear from him on the subject. The position of the Labour party is different. Its members agree that Victoria gets a raw deal, and I do not think there would be any use in denying that, because figures

speak louder than words. However, they claim that the answer lies not in the return of taxing powers to the States but in the securing of more money from the Commonwealth. What do they think we have been doing for the last ten years? What has every Premier tried to do in that time? What do they think happens at every Premiers' conference? What do they think every other State Premier is trying to do? What reason have they to think that Victoria would be more successful in getting more than a token hand-out from the Commonwealth as a sop?

Do the members of the Labour party really wish to continue this system of State Government finance which fosters irresponsibility and "buck-passing," with each Government blaming the other for its misdeeds? Do they really want a continuation of "slush-fund" government finance, or, as the Americans call it, "the pork barrel system," under which the Government hands out an odd £1,000,000 here to silence some Premier who is more than usually bitter in his protestations, another £1,000,000 there as a reward to a Premier who has gone along with them quietly, perhaps another few million pounds to help their friends when a State election is approaching, or £1,000,000 or £2,000,000 when it is necessary to "sweeten up" some State to win an odd place in the Senate?

Surely, the State Labour party should do more than "have a bit of fun" with a Bill such as that now before the House. Its members should re-examine their position and determine whether the cure does not lie along the lines I suggest and whether, as members of the Victorian Parliament, with an over-all responsibility for the good government of Australia, they can condone the present system. Perhaps their objections are rooted in their past fear of the State Upper Houses. I do not think this fear exists any longer.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE. — Mr. Dougherty, who was recently elected a member of the Legislative Council in New South Wales, has advocated getting rid of them.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—That would make it easier. A party which professes interest in the protection of minority groups should perhaps consider whether minorities would not be better protected by the careful preservation of the Federal system, perhaps after a revision of the Commonwealth Constitution which, I believe, is overdue. Whoever raises the money should spend it.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—Members of the Labour party showed their interest in minority groups by keeping members of my party off committees of this House and of the other House.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD.—The question I am discussing is more important than that. Members of other parties might examine their policies to determine whether their thinking is up to date and whether the principles of Labour may not be better expressed by an effort being made to protect State Parliaments than by fostering a principle which in the end must destroy them.

This matter, surely, is far above party politics. We, on this side of the House, will continue to put the facts before the public until some justice is done. We should like to have the Labour party with us on this question, but, whether it is with us or against us, we will continue until we succeed. When we do succeed, we shall have the pleasure of knowing that we have done something practical about the deficit, instead of merely talking about it. When we cure the problem, it will be cured not temporarily, but for ever. We shall then have all the money to which I have referred—I hope I have convinced the House as to the staggering sums of money that are involved. We shall have all that money to spend on the kind of community services to which the people are entitled—better schools, hospitals, universities, roads, and so forth—and even so there will still be plenty of room for a reduction in taxation.

In conclusion, I should like to read the words of the late John Cain, spoken by him not to a Liberal Prime Minister, but to the late Ben. Chifley at a

Premiers' conference in 1947. On the subject of tax reimbursement grants, he said—

I say to the Prime Minister, in all sincerity and in the most friendly manner, that he is not treating the States with even common justice.

**The Hon. R. R. RAWSON** (Southern Province).—First, I congratulate and thank Mr. Bridgford for his very well prepared speech and for the fact that he has dealt completely with the subject under discussion. It was a pleasure to hear him and to note that, in presenting his case, he found it unnecessary to indulge in personalities and besmirch the reputations of other members of the House. When I heard Mr. Bridgford, I could have been listening to someone speaking from this side of the House, rather than from the Government side, because, above everything else, his speech was an indictment of the Commonwealth Government. In the Commonwealth field, Labour has been in power for only about sixteen years since Federation, and any shortcomings of the administration of the Federal system, and any hesitation about amending the Constitution and giving justice to Victoria or any other State, are the responsibility of the party of which Mr. Bridgford is a member.

In Labour's sixteen years of power it did much towards achieving a fairer distribution of the wealth of the Commonwealth. Mr. Bridgford mentioned the various social service benefits distributed by the Commonwealth Government and the amounts paid to people in this State. With the exception of two, all these benefits were introduced by Labour Governments.

**The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON**.—They were the two main ones!

**The Hon. R. R. RAWSON**.—I agree that they were important social services. The first was the old-age pension, which was introduced by the Deakin Government. Since Mr. Thompson has indicated, by his interjection, that he has done some research in the matter, he will be aware that when Deakin introduced the legislation he was strongly supported by the Labour party at whose

instigation this social service was initiated. One of the principal speeches made on the subject was contributed by Andrew Fisher. Mr. Thompson will also be aware that child endowment, the only other social service introduced by a Conservative Government, was first commenced in New South Wales by a Labour Government and was adopted second-hand by the Commonwealth. All the social services now in force were introduced with the idea of returning to the people some proportion of the taxes collected.

Mr. Bridgford referred to the amount of interest that this State is paying on loan moneys provided to it out of Commonwealth revenue. In his Budget speech, the Premier said—

In the Estimates for 1957-58, we have had to provide a total of £4,500,000 to meet debt charges on surplus Commonwealth tax revenues which have been made available through the Loan Council in recent years.

I agree that that sum would go a long way towards relieving this State of the necessity to incur a deficit. However, I remind Mr. Bridgford and Government supporters that the provision of loan money out of revenue was introduced in 1951 by the party which they support. Up to that time loan moneys were readily obtainable on the market and the competition from outside bodies—encouraged by supporters of this Government—for loan money that now obtains was not to be found. Then, however, the Federal Government found itself unable to raise sufficient loan funds to provide for its own and the States' requirements. That Government was then currying favour with its supporters—the big financial interests. It was clear that the only method by which the shortage of loan funds could be made up was to tax the people more heavily and thus provide such moneys out of revenue. The whole situation was caused by the maladministration of the Federal Government. Members on the Opposition side of the House would freely join Government members in a strong campaign, in concert with the other States, to obtain such loan funds

from the Commonwealth free of interest. If that position obtained, we would go a long way towards avoiding the necessity to incur deficits in our Budget. Earlier in the session when the Minister of Transport was addressing the House, I understood the honorable gentleman to urge all honorable members to write to their counterparts in the Federal sphere requesting them to do something about this matter. I was quite willing to follow up the Minister's request, but I found no reference to his statement in *Hansard*. Either I did not understand the honorable gentleman correctly or the matter was not correctly reported.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I certainly did not delete the statement.

The Hon. R. R. RAWSON.—I should like the Minister of Transport to give honorable members an assurance that he would like them to take the action I have mentioned. I am quite sure a number of members would do so. I urge the Government to go further and not only organize the members of this House in that direction but also obtain publicity in the press, which, generally speaking, supports the Government, and with which the Government has a good deal of influence. This is a cardinal method by which we could improve the financial position which, unfortunately, the State is in to-day.

Over a great number of years we had anything but good government in the State of Victoria. I remind honorable members that the Labour party, since it became a party, has been in power for only about seven years in this State. Recently, when doing some research into education, I ascertained that in 1919 the income tax imposed in New South Wales amounted to £2,355,243, whereas in Victoria in the same year the amount was £929,210. As Victoria's population at that time was about two-thirds that of New South Wales, it will be seen that the revenue from income tax was out of proportion. That situation obtained in this State for many years. The State has never collected sufficient taxation to render adequate service to the people or to provide proper social services. We are suffering from that situation now. The taxation reimbursement formula

was based on such figures and thus, through bad government in the past, Victoria receives far less in taxation reimbursements than her due proportion, as compared with her sister States, particularly New South Wales. I appeal to the Government to show its sincerity by taking strong action to avoid budgeting for a deficit next year. I urge it to organize a campaign on the widest possible scale with the object of ensuring that interest will not be paid on loan moneys raised by the Commonwealth from revenue.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—We have endeavoured to achieve that at the last two Premiers' conferences.

*The sitting was suspended at 6.25 p.m. until 7.56 p.m.*

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH (Monash Province).—I congratulate my colleague, Mr. Bridgford, on his lucid and optimistic speech. How different it was from those which preceded it. The affairs of this State are in capable Liberal hands whilst we have men of Mr. Bridgford's calibre in this House. The older and more experienced members of this Council know the type of taxation under which we suffer—and I use that expression advisedly. I am surprised that they should express the opinion that consideration should be given to any proposal to increase taxation in Victoria. In the opinion of Mr. Bridgford, Mr. Rawson, Mr. Galbally and other members, Victoria is already over-taxed by general Australian standards. The Bolte Government, since it has been in office, has repeatedly stated its intention to keep the cost of utilities within the limits of the purses of the people of this State. Mr. Galbally referred to the financial situation of the State when this Government assumed office and to the deficits aggregating £10,000,000 which have been incurred since then. How is a business run?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Tell us. We are all waiting to hear you.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I shall inform Mr. Galbally. When this Government took office in 1955, there were people in Brighton financing their own

schools, and old people sleeping in paddocks in Coburg, while at the same time the Cain Government had £1,600,000 in the bank. It is no laughing matter when there are old people living in paddocks while a Government has on hand a balance of £1,600,000. A Labour Government was running the State at that time—running it down hill! The present Government during its period of office has done more for the State than has any other Administration in the history of Victoria. It has passed more legislation which has been commented on favourably by members of the Opposition and of the Country party than previous Governments have. Mr. Rawson in his speech went back to the days of Cook, Bass and Flinders, and Ned Kelly. He said that the Labour Government gave the old people this and something else. The only things it ever gave old people were promises and politics.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I think the dog in the sky is worrying you.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—Yes, the "smutnik" from the Labour party and the Sputnik from the Communists. Mr. Galbally goes hand in glove with them, so he must understand that sort of thing.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—The old smearer again.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I am not attempting to smear anybody. Members of the Opposition look for this sort of thing. They cannot keep to clean speech. You should protect me from them, Mr. President. I am not able to look after myself.

**The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).**—Order! I advise the honorable member not to listen to interjections.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—Mr. President, do not deprive me of a little enjoyment. The Bolte Government, since it took office, has spent money in a wise and proper manner trying to do the things that the Labour Government would not or could not do. I point out to the calamity howlers, who want an increase in taxation, that Victoria receives 48 per cent. of the migrant intake to Australia.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—We have 48 per cent. interest rates here, too.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I do not know what interest Mr. Galbally has in hire-purchase companies, and I do not want to know, Jack.

**The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).**—Order!

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I am sorry, Mr. President, I should not address a member by his first name. It is unchristian or something like that. I apologize to Mr. Galbally.

**The PRESIDENT.**—Order! Apart from that, the proceedings must be conducted with decorum. I ask honorable members to listen to Mr. Gawith in silence and then there will be no trouble.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I had just pointed out that Victoria received 48 per cent. of the migrants entering Australia. This State also finances many of the smaller States. Mr. Bridgford said that Victoria provides 85 per cent. of the finance for its roads and Queensland only 35 per cent. We make up the difference for Queensland. Finance for housing in the two States is comparable. Every endeavour should be made to impress the Federal Government of the need to provide adequate funds so that Victoria might finance its intake of migrants. The State of Victoria is very well managed and organized. When the Bolte Government came into office it found that traffic in the city was almost strangled.

The Hon. G. L. TILLEY.—It also found a bit of money.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—Yes, £1,600,000 which should have been spent on the old people. The deficits incurred by the Bolte Government have resulted from expenditure designed to improve conditions for the people of the State. We are here to do a good job for our citizens. This is Socialism that I am preaching.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Your Leader condemned it last week. Are you a Socialist?

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—Yes. If it were a matter of looking after the people, I would not object to being called

a "Com." Of course, I am not a Communist; everybody knows that. As I said before, when the Bolte Government took office, the city was suffering from traffic strangulation. It took motorists three-quarters of an hour to cross the main bridges. Before the Bolte Government leaves office, if it ever does, it will have vastly improved traffic conditions.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—Do you think it will ever leave office?

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—I do not think so. I believe members of the Country party are adamant in their minds that this is the best Government Victoria has had for a decade.

The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.—The best Government for two years!

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—With the support of the Country party, the Bolte Government will stay in office. In Queensland, there is a wonderful organization known as the Lions Club. It performs great service to the people, and I think its code of ethics is something everybody should read. That document provides, *inter alia*—

Always to bear in mind my obligations as a citizen to my nation, my State and my community, and to give to them my unswerving loyalty in word, act and deed. To give them freely of my time, labour and means.

To aid my fellow men by giving my sympathy to those in distress, my aid to the weak, and my substance to the needy.

Those words could well be used to describe the policy of the Liberal party. I invite members of the Labour party to heed the concluding words of the code, which are—

To be careful with my criticism and liberal with my praise, to build up and not destroy.

Mr. Bridgford to-night delivered the type of speech that I had hoped would be heard from some of the older and more experienced members of the House. He stated in cold detail what was wrong with the finances of the State; his review was something which was necessary. I support his plea. If all members of this Chamber are sincere—Mr. Rawson said that he

doubted our sincerity—and are attempting to do the best they can for the people of Victoria, they should support this Government in its efforts to see the end of the uniform taxation system. We do not regard this as a parochial matter as we believe its abolition will be of benefit to the nation. I endorse freely what Mr. Bridgford had to say.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Appropriation of loan money to meet revenue deficit).

Sir ARTHUR WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I wish to answer a few of the questions raised by Mr. Rawson and Mr. Galbally in regard to the money that has been spent by the State. There has been some criticism of the Government about the size of the deficits it has accumulated. Mr. Bridgford dealt at length with the uniform taxation issue, and I wish to relate my remarks to the reasons for the deficits. It was suggested in the course of debate that the railways were responsible for the excess expenditure. To some extent that might be the case, as during the period of two and a half years that the Government has been in office rail freights have not been raised—something that no other Government in recent years has been able to claim.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—The Government has not raised freights because it fears what the Country party may do.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—It is not a matter of what I think or what I should like to do. The question was whether the Government would raise freights or not and the Government decided not to do so. I would not say that the Government was influenced in its decision by fear of the Country party. Curiously enough, the Country party Government raised freights by 66 per cent. during its term of office, and I believe that action required a considerable amount of courage. If we had raised rail freights by the same percentage, no

deficits would have been incurred. However, I do not propose to press the point regarding the railways, as this Government has in other directions spent sums far greater than the amounts of the deficits. I appreciate that Mr. Thomas is not interested in education, but I point out that in the last two years we have raised the expenditure on education from £25,275,000 to £35,000,000, an increase of £10,000,000. Would any honorable member challenge the need for the increase in the vote for education?

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—The increase has offset only the devaluation of the £1 in that period.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I thank Mr. Little for that comment. Since the Bolte Government has been in office the rate of inflation has probably been a gross 15 per cent. I do not claim that it has been due to any effort on the part of the Government apart, perhaps, from its action regarding cost-of-living adjustments. In the same period expenditure on education has been increased by £10,000,000 on £25,000,000, a rise of approximately 40 per cent. or two-and-a-half times the amount of the inflation.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—Are you sure that you are not more wasteful?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—One would expect Mr. Ferguson to ask a question of that nature. I invite him to show the Government where money is being wasted. If he does, we will gladly take the credit of making some savings. I do not expect him to make constructive suggestions once a week, but would welcome a constructive suggestion once a year.

The Hon. D. P. J. FERGUSON.—The first is that the Government should resign.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER. — In the period of office of the present Government, police expenditure has been increased by £1,000,000, a portion of which is due to an increase in wages and salaries. On the other hand, the membership of the Force, which I

believe had been undermanned, has increased by 400. In the same period of which I am speaking, hospital expenditure has risen by just over £2,000,000. Surely that has been justified. There have been too few hospitals, and these have not been fully staffed.

The education bill has gone up by £10,000,000. There has been an increase of £2,000,000 in respect of hospitals, and upon mental institutions another £1,000,000 has been spent. The Government has really expended on these items alone four times the amount of the deficit. Critics of the Government, when referring to the deficit, should also point out that the Government has found another £9,000,000, which is not out of the deficit, in order to give to the public extra services, such as I have enumerated.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—You have a bigger allocation to-day.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—On those items alone, to which I have referred, the Government has spent an extra £14,000,000.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—How much more revenue has the Government had?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—Obviously, the Government obtained £11,000,000 more revenue in certain ways, including additional fares and increased probate duty.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—You have already pointed out that inflation accounts for only 15 per cent., but the Government has increased train and tram fares.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—By about 25 per cent. When the present Government came into office the losses on the railways and tramways were already tremendous. In saying that, I at once add that I think Mr. Coleman, the previous Minister of Transport was very capable. Owing to the curious procedure adopted in the budgetary system, however, there was a very large volume of accumulated holiday pay and long service leave that was not shown. This accumulation cost the railways approximately £2,000,000 of liability,

which the present Government is endeavouring to reduce by the giving of holidays, spread over four years. It will be noted that the staff of the railways has been increased considerably by the present Government in order to catch up on maintenance and other work. If anything, the Government went too far in that direction, and we are not able to continue because we have not sufficient funds to do so.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—The Government has been putting men off.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—That is so, because, as I have just said, we were going too fast. The deficit is about one quarter of the additional money spent on the four items I have listed. Mr. Bridgford dealt with the fact that the Government receives as revenue a very minor reimbursement on the income tax collected by the Commonwealth. He did not, however, deal with the point that I shall now mention. The Federal Government, in addition to levying income tax—portion of which it gives this State as a reimbursement—has started to levy for loan money. In our contributions we pay the same high rate on the levy for loan money that we pay in respect of the normal tax for revenue. Out of the 31 per cent. of the total collections that Victoria pays, we get back only 27 per cent. as loan money. So the State Government not only contributes for revenue; it also contributes loan money, which goes in large measure to the other States.

However, I do not regard the financial position as the major matter. The States are affected by the uniform tax system, to which I am violently opposed and have been for a number of years. When people say that the States are parochial or are un-Australian, they should consider what really happened regarding the uniform tax. The relinquishment of income tax to the Commonwealth was a voluntary action on the part of Victoria and other States about the beginning of the war. This State had the most to contribute and the most to lose by giving up its taxation rights, and we gave them up as a patriotic action for reasons of national defence.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER. — The State Governments were obliged to.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—The Victorian Government decided to be patriotic, and I agree with Mr. Slater that it should have been. But the Victorian Government put a condition upon its agreeing to the temporary loss of its powers, namely, that its taxation rights should be returned to it one year after the war. That was embodied in an Act of the Commonwealth Parliament. In other words, it was conditional that Victoria was to be restored to the position it had previously occupied. I think it was the Curtin Government that refused to honour that undertaking.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—And every Liberal Government since that time has refused to honour it.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I am not denying that the Commonwealth, power-drunk with its huge volume of taxation money, repudiated the contract and has continued to repudiate it year by year. I understand what the Commonwealth Governments have been doing and why they have been doing it. It cannot be said that when Victoria objects to the abuse of the power in the hands of the Commonwealth Government, we are un-Australian. We gave up our power because we were Australian. Let us examine now the effects of that decision. I can understand why Mr. Slater is in favour of uniform taxation.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—Did not all the State Premiers agree to give these powers to the Commonwealth?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—They did, on the consideration that the Federal authorities should have only a one-year continuance of the contract after the end of the war.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—But what happened after the war? What was the position in 1947?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—The State Premiers may have been forced under duress to accept something, but it was not an agreement.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—Only on the cat-and-canary principle.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—It was on whatever Mr. Fulton may like to call it. The existing situation is a disadvantage to Victoria in that it is the highest taxed State, yet it receives the lowest income from the Commonwealth. There is also this point, that in addition to our paying the highest Commonwealth tax, the State Government also taxes the citizens of this State at the highest rates of all the States to make up for the deficiency caused by Victoria not getting a fair percentage from the Commonwealth. However, let us forget the money aspect for the moment. What is behind the whole matter is broad policy. It is very bad for a municipality, or a State Government, or a Commonwealth Government not to be responsible for collecting the revenue it spends. Therefore, it is not Federalism when one Government is given the sole power of collecting. There is thereby created a system of toadying amongst the Premiers. I have been to various conferences over a period of several years and I know that prior to a Premiers' conference, various Premiers, as well as other Ministers, go into the Commonwealth offices, and it becomes a matter of what they are to get for their State compared with what they are going to give away. That is not Federalism, and it is not quite clean politics either.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—And it has happened irrespective of party.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—It is not good that a Minister should say, the day before a conference, "If you give us another half a million, we will give you certain rights that belong to our State."

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—One can buy the smaller States much more cheaply than the larger ones.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—That is exactly what happens. The Commonwealth says, with respect to the right of tax collection, "Yes, you may have it back provided all the States agree." But the Commonwealth knows full well that the small States, which are getting some advantage in money at the expense of State rights, are not going to give up their present position. Therefore, we are offered something under conditions, because the Federal authorities know very

well that we will never get it, notwithstanding our patriotic reasons and our contract. The Commonwealth people say, "If you do not like it you can tax," and, as Mr. Slater has said, "Why don't you do something about it?" He understands that the Commonwealth authorities have said, "If you tax in your own State we will continue to tax, but we will not give you your share back." They say, further, "If you dare exercise your undoubted rights, we will penalize you and put the responsibility upon you because we are going to keep this hold on the States."

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—You think Menzies is more immoral than I do!

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I do not think Mr. Menzies is more immoral than any other Leader of a Commonwealth Government. They have all said, "You can have your taxing rights back under conditions that will be impossible for you to get them back."

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—And you are not game to call their bluff.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—That is a matter that ought to be considered.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—Two can play that game.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—There would be civil war.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—It is a form of blackmail and one that it is very difficult to deal with because the people of Victoria do not thoroughly understand the implications behind it. As Mr. Bridgford quite clearly pointed out, the State is controlled through its social services and everything else by means of the money at the other end. We are forced to borrow our money back at increased rates of interest or we must fail to give the services the States need. We become more and more impoverished and more and more under the control of the Commonwealth, so providing the Labour party with the greatest opportunity to implement their policy of unification. The Labour party stands for the elimination of Upper Houses, both State and Federal. It stands for one Government controlling all the people of Australia and all the means of production and exchange.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—There are many variations of that policy.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I know that variations are made every week according to the political wind, but the main policy is clear. There is no greater instrument of Socialism than uniform taxation, which leads to one Government, one domination. As Mr. Calwell so nicely put it in the Federal Parliament, it is difficult to unscramble an egg.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—What do you suggest as a challenge?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I suggest to Mr. Slater who, I presume, represents the people of his province, that members of the Labour party should make the same kind of fight as we are making to have the right to impose taxation returned to this State.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—Tell that to Sir Thomas Playford, the Premier of South Australia, also to the Leader of the Liberal party in Western Australia.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—Mr. Slater knows that Sir Thomas Playford has received a great advantage out of this form of taxation, and he is therefore selling the rights of South Australia for extra Commonwealth revenue. So far as the members of Mr. Slater's party are concerned, they take a long-term view towards Socialism, and so they support the present scheme. They are prepared to stick by it to advance the progress of Socialism. I am quite satisfied with the definition of that philosophy as appears in the Oxford dictionary. It coincides with the original statement that appeared in the Labour party platform until a few weeks ago in relation to Socialism.

I believe the fact that the Commonwealth Government is able to gather more and more revenue and has access to those funds and can impose an interest charge on State loan funds, encourages waste in the Commonwealth sphere, forcing the States to be parsimonious in the services they give to the people. That is bad for Australia. While there are a few Premiers who are gaining an advantage, I feel that, in the long term, they will pay a big price for that advantage.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER (Doutta Galla Province).—I would not have participated in the debate except for the observations of the Leader of the Government. The honorable gentleman brought forward a mass of statistical material to demonstrate how extremely badly off Victoria is as the result of the formula which, no doubt has been due in no small measure to past Liberal Governments; that fact cannot be denied. That formula has placed this State at a disadvantage compared with other States.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—There have been a few Country party Governments in power also in this State.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—That is true. During his long speech, the Leader of the House did not offer any solution to this problem, because he had none to offer. It is very well for the honorable gentleman to say that it is my obligation to advise my constituents of the great disadvantage they are suffering under uniform taxation while people in Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia are enjoying advantages. I repeat that the Leader of the Government has offered no solution of the problem, but the real controllers of the political government of Australia at present and during the last decade have been members of the party to which he belongs. In the Federal Parliament, the masters of the financial structure of Australia, who have been rudely criticized by the Minister, are of his own political faith, and in the other States the Governments that have adopted policies injurious to Victoria, as the honorable gentleman maintained, are controlled by the political party to which he belongs. I refer, in particular, to the Governments of South Australia and Queensland; Governments in the other States are fortified by Legislative Councils elected on a property franchise. In Western Australia and Tasmania, although the Governments have a majority of Labour members in the popular Houses, they are dominated in the Upper Houses by the political party of which the Minister of Transport is an adherent. There has been no voice raised by Liberal party

members in those States to support the view enunciated by the honorable gentleman.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—And there never will be.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—It is hypocritical for the Minister of Transport to suggest that his party in Victoria is the lone voice in the wilderness crying for the abolition of uniform taxation. Having carried the matter to the highest tribunal in the Commonwealth and obtaining a favourable decision, it is not game to carry the fight one step further.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—There has been no voice raised in the lower Houses of the States you have mentioned.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—No, because they view the problem as we view it, from the point of view of parsimony. I believe in uniform taxation. That is the considered policy of the Labour party of Australia.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I will bet that it is.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—Yes, but the policy of the Minister vacillates from day to day and from interest to interest. The "big boys" in the Federal Parliament are members of the Minister's party and have ample power there to do what they desire, particularly to bring into line other States dominated by Liberal Governments, or by a majority in the Upper Houses. They can force their will upon the people if they wish to make any change in the principle of uniform taxation, but they are not game to do it. While the Minister of Transport claims the right to voice the Victorian case, the honorable gentleman cannot stop these other people from putting their case from their own point of view. The political organization to which the Minister belongs is in a strong position to-day and has a unique opportunity of expressing its will through its organization in the Federal Government and in State Governments controlled by the Liberal party, and in other State Governments not controlled by the Liberal party but dominated by the Liberal party in Upper Houses. It has an opportunity that no other party in Australia has of giving effect to its political philosophy on this subject.

It is easy to make speeches about the great harm that is being done to Victoria under this principle, without offering any real solution of the problem. I repeat that members of the Labour party believe in uniform taxation, but it does not follow that we believe in a formula which has been harsh on Victoria. That has followed, unfortunately, the parsimony or prudence—whichever way one looks at it—of past Governments, owing to the meagre amounts they spent on social services.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—And reckless spending by New South Wales.

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—There were spendings in other States. There were expenditures by Liberal Governments in New South Wales, but I have not heard that they were less extravagant than the expenditures of Labour Governments that followed. It is not reassuring to us to hear the observations of the Leader of the Government. I suggest that he and his party have the means of presenting a solution. We have none at all because we have not the same political power in Australia that the Liberal party enjoys. I invite the Leader of the Government to indicate his solution of the problem.

The Hon. C. S. GAWITH.—Will you support the effort of the State of Victoria to get back the right to impose taxation?

The Hon. WILLIAM SLATER.—I support the principle of uniform taxation, but I do not believe in the present formula. Under a revised formula greater justice would be done to this State. That does not impair my argument in support of uniform taxation. Members of the Labour party invite the Minister of Transport to submit a solution of a problem that is baffling not only this State but also all other States.

The Hon. C. H. BRIDGFORD (South-Eastern Province).—Mr. Slater charged us of the Liberal party with not having sufficient influence over our colleagues in the Federal Parliament. If we had, the problem would have been solved by now. I would point out that we are doing the best we can in the interests of our Victorian constituents. If members

of the Labour party would act similarly with their members in the Federal Parliament, this question could be settled. Out of 124 members of the Federal House, there are 33 from Victoria and 46 from New South Wales—Liberal party, Labour party, and Country party members included. If all Federal members would act in the interests of their States, the problem could be solved within a few months.

Considerable criticism has been directed at the Government by members of the Labour party, but the fact is that we are trying and they are not. They have not always been unanimous in their present outlook, because Mr. Cahill, the former Labour Premier in New South Wales, was glad to join the Victorian Premier in opposing the system of uniform taxation. It is time members of the Labour party reconsidered the position, particularly from the aspect whether uniform taxation is really in the interests of that party—it is not in the interests of Victoria. The States of Victoria and New South Wales, that lose so much from uniform taxation, return 63.7 per cent. of the members of the House of Representatives, and 57 per cent. of the House of Representatives and the Senate combined. It would be just as well if the Labour party joined us in our fight against uniform taxation.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—I should like to answer very briefly the points that have been raised, dealing first with Mr. Slater's question, "What is the Government doing about it?" I remind the honorable member that the Government, on assuming office, had to recommence the litigation for the restoration of the State's taxing powers—the Labour party Premier had withdrawn—and it achieved some measure of success. The next step was to take up the matter with the Federal council of the Liberal party—the council of the whole of the States, including the Victorian Liberal party—which was persuaded to pass a resolution to the effect that it was opposed to the present system of uniform taxation and that it would endeavour to have it corrected. In other words, the Commonwealth-

wide policy of the Liberal party is that the present system of uniform taxation is bad. Obviously, the Federal council of the Liberal party is not concerned solely with Victoria, and its members agree that if the present system continues, it will ultimately destroy the States. That is something that has been achieved.

The reply to the accusation that such States as South Australia and Western Australia adopt a different policy is obvious. Undoubtedly, the Premiers of those States want as much money as possible. They take the money sooner than fight—it is a form of "pay off" to enable Federal Governments, of all political complexions, to buy State rights for money, which is a disgrace and a very sound reason why we, in Victoria, should oppose the system.

**The Hon. F. M. THOMAS.**—Give us one proof of that statement.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—Victoria is the highest taxed State with the lowest receipts from the Commonwealth per head of population. The Government intends to continue to fight for the removal of the present taxation system. If we were offered a correction of the formula and the opportunity of giving up taxation in future, we, as a Liberal party, would refuse it, because the principles are far more important than the money.

The clause was agreed to.

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

#### **SHEPPARTON LANDS 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.

#### **ELPHINSTONE LANDS EXCHANGE 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.

**BENDIGO 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.

**TEACHING SERVICE  
(AMENDMENT) BILL.**

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

**FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE  
ERADICATION FUND BILL.**

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), was read a first time.

**LIQUIFIED PETROLEUM GAS BILL.**

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is to authorize the distribution of liquified petroleum gas. This matter mixture of butanes and propane and which is manufactured during the process of purifying crude petroleum oil. It deals also with the issue of a set of regulations for the distribution of liquified petroleum gas. This matter was brought to a head by the fact that Port Fairy, an important coastal town in the Western District, has a gas company, the equipment of which is run down. Its plant is inadequate to supply the needs of consumers, many of whose services will have to be disconnected. It would not be an economical proposition to operate an up-to-date coal-gas plant, and so it has been decided to supply Port Fairy residents with liquified gas in bottles, pending the availability of some other type of gas.

In 1938, I introduced this gas into Australia for the purpose of selling it in bottles to the owners of boats and caravans. Owing to import restrictions, however, supplies were reduced, but eventually a New South Wales firm making oil out of shale produced it as a by-product. In more recent years,

this type of gas has become a by-product of petroleum refineries which have been established in Australia. Previously, this by-product was wasted, but in view of the demand for it a pressurizing plant was established. The pressure at which it liquifies is approximately 150 lb., which is not much greater than the pressure that could be put into a motor car tire.

It has been decided that the best means of distribution is by selling the gas in bottles containing 150 or 200 lb. Then it was considered that if the gas was to be sold for domestic use, regulations would be necessary to deal with the methods of installing and manufacturing the cylinders, which need to be examined regularly. In fact, they should be examined every time they are refilled. The general procedure adopted is that when an empty bottle is returned, the customer is supplied with gas in a new one and the old cylinder is examined before it is refilled.

**The Hon. P. T. BYRNES.**—Are regulations in force at present dealing with the sale of similar commodities?

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—There has been a doubt whether any organization is properly authorized to supervise the sale and use of this gas. If there is such a body, it is the Mines Department. Because of the wording in enactments relating to that Department, it has power to regulate the type of bottles into which this gas could be put, but it does not appear to have authority to deal with the piping or valves which are used.

Most types of sealing compounds that are used with ordinary gas pipes are not suitable for use with this type of gas because the butane and propane will eat away the compounds. Therefore, a compound not subject to attack by these agents has to be used. At present, the gas is distributed mainly by Blue Ray Distributors. In order to protect its good name, that company takes reasonable precautions to ensure that its bottles are in good condition and are not connected to equipment that is faulty. However, there is nothing to

stop a person from buying a bottle of gas and installing his own pipes and valves.

The Hon. F. M. THOMAS.—Such a person would come into conflict with the Plumbers and Gasfitters Employees' Union of Australia.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—The Gas and Fuel Corporation will not connect gas to faulty equipment, and the State Electricity Commission will not supply power to a person who installs or uses equipment that is not suitable for that purpose. An approvals committee, which operates under the State Electricity Commission, approves or disapproves of various types of appliances for attachment to electric services. A different procedure is proposed in regard to this gas. The object is to control something which could be installed by anybody. Mr. Thomas could buy a bottle of gas and install it, and nobody would know anything about it. The proposal in the Bill is to make regulations to ensure that the bottles are in good condition, that the pipe-lines are correctly installed, that the proper sealing compound is used, and that proper gas regulators are fitted.

The Government is desirous that the residents of Port Fairy should have this gas, which is largely manufactured at Geelong, and of ensuring that the proper type of equipment is installed.

The Hon. W. O. FULTON.—Will the installation costs be high?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—The gas is not costly. It has a British thermal unit output by weight five times greater than coal gas. The cost of this gas will be slightly higher than that of ordinary gas. It has the disadvantage that it is heavier than air and it is necessary, when a cylinder is installed in a wooden case, to have a ventilator at the bottom instead of at the top. The gas is odourless and colourless, and regulations will be promulgated to ensure that an odourizing substance is added to it. Its greatest danger is that if it is used in a boat and starts to leak, it will get into the bilge and will lay there if the area is not properly ventilated. If a

match is struck in the vicinity, the gas may ignite. However, that danger is not great because there has to be an accurate mixture of air and gas before it will explode.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN.—It is proposed that the gas be odourized only for domestic uses?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I presume so. In industry, it may be used in conjunction with oxygen for welding and so forth. In such cases, care will be taken to ensure that it is used only by proficient people and no great danger will exist.

The Hon. F. M. THOMAS.—Will the cylinders be similar to oxygen bottles?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—They will be of lighter construction.

On the motion of the Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

#### POLICE OFFENCES (CRUELTY TO ANIMALS) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a Bill to amend the Police Offences Act 1957 to make it an offence for any person to abandon a domestic animal, and to double the penalties for offences involving cruelty to animals. The present law on this subject is contained in Division 2 of Part II. of the Police Offences Act 1957, which prohibits cruelty to almost every type of animal. Last year, this Act was amended to cover the specific offences of cruelty to animals relating to the chaining of dogs and the sale and transport of bobby calves.

The present Bill will make it an offence for a person to abandon a domestic animal and will double penalties for second, third and subsequent offences already provided for in the legislation. The Bill became necessary because of the fact that a great deal of trouble is caused by the abandonment of dogs and cats on the fringes of Melbourne and in

the nearer farming districts. In addition, the measure has the laudable object of preventing cruelty to animals as far as possible. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. F. M. Thomas, for the Hon. D. L. ARNOTT (Western Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

## CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING SOCIETIES BILL.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

As honorable members are aware, there are now 413 co-operative housing societies in Victoria and they have a membership of approximately 32,000. Obviously, many people are interested in co-operative housing. The legislation regarding these societies is found in one major enactment and in eleven amending Acts. In accordance with the policy of the Government to make legislation as simple as possible, it was decided to consolidate this legislation, which is used by so many people. However, during the process of consolidation it became obvious that certain amendments were desirable, and the Government decided that they could well be incorporated in the consolidation. Therefore, this measure consolidates the existing legislation and contains a number of amendments.

I should like briefly to cite some of the more recent facts. There are now 413 co-operative housing societies, with an aggregate membership of 32,000. During the year ended 30th June, 1957, 112 new societies were registered. That was an all-time record for any one year, the next highest number having been in 1945-46, when 63 societies were registered. The increase last year was due mainly to the new policy of appropriating approximately 20 per cent. of the Commonwealth housing loan funds to housing societies. It was also partly due to the fact that some money was obtained from various institutions, thus increasing the availability of funds. Actually, the amounts advanced to

co-operative housing societies in the last four years have been:—1954, £6,400,000; 1955, £5,800,000; 1956, £5,400,000; and 1957, £9,400,000.

**The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).**—Can the Minister of Transport indicate what amendments to the legislation are contained in the Bill?

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—Yes, Mr. President. I understand that the Bill itself is an explanation. The matter is covered also in notes prepared on the subject.

**The PRESIDENT.**—It would be convenient to the members if they had the notes, if available.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER.**—I am sorry, Mr. President. I thought I had distributed them. One reason for the increased availability of money for this purpose is that many new subscribers have provided funds. Last year, the sum of £2,000,000 came out of the Home Builders' Account—that is from housing loan funds—representing 20 per cent. of the total made available by the Commonwealth. The sum of £1,050,000 was advanced by the Commonwealth Savings Bank, £200,000 by the Commonwealth Trading Bank, £1,775,000 by private savings banks, £225,000 by a private trading bank, £500,000 by insurance companies, and £74,500 by the State Savings Bank. I believe that this year the State Savings Bank has agreed to lend £1,000,000.

Some money has been provided as temporary finance, and there is some doubt whether this procedure is proper. An amendment embodied in the Bill deals with that question. In addition to co-operative housing societies, the more recently formed Home Finance Trust raised £1,900,000 last year. That is a large amount; in fact, it is much greater than the most optimistic expectations of the Government when the Trust was established. The moneys guaranteed by the State under the Housing Acts now total £52,000,000, and the indemnity advances amount to £434,000. No claim has ever been made with respect to either of the two forms of guarantees, but there is no certainty that a claim will not be made.

Up to June last, 24,606 members had obtained homes under the scheme, and there were then 5,195 more homes in the course of erection. The amendments to the legislation are set forth in the departmental notes. Clause 3 recites section 3 of the Act, in which it is provided that any reference to the erection or purchase of a dwelling shall be deemed to include references to street construction and installation of sewerage. The small machinery amendment, which is contained in paragraph (d) of sub-clause (4) extends the definition to cover drainage. I think that is fairly obvious and understandable.

The Bill provides for an extension to the objects for which a society may be formed so that it can take over or discharge a mortgage obtained by a member. It is not really the object of the Act, nor does the Government intend, that co-operative housing societies shall become instruments for discharging mortgages generally. That would not help housing; the object of co-operative housing societies is to reserve money for the building of new dwellings. I think most Governments and Ministers of Housing have always had that fact prominently in mind and have prevented, as far as possible, the purchase of old houses under this scheme. They have endeavoured to make the societies instruments for the building of new houses.

The societies being financed from housing loan funds receive their allocations in annual instalments over a period of five years. It will be appreciated, therefore, that in the normal course of events the total amount that any society may advance to its members in one year is limited to the sum received in that year. Some societies are able to increase the rate of building because of temporary advances obtained by members. It is thought that, if they know they will receive a loan, they can then borrow temporarily and the society can discharge that loan at a later date. Therefore, to some extent the home building rate will be accelerated.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—On what security would they get it?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I presume the society would not take over the loan until it took over the property, so it would have the security of the property when discharging the temporary loan.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—I was wondering what security there would be for the granting of a temporary loan?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I presume the member would get it on the security of a block of land, or something of that sort, and start to build his house. When he completed it, the loan would be discharged. Short term loan money can be obtained from many solicitors. Possibly, even trading banks will grant a loan to a person for, say, eighteen months, provided that it is assured the debt will be liquidated and taken over by a co-operative housing society at the end of the period. The idea embodied in the Bill is to enable people to act accordingly. There are certain objections. In the case of houses built under the War Service Homes Division of the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, home builders who have been promised loans at 2 per cent. have paid up to 12 per cent. to enable them to build before their allocation has been forthcoming.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—That is all right, so long as the money keeps coming forward, but, if funds dry up, some people who obtain temporary loans may get into difficulties.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—That is so. I have often wondered whether, in the case of the war service homes, it might not be better for the loans to be refused rather than for them to be approved and the applicants kept waiting a long time. It might be better if a loan was refused until the money was actually available. As it is, people are tempted to pay high rates of interest to get out of their financial difficulties. The question is debatable. It may be preferable for a man to pay 10 per cent. interest on money for one year, if he is thus enabled to obtain a house a year earlier than he could otherwise, provided he knows that in future he will pay only the co-operative housing rate.

The Hon. F. M. THOMAS.—What rate do you suggest for that?

Sir ARTHUR WARNER.—I think the rate is of the order of 5 per cent. Doubtless, some persons are tempted to borrow money, for temporary accommodation, at a high rate of interest, but if a man is thereby enabled to leave uncomfortable quarters twelve months earlier than otherwise, the money might not be expensive.

The exact procedure to be followed is set forth in the departmental notes. The Bill contains also an amendment to provide that the shares of a deceased member of a society may be held by an executor, unless he is already a member of the society. Cases have arisen where this restriction has inflicted great hardship on a widow or someone else when a member dies and the loan cannot be transferred to the widow. The Bill contains an amendment to cure that defect in the legislation.

One method of overcoming the problem is to permit the executor, in effect, to become a temporary member of the society concerned, for the reason that a society cannot make an advance to a non-member. In other cases, a house might be in the course of construction when the member died, and the widow would be placed at a great disadvantage unless the executor could continue to receive the remainder of the advance. An amendment is contained in the Bill to remove that anomaly.

Another amendment will permit a building society to encourage but not compel a person to insure his life for the unpaid balance of the mortgage, so that if a person dies his widow will receive the house without the "blister" of a mortgage to a co-operative housing society. No power is given in the Act for any of the present societies to alter their rules so that a person may be forced to take out insurance cover, but they are permitted to do so in the event of a member being prepared to act voluntarily. However, a new society can make it compulsory for the insurance to be effected, but in this case

a person will know the conditions before joining, and can decide whether to accept them or to join another society.

The amounts of insurance to cover persons for various types of loans over the period of the term are also set out in the departmental notes. Clause 46 of the Bill precludes a society from providing in its rules for the expulsion of a member in any manner other than by way of a special resolution. Provision is made in another amendment for the Registrar of Co-operative Housing Societies to have control, in effect, over the power of a society to expel a member. This is brought about by an unfortunate occurrence in one of the building societies. I think the amendments might more aptly be dealt with at the Committee stage. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. J. J. JONES (Ballarat Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

#### CRIMES (PAROLE BOARD) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill, as its title indicates, is to make certain additional provisions with respect to the functions and powers of the Parole Board, and to amend some of the existing provisions relating to that Board. As honorable members are aware, the Parole Board was appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Penal Reform Act of 1956, and Mr. Justice Barry, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, was appointed as chairman. Since the passing of that Act its provisions have been consolidated into the Crimes Act 1957, which was recently passed by this Parliament, and the Bill is to be read with that consolidated Act.

One of the functions of the Parole Board is to assign fixed sentences in place of the indeterminate sentences which were in course of being served when the Penal Reform Act came into operation. As a result, the Board has already had considerable experience in

the application of the new provisions. Arising out of that experience, His Honour Mr. Justice Barry, chairman of the Board, has advanced on behalf of the Board a number of suggestions for additional powers to be exercised by the Board and some modifications and amendments of the existing provisions governing its activities. The Government has examined those proposals and believes that, if implemented, they will make for greater convenience in the operation of the law. The Bill deals with a number of separate matters, which will be more easily explained by reference to the particular clauses.

Mr. Justice Barry has suggested that it may some times be necessary for the Board to sit as a Board of Inquiry conducting a formal, even though private, hearing in relation to the matters with which it has to deal. Clause 2 confers on the Board the powers of a commission of inquiry under the Evidence Act 1928—usually known as a Royal Commission—with respect to the summoning of witnesses to give evidence and to produce documents, the administration of oaths, the taking of evidence on oath and the certification to the Attorney-General, with a view to proceedings being taken in the Supreme Court, of any failure to attend or to produce documents or any refusal or failure to answer any questions. Mr. Justice Barry has also suggested that the duties of the Board with respect to the fixation of sentences and minimum terms, and in particular with respect to the reporting upon persons detained in prison during the Governor's pleasure—for example, upon commutation of death sentences—leave the Board open to actions for damages by persons who may consider themselves injured by the exercise of those powers. This possibility, His Honour believes, may be increased by the fact that many of the persons who may feel themselves aggrieved would have little or nothing to lose by bringing such an action against the Board. Clause 3 is designed to provide members of the Board with statutory protection against actions for damages or otherwise for things done or omitted in the exercise of the Board's powers under the legislation.

Under the Penal Reform Act, the new Parole Board was made the successor in law of the indeterminate sentences Board. That meant that where persons previously sentenced to indeterminate sentences had been released by the indeterminate sentences Board, the new Board could exercise the powers of recall or recommitment previously possessed by the old Board. The provisions of the Crimes Act 1928 with respect to indeterminate sentences were then repealed but with a saving of their operation in cases in which persons so released might subsequently be recalled or recommitted. Where a person was recalled, the Parole Board was empowered to substitute a fixed term for the indeterminate sentence still to be served and to fix a minimum term in respect of that substitute term for parole purposes. Many cases arose, however, in which the person recalled to gaol had committed another offence in respect of which he was imprisoned. A difficulty therefore arose with respect to the Board's dealing with the indeterminate sentence because the order for recall or recommitment could not take effect until the expiration of the whole term which the prisoner was undergoing. This difficulty could have been overcome by application to a Judge of the Supreme Court under section 46 of the Penal Reform Act 1956, but as that course would entail a separate application in respect of each prisoner, Mr. Justice Barry has suggested that the Board itself should be empowered to anticipate the coming into effect of the order for recommitment and to fix a term of imprisonment and a minimum term in relation thereto. Clause 4 confers on the Board the necessary power. This difficulty is of a transitory kind and will gradually disappear when indeterminate sentences are no longer in operation. For the present, however, it will greatly facilitate the operations of the Board if this clause is passed.

Where a person is sentenced at different times to terms of imprisonment, in respect of each of which terms a minimum period is fixed for parole purposes, it is necessary that the minimum terms should be brought together into one continuous term in

fairness to the person convicted. Section 27 of the Penal Reform Act made provision for courts to amalgamate minimum terms in this manner. In the cases to which reference was made in respect of clause 4, and in some other cases, it can happen that a sentence of imprisonment with a fixed minimum term has been imposed and that subsequently the Parole Board is called upon to impose another term and fix a minimum term. As the law stands at present, there is no specific provision for the amalgamation of such minimum terms, and application to a Supreme Court Judge is necessary for that purpose. The purpose of clause 5 is to grant the Parole Board powers of amalgamation in such cases similar in all respects to those which at present can be exercised by the courts.

The purpose of clause 6 is to provide that judicial notice shall be taken of the signature of the secretary of the Board and to make certificates signed by the secretary *prima facie* evidence of the making of determinations or decisions of the Board. Under the Penal Reform Act the Board was required to report from time to time to the Minister with respect to prisoners serving sentences of imprisonment upon the commutation of a death sentence. No provision was made for reporting upon the cases of persons convicted of murder whilst under the age of 18 years, who are ordered to be detained during the Governor's pleasure pursuant to section 473 of the Crimes Act 1957. Clause 7 adds such cases to those upon which the Board is required to report.

As the law stands at present, the Board cannot make a parole order until the minimum term fixed in respect of the prisoner has expired. Some members of the Board are of the opinion that the Board should be capable of making such an order before the expiration of the minimum term but so that it will take effect only upon or after the expiration of the minimum term. Since the Board can meet only at intervals, the necessity of waiting until the minimum term has expired in order to make the parole order sometimes has the effect of depriving the prisoner of

the benefit of reductions from the minimum term which he has earned under the regulations by his good conduct. The purpose of clause 8 is to make it possible, but not mandatory, for the order to be made before the expiration of the minimum term. Where an order is so made, it is possible for the prisoner, before it becomes effective, to be guilty of some conduct which would rob him of the right to early release. For that reason a proviso is added authorizing the Board to revoke a parole order before it has taken effect.

In relation to the Parole Board's exercise of its powers as successor of the indeterminate sentences Board, the Penal Reform Act authorized the old provisions of the Crimes Act to be read as though references therein to the indeterminate sentences Board were references to the Parole Board, and as though references therein to reformatory prisons were references to gaols. It has been pointed out that where orders or warrants for recommitment were made before the commencement of the Penal Reform Act it is necessary to make a similar provision in respect of the wording of the orders and warrants themselves, and that is the sole purpose of clause 9. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

#### THE CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT (SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS) BILL.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a small Bill to amend the Constitution Act for the purpose of increasing the amounts specially appropriated respectively for "The Clerk and expenses of the Executive Council" and for "the Clerk and expenses of the Legislative Council." The original provision for the Clerk and expenses of the Executive Council was made in the year 1850, when an amount of £400

was provided. In Part 4 of Schedule D of the Constitution Act 1855, the amount was increased to £1,500 and that amount has not been varied. However, the expenditure exceeded £1,500 in the financial year 1955-56, and it is unlikely to be less in the future. The main cause of the increase in expenditure has been the higher rates of salaries for public officers, due to the general revisions of salaries in 1954 and 1956.

In recent years the cost of the Clerk and expenses of the Executive Council has been as follows:—

| Financial Year. | Total Expenditure. |    |    |
|-----------------|--------------------|----|----|
|                 | £                  | s. | d. |
| 1954-55         | 1,486              | 6  | 7  |
| 1955-56         | 1,620              | 17 | 11 |
| 1956-57         | 1,810              | 14 | 7  |

The estimated expenditure for the current financial year is £1,906, and it is anticipated that the maximum annual expenditure will not exceed £2,000.

Provision is made in clause 2 of the Bill for a sum not exceeding £2,000 for the Clerk and expenses of the Executive Council. The annual provision of £1,500 was exceeded in expenditure by £120 17s. 11d. in the financial year 1955-56, and by £310 14s. 7d. in 1956-57—a total excess of £431 12s. 6d. Provision is made in clause 3 to authorize the Treasurer to apply that sum out of Consolidated Revenue to get rid of the over-expenditure involved. Under Part 4 of Schedule D of the Constitution Act, an amount of £5,000 per annum is specially appropriated for “The Clerk and Expenses of the Legislative Council”. The expenditure incurred under this item is on account of the salaries of the permanent and temporary officers of the Legislative Council and miscellaneous expenditure, such as stores, and so on. With the exception of five years, expenditure each year until the financial year 1945-46 was below—frequently it was considerably below—the sum of £5,000 specially appropriated. The first of those five years was 1891-92, when expenditure was £150 more. The excesses in the following years were: 1892-93, £100; 1924-25, £400; 1925-26, £600; and 1926-27, £500.

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Each year since 1945-46, expenditure has exceeded the sum of £5,000 by a steadily increasing amount, due principally to successive increases in rates of salaries, cost-of-living allowances, and the prices of various commodities comprising contingencies, and to the introduction of the payment of overtime to the staff. It is now approximately £14,000 in excess of the £5,000 provided under Schedule D. Consequently, the existing provision is totally inadequate. The sum of £22,500 provided in the Bill should meet all requirements for several years to come and be sufficient also to meet additional expenditure in any year for possible payments in lieu of long service leave. The amount provided in Part 4 of Schedule D of the Constitution Act 1855 is £5,000 and this amount has remained unchanged for 102 years.

Provision for expenditure in excess of £5,000 a year has, for some time past, been provided in the Appropriation Act under the relevant item. The actual cost for the Clerk and expenses of the Legislative Council in the last two years has been—

| Financial Year. | Total Expenditure. |  |
|-----------------|--------------------|--|
|                 | £                  |  |
| 1955-56         | 16,114             |  |
| 1956-57         | 18,876             |  |

It is estimated that the expenditure for the current financial year will be £18,910. Provision is made in clause 2 for a sum not exceeding £22,500 to be specially appropriated for the Clerk and expenses of the Legislative Council. The remaining provisions of the Bill are routine matters that are self-explanatory. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. R. R. RAWSON (Southern Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

#### CRIMES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill deals with six different aspects of the law relating to crimes, and I propose to explain in some detail the amendments proposed to be made. The

principal purpose of the measure is to make another onslaught against the grave problem of protecting the community from the drunken and reckless driver. Since the Government has been in office, several important steps have been taken to meet this evil. Abuses of the bona fide traveller law, which resulted in a considerable amount of drinking on Sundays and led to the life of the motorist on Sunday being made a misery by the activities of people who had spent all day in an hotel under the pretence of having travelled 20 miles or more and being in need of refreshment, have been tackled. The strength of the Police Force has been increased considerably, more motor car and motor cycle patrols have been put on the road and improved communications and equipment have led to the policeman being much more in evidence, which has resulted in a great improvement in general road manners and conduct. Penalties for dangerous driving and driving under the influence of liquor have been substantially increased, and trial before a jury has been introduced for serious driving offences.

The Government believes that these measures have contributed to a general improvement in the standard of driving and road courtesy, and that a large proportion of motorists are responding to the repeated appeals to drive safely, and "if you drink don't drive; if you drive don't drink." Unfortunately, however, the accident rate, particularly at week-ends, has remained substantially high, and a recent survey conducted by the Police Force, with the assistance of Dr. Birrell, the newly appointed police surgeon, has drawn the community's attention once again to the considerable economic loss, misery and hardship caused by deaths on the roads. This survey shows that Saturday is by far the worst day for both accidents and arrests for driving under the influence of liquor, and the worst time on every day for both these offences is from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

An examination of a series of inquests resulting from road accidents reveals that alcohol has been present in the blood of the victims of 64 per cent. of these accidents, and Dr. Birrell estimates that of the 582 road deaths and 13,483

injuries over the last twelve months, alcohol was associated with 375 of these road deaths and 8,200 of these injuries, or, to put it another way, a 400-bed general hospital or its equivalent is considered necessary to handle the motor accidents that occur in the metropolitan area alone at the present time, and the estimated annual cost of maintaining a general hospital of this size is £650,000. This, of course, takes no account of the economic loss that results from people being maimed and put out of circulation as a result of road accidents, nor of the hardship, sorrow and misery which accrue to relatives from these accidents.

Further evidence of the part played by alcohol in traffic accidents has been obtained by Dr. Birrell, since he has taken up duty as police surgeon, by making examinations of casualty victims treated in the public hospitals. These casualties were not charged because their injuries were such as to render it impracticable to make any general tests as to their condition, but the following blood alcohol estimations, obtained by Dr. Birrell, are rather revealing:—

|                                          | per cent. |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Driver head on into tram ..              | .274      |
| Driver head on into taxi ..              | .142      |
| Driver turned car over on safety zone .. | .273      |
| Driver killed hitting tram ..            | .220      |
| Driver turned car over ..                | .174      |
| Driver of motor cycle hit car            | .151      |
| Taxi driver in accident ..               | .115      |

When it is realized that there is almost general agreement that any blood-alcohol level over .15 shows an incapacity to drive a motor vehicle, and when there is general agreement that any percentage over .2 would in every case make a person incapable, the seriousness of the position can be realized.

The nature of the problem is such that accurate statistics can never be obtained, but all the evidence available to the Government tends to show that the magnitude of the problem is far greater than can ever be proved by statistics.

Many people have pressed, and are pressing, for a compulsory blood test as a means of assisting in the conviction of

motorists under the influence of alcohol driving on the road. The Government introduced the voluntary blood test last year, and its operation has been kept under constant scrutiny. There is no doubt that it has been a considerable factor in assisting in the determination of the guilt or innocence of drivers who are apprehended by the police and alleged to be driving under the influence of alcohol. But there have been serious difficulties in providing the necessary facilities for the taking of samples and having them tested. Despite the assistance of Dr. Lindell and other members of the Hospitals and Charities Commission, there has been considerable reluctance on the part of the medical profession to assist in taking blood tests. The Government believes this is due to three factors.

First, the time spent by a doctor waiting around a court for a case to be heard is quite considerable, even though the courts, whenever possible, arrange for the doctor to give his evidence and get away as soon as possible. This type of case is strenuously contested as, no doubt, it should be because a conviction will lead to a substantial limitation on the freedom of the individual.

Secondly, doctors have been very strongly attacked by counsel for the defence in a number of cases and, not being used to legal procedures, they feel that counsel are attacking their personal integrity; they are unable to see that it is in the interests of the proper administration of justice that an accused person should be defended vigorously.

Thirdly, there has been a belief among doctors that if they take a blood test from a person who has consented to such a test being taken, and subsequently it could be shown that the person was under the influence of liquor at the time that the test was taken, he could claim that he had been assaulted by the doctor. Such a proposition, of course, is difficult for the layman to understand, but the strict interpretation of the law in favour of personal liberty might well lead to such a result.

In addition, doctors are reluctant to carry out general medical examinations for the same reasons. The Government

believes a general medical examination is necessarily ancillary to a blood test and is just as important, so far as the court is concerned, as the result of the blood test. The amendments proposed by the Bill will, it is believed, help doctors to overcome their difficulties.

Clauses 2 and 4 deal with the following points in relation to driving offences: Under section 318 of the Crimes Act 1957, a member of the Police Force may without warrant apprehend a driver who commits the offence of reckless driving within his view if the driver refuses to give his name and address or fails to carry an identifying number on his car. The present provision renders it doubtful whether a policeman is entitled to act if he has reasonable grounds for believing that an offence has been committed or whether he acts at his peril and, if it is subsequently established that a person did not commit an offence, then he has no protection. It is proposed to amend the law to make it perfectly clear that a policeman may apprehend the driver of a motor car for the offence of reckless driving if he has reasonable grounds, based upon his own personal observations, for believing that the driver has committed an offence and that the driver has refused to give his name or the driver's car does not bear an identifying number.

In relation to the offence of driving under the influence of intoxicating liquor, a policeman has power to arrest without warrant any person who is apparently under the influence, but only whilst he is driving a motor car. In practice, most arrests made by policemen are a result of some accident occurring, and there is grave doubt whether the powers conferred by section 319 are sufficient to authorize a policeman to arrest a person who he has reasonable grounds for believing is under the influence and who he has reasonable grounds for believing has been driving a motor car. To rectify this position, it is proposed to confer on the policeman the same powers of arrest in relation to the offence of driving under the influence as he has in relation to felonies. This means that he may arrest any person if he has reasonable grounds for believing that

the person has committed an offence, even if it subsequently appears that no offence was in fact committed. The Government feels that this amendment is proper and necessary having regard to the gravity of the offence and the urgent necessity for protecting the community. A further small amendment in clause 2 removes a definition of "highway" which is superfluous. This was an error in drafting that occurred when driving under the influence was made an indictable offence.

The next series of amendments relates to the provisions which were introduced into the Crimes Act in 1955 relating to the taking of blood tests of drivers suspected of driving under the influence of liquor. A technical correction is made to the method of expressing percentages, but the more important amendments relate to the admissibility of doctors' and analysts' evidence by certificates. As I said before, it has been found in practice that doctors and analysts are spending a large proportion of their time in court, or rather waiting about the court for cases to come on. In an attempt to obviate the waste of the valuable time of these professional men, it is proposed to allow evidence by the doctor that he has taken the blood to be tendered in the form of a certificate, and also for the analyst to be able to tender a certificate containing the result of his analysis. It is not proposed at this stage to allow the analyst to offer certificate evidence as to any estimations or back calculations. This will mean where the accused person does not propose to contest the evidence of the test, that the doctor and the analyst will not have to attend court. Provision is made that this certificate shall be served on the accused person not less than ten days before the hearing and that the accused can, not less than four days before the hearing, require the doctor or analyst to attend for cross-examination. The Governor in Council is also empowered to make regulations controlling generally the methods and procedures to be adopted in relation to blood tests, and it is hoped that the regulations made under this power will ensure uniformity in procedures and minimize the possibility of errors.

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Another important amendment in this series will protect doctors who take blood samples from people who have consented but who, it subsequently appears, were not capable of giving a valid consent because of their inebriated condition. Doctors have told me on many occasions that they are reluctant to take blood samples because of the possibility of actions being taken against them by the persons from whom they had taken the sample. I believe these fears are genuinely held by doctors, although the possibility of successful action against them seems to me to be somewhat remote. This provision will protect doctors who take samples with the consent of the accused, even if the sample subsequently shows that he was completely intoxicated when he gave the consent.

It is the Government's intention not to be stampeded into the introduction of a compulsory blood test, which necessarily carries with it the implication that the test itself shall be conclusive evidence of the drunkenness or otherwise of the person accused. Likewise, the Government does not intend to break down the proper safeguards that have been designed over the centuries for the protection of every person accused of a crime. Its object in this legislation is to make the voluntary blood test work properly. Steps have been taken by Dr. Birrell to seek the co-operation of resident medical officers in hospitals and, although so far he has not had very much success in this regard, the Government believes that the medical profession will ultimately realize its responsibilities and, in view of the protection given to them by this legislation, it is hoped that they will give greater assistance in the future than they have done in the past.

Steps have been taken to supplement the analyst staff in the Government Pathologist's Office so that blood can be quickly and efficiently examined, and the introduction of the certificate form of evidence will result in some saving of travelling time and waiting time of the present analysts and, consequently, their services will go further. The biggest problem facing any Government in tackling this question is to convince

the community that it cannot afford the consequences which result from persons hopelessly under the influence of alcohol driving a lethal weapon which a motor car becomes in their hands on the highway. Despite the provisions contained in the Bill, the educating of the community will still be in the forefront of the Government's mind in its campaign against this evil.

Clause 3 corrects an error that occurred in the printing of the consolidating Crimes Bill, which was recently passed by this House. As honorable members will observe, a line dropped from section 365 appears in section 368. The amendments in clauses 5 and 6 relate to the powers and procedures of a court in relation to persons who are convicted whilst on probation. They are designed to remove difficulties or limitations and to provide in advance against difficulties which may arise rather than to meet difficulties which have already arisen. The Penal Reform Act 1956—which is reproduced in the Crimes Act 1957—empowered the courts to release offenders on probation and place them under the supervision of a probation officer during a specified period referred to as “the probation period,” and prescribed the procedure to be followed in cases where the offender does not comply with the probation order.

Sub-section (3) of section 13 of the Penal Reform Act—which now appears in section 517 of the Crimes Act 1957—provides that where a probation order has been by the Supreme Court or a court of general sessions and the probationer is convicted by a court of petty sessions for an offence committed during the probation period, that court of petty sessions may direct the probationer to be brought before the Supreme Court or the Court of General Sessions which made the order. It is proposed that this provision should be made general in its application, so that not only a court of petty sessions, but any court which convicts a probationer for such an offence, may remand him to the court which made the probation order.

Sub-section (4) of the same section empowers the court which made the

probation order to deal with the probationer for the offence in respect of which the order was made if the probationer is convicted of another offence committed during the probation period. There is some doubt, however, whether the sub-section as at present framed covers the case of a conviction before the court which made the order. The proposed amendment is designed to remove this doubt.

Section 29 of the Gaols Act 1928 enables a prisoner who is under sentence or awaiting trial, and who is charged with an offence, to be brought before the court to answer the charge on an order of a Judge or a justice and without a writ of *habeas corpus*. It is proposed by sub-clause (2) of clause 6 to make it clear that section 29 of the Gaols Act covers the case of a person charged with the breach of a probation order. The last of the four amendments to the provisions of the Penal Reform Act relates to minimum terms of imprisonment—a minimum term being part of a term of imprisonment during which the offender may not be released on parole. Section 26 of that Act—now section 531 of the Crimes Act 1957—deals with the fixing of minimum terms by courts when they are imposing sentences. Section 44 provides that in the case of terms of imprisonment being served at the commencement of the Act the Parole Board shall fix the minimum term.

Section 27 deals with the fixing of minimum terms in cases where several successive terms of imprisonment have been imposed. The words “as aforesaid” in sub-sections (1) and (2) of this section unduly confine its operations to cases in which minimum terms of imprisonment were fixed in the first instance by courts under section 26. As it is desirable that provisions of section 27 should apply also where minimum terms have been fixed by the Parole Board, it is proposed that the words in question should be omitted from the section.

At present the express provision for amalgamation of such minimum terms is limited to cases in which the person is convicted during the service of the first minimum term, but cases arise—particularly where there has been a release

on a bond or on probation—where the conviction in respect of which the prisoner is subsequently to be sentenced occurred before the conviction in respect of which he is already undergoing sentence. The existing sub-section does not expressly cover such a case, and consequently a special application to a Judge is necessary under another section of the Act to provide for the amalgamation. By omitting the reference in sub-section (1) of section 531 to conviction, and thus referring only to sentence, the sub-section will be made more general in its application, the necessary amalgamation will be achieved without the special application, and the procedure will be simplified accordingly.

The amendment contained in clause 7 gives effect to the recommendation of the Statute Law Revision Committee on amendments of the statute law for the removal of certain anomalies in sections 471, 472 and 572 of the Crimes Act 1928. That committee has recommended that a court, when it convicts an accused, may, on the application of any person who has suffered loss, make an order for damages against the accused to the extent of the damage suffered by the person whose property has been stolen or destroyed. It is proposed to make such an order enforceable in the same way as a civil debt, and it is felt that this summary procedure will be an added deterrent to criminals and a great help to members of the community whose property is damaged or destroyed as the result of the commission of crimes.

The last amendment relates to the powers of the court and the procedure to be followed in relation to breaches of bond by persons who have been convicted in the Supreme Court or in general sessions. It has been the practice in those courts, in cases in which it is thought desirable, to extend leniency to persons who have been convicted before them, to release those persons on bonds—known as common law bonds—to be of good behaviour for a certain period and to require them to appear before the court to receive sentence for the offence of which they have been convicted whenever they are required to do so. In view of the pro-

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visions enacted in the Penal Reform Act 1956 empowering the courts to release offenders on probation, the common law bonds are likely to become comparatively rare but, as many of these bonds are still current, it is desirable to clear up some difficulties and doubts which have arisen in regard to the procedure to be followed when the bonds are broken.

Whenever there is reason for believing that an offender has broken his bond, the practice is to refer the matter to the Judge who released him on the bond and that Judge, if he thinks fit, directs that the offender be brought before him to be dealt with. A notice or an order requiring the offender to appear is then served on him. Very commonly, the offender duly appears before the court in answer to the notice and in such cases there is no difficulty. Difficulty may arise however, first, if the offender is served with the notice but fails to appear before the court and, secondly, if the notice cannot be served on him. In the first class of case, it is the practice for the Judge who released the offender on the bond to issue a warrant directing the offender to be arrested and brought before him. It may happen, however, that when the offender is arrested under this warrant the Judge who issued it is not available to deal with the case, perhaps because he is sitting in another jurisdiction, or is on circuit in some other part of Victoria, or because the court is in vacation. In that case under the form of warrant which is at present in use there is no authority to keep the offender in custody until the Judge can deal with him and there is no power in any other Judge to deal with him. Furthermore, although it is clear that the Supreme Court has power to issue such warrants, the power of courts of general sessions to do so is not free from doubt. In the second class of case, that is where it has not been possible to serve a notice on the offender requiring him to appear for sentence, nothing can be done.

It is therefore proposed to deal with these difficulties by giving express power to issue a warrant for the arrest of the offender and for bringing him before the court and for his detention in custody, if necessary, until he is actually

brought before the court. It is proposed that in the first class of case this power be exercised by the Judge or chairman before whom the offender was required by notice to appear, upon his being satisfied that the notice was duly served on the offender and, in the second class of case, by any Judge or chairman of general sessions upon his being satisfied that reasonable efforts have been made to serve a notice on the offender but have been unsuccessful. In each case the warrants will direct that upon his arrest the offender be brought before the Judge who issued the warrant or some other Judge.

The Bill provides that when the offender is arrested and brought before a Judge, that Judge, if he is then sitting in court, may if he thinks fit deal with the offender forthwith or, whether he is sitting in court or not, remand him in custody or on bail to appear before the court at a specified time and place and that that court may then deal with him for the offence. The present practice is that only the Judge who released the offender on the bond in the first instance may sentence him on a breach of the bond, and usually it is desirable that the offender be dealt with by that Judge. It is considered desirable, however, that a more elastic provision should be made so as to enable a different Judge to deal with the offender if for any reason that Judge thinks it desirable to do so. The power to bring the offender before any Judge will also reduce to a minimum the possibility of the offender having to be kept in custody for any length of time before being dealt with, and if the Judge before whom he is brought thinks it unwise that he should deal with the offender he will have power to remand him and if he thinks fit to release him on bail pending his being brought before another Judge. Provision is also being made to cover the case of any offender who is being released on bail following his arrest on the warrant and who fails to answer to his bail.

I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. J. W. GALLAGHY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

## LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (LONG SERVICE LEAVE) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 13) on the motion of Sir Arthur Warner (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**The Hon. J. J. JONES** (Ballarat Province).—This Bill amends sections 157 and 163 of the Labour and Industry Act 1953, which was introduced by a Labour Government. Section 157 enables a person to apply to a court of petty sessions to determine whether he or she is entitled to long service leave, and provides that the application must be made within a certain period. Section 163 provides for the prosecution of an employer who fails to comply with the Act and also allows a margin of two years in which an alleged breach may be dealt with. This Bill is necessary to protect those who are entitled to long service leave but whose entitlement has been delayed by court proceedings. In his second-reading speech the Minister stated, *inter alia*—

Proceedings were taken in the Industrial Court in New South Wales in the case of *Haylor v. T. A. Robinson and Sons, Proprietary Limited*, and the magistrate held that the State law was applicable to employees in the industry. However, an appeal has been taken to the High Court of Australia by the employer to determine the question whether the refusal in 1951 by a Conciliation Commissioner to grant long service leave in that industry excludes the operation of the State law.

According to a press report to-day, the appeal by the firm of T. A. Robinson and Sons Proprietary Limited to the High Court has been dismissed. That means that 400 or 500 members in the boot trade employees' union who are affected by that decision are entitled to long service leave. The Minister has stated that there are other industries, such as life assurance and shipping, which have come under notice. The Bill will protect the employees in those industries. In view of the fact that this measure gives protection to those who are entitled to long service leave, my party supports it.

**The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE** (North-Eastern Province).—The Country party supports this measure which continues

for another year the provision under which appeals may be finalized and decisions made in connexion with long service leave. This matter has been before the House for three or four years, and until some finality is reached, to protect the interests of those entitled to long service leave, the extension provided in this Bill is necessary.

**The Hon. J. A. LITTLE** (Melbourne North Province). — This is a simple measure, and I congratulate the Government for introducing it. This Bill protects the rights of those who could have been excluded by the effluxion of time from claiming long service leave. When the Bill which became the principal Act was presented it was not anticipated there would be the lengthy litigation that has occurred. Many phases of this legislation have developed. In Victoria, this matter came into prominence because the long service leave Bill was worded better than similar measures in other States where it had been applied to workers under Federal awards and there had been no challenge. For the first time, it became apparent that State legislation could cover people working under a Federal award. Doubts arose as to which workers under Federal awards could be covered. In some cases, Federal awards made provision for some form of long service leave, and it seemed obvious in those cases that the Federal award would override State provisions. Where there was no provision in a Federal award, or where the court considered the proposition but made no decision on it, or where a claim had been considered by the Federal court and had been allowed to lapse because neither side had pressed the claim, there seemed to be some doubt as to the status of the employees in those industries under Federal awards. That is what led primarily to the lengthy litigation that has developed, so that the period of eligibility for long service leave has needed to be extended from year to year.

On behalf of the trade union movement I thank the Government for legislating to extend the period for another year so as to provide an opportunity for the position to be thoroughly clarified. A

decision affecting the footwear industry in New South Wales has been given recently, and whether at this stage any good purpose will be served by employers' organizations making another appeal to the Privy Council is a matter for them to determine. This decision affected employees whose organization had an application for long service leave before the Federal tribunal but had not persevered with it. Whether the employers will appeal, in view of the fact that the Privy Council has already rejected a somewhat similar proposition, is a question for their legal advisers to determine. Whatever time is spent in this lengthy litigation, I feel a good purpose will be served in having the matter thoroughly thrashed out so that employees will ultimately know where they stand. As the decisions given to date have been in line with my thoughts, I have no reason to be disappointed.

Whilst it may be inconvenient, and perhaps harsh, to some workers to wait for such a long period before their entitlement to long service leave is definitely established, with such a big issue at stake I feel the delay might be well justified. The Victorian legislation granting long service leave was passed four years ago, and the purpose of the present amendment is to ensure that nobody will be excluded from his rights because of technicalities. I am pleased that the Government has brought forward the measure, and my party supports it.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### FRUIT AND VEGETABLES (INSPECTION) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 12) on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**The Hon. ARTHUR SMITH** (Bendigo Province).—It has been discovered that the authority of inspectors of the Department of Agriculture to intercept vehicles and search is open to question, and

many of them have been unable to apprehend persons who have been thought to be carrying infected fruit. To clear up any doubts, the Government has brought forward this Bill. Members of the Labour party believe there are many reasons why the Government's action should be supported. One would not like to see in Victoria similar happenings to those witnessed in New South Wales for many years. I personally have examined fruit affected by fruit fly infestation and it is very depressing to see what damage has been caused. Much of the fruit appears, on the outside, to be in good condition, but the moment it is squeezed it is found to be rotten inside. I have been stopped at road blocks at Wodonga, on the Hume Highway, and my car and person have been inspected in an attempt to locate infected fruit. It has been reported that on several occasions persons have refused to stop for inspectors and have attempted to intimidate them. Some motorists have threatened to drive over the inspectors. One appreciates that that type of action cannot be tolerated, but I should like the Minister to give an assurance that a close check will be placed on inspectors so as to ensure that their actions in policing this legislation will not cause much disturbance in the community. If the Minister of Agriculture gives that undertaking, no opposition will be offered by my party to the passage of the Bill.

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL** (North-Western Province).—The Country party supports this measure. I, personally, am particularly keen to see the measure go through as I realize what harm could be done to the Sunraysia and Robinvale areas if the ravages of the fruit fly are not arrested. This pest is travelling down the eastern coast from Queensland and is doing untold damages to the quality and to the marketing of fruit. I am gravely concerned that Government Departments are not worrying a great deal about controlling the pest. In South Australia, large sums have been spent in tackling the problem, despite the fact that that State has to contend with only one species of fly.

Last year the Victorian Department of Agriculture engaged men to check the incidence of fruit fly infestation in various districts of the State. Quite a number of people co-operated with the inspectors and allowed their vehicles to be examined, whether they were carrying fruit or not. However, a full-time check was not maintained. A resident of the Mildura area—he formerly lived in Western Australia where he experienced the ravages of fruit fly—noticed that trees in his backyard were affected and reported the matter to the Department. Consequently, the area was declared, and all fruit and vegetables had to be destroyed. Money was spent on spraying, and the export of oranges—particularly to New Zealand—was affected. Fruit had to be placed in cold storage and held at a certain temperature for fourteen days. The New Zealand authorities considered the matter so important that within 48 hours a representative was sent to Mildura to see what was being done. The fruit fly came into the Mildura area in fruit conveyed on a bus which actually carried notices of the Department of Agriculture. Fortunately, the reporter who detected the fly had the infected fruit destroyed in an incinerator. If he had not known what the fly was there might have been a very bad infestation.

If the fruit fly is discovered in the Melbourne metropolitan area those citizens affected by the necessary inspection and destruction of trees are compensated for damage done, but when the fruit fly is found in country districts, where the main commercial part of a crop is produced, the people involved are likely to be very seriously affected. That holds good both in respect of the quality of the fruit and the economic conditions of the growers who must undertake a campaign of eradication. The departmental officers have been doing a particularly good job, being always most courteous and efficient. Last year the fly was detected in fruit being conveyed across the Murray bridge at Mildura, and so the fruit growing in that centre had to be put through the cool stores, with resultant difficulty and loss. If this menace ever gains an extensive hold, there will be expense

due to the necessity for fruit to be chilled and stored for a fortnight, in addition to the extra expenditure necessitated by inspection before the fruit can be despatched.

The fruit fly could infest dried fruits also, and the ultimate loss in the various dried fruit-growing centres of northern Victoria could be from £10,000,000 to £12,000,000. There are extensive areas where citrus fruits are predominantly growing. The South Australian authorities have on duty at the State border police inspectors who watch the position closely and stop every vehicle compulsorily. A month ago a South Australian car was stopped as it was about to re-enter that State. The people in the car were asked by the inspector whether they had any fruit with them. They said that they had been to Queensland, but five times denied that they had fruit in the car. However, the vehicle was searched, and several maggoty custard apples were found amongst the clothing. A fortnight ago a transport vehicle was pulled up at the border and the driver was asked whether he had any fruit with him. He replied that he had a few oranges which he had obtained at Gosford in New South Wales. These were examined and fruit fly eggs were found in the fruit.

In Victoria, where we are free—and it is most important that we should remain free—of the pest, a good job is being done, but unfortunately it is only a limited job. The Bill provides a good step in the right direction. To-day, people will drive their cars over the border of and through the State, and will take no notice of inspectors. Notices are affixed along the roads. Motorists can see these notices, and at a centre through which they pass they can see an officer with his peaked cap. Yet they ignore the inspector, who has no power to take action. Some travellers may contend that the proposals in the Bill will confer too much power. Authority such as is set forth in this measure already obtains in the quarantining of stock from overseas; plant stocks also must be quarantined, and there is strict regulation of these matters. Although regulations to afford

*The Hon. A. R. Mansell.*

protection from the visitation of the fruit fly have been promulgated, there is no power to enforce those regulations.

Tons of canning peaches are being produced by ex-servicemen and others in and about the Mildura area, across the Murray in New South Wales, and elsewhere. If the fruit fly should attack the peach crops many persons will suffer disastrously. The time has come when the Commonwealth and the States should get more closely together. Insufficient is being done to eradicate this pest, as well as others. In South Australia another fly is already operating and, if it is brought into Victoria, nothing can stop its ravages. The proper course is to ensure completely adequate inspection and care.

**The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN** (Monash Province).—I assure Mr. Mansell that even we in the outer suburbs of the metropolis have had some personal experience of the fruit fly and the necessity for its eradication. The area in which I live was raided two or three times by inspectors, who came along courteously and did their job thoroughly. After a while our district was declared free. Then, however, it was redeclared and further work had to be undertaken. Many people complained of the confiscation and destruction of their crops, and examined the question of compensation. But the fruit fly is a national peril. As in the case of other pests, it has come in with the motor car and the aeroplane. The white butterfly has descended upon us from the jungles of India and that visitant has had a tremendous effect upon the growth of table greens.

I have read with close interest the powers proposed to be conferred on inspectors. I know that these will be exercised judiciously and sensibly. I think Mr. Mansell might have pressed for more publicity in campaigning against the fruit fly. The mere placing of a notice at a roadside may not be enough when a vehicle is being driven rapidly into a particular centre. It may even be driven at such speed that the inspector himself is not seen. I emphasize that there is insufficient

publicity. The press should be asked to make the position more widely known than it is to-day. Notices should be erected in all the townships through which interstate traffic passes.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL.—There are already notices.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—It seems to me that the more civilization we have and the more facilities our people are given, the more selfish and uninterested they become. Departmental inspectors have a duty to discharge and we, as citizens, should co-operate. We cannot expect interest without co-operation. I think what Mr. Mansell would want is a system of proper road blocks into which vehicles would be directed. I have frequently talked with members who have just reached Melbourne from Brisbane. A man who left South Australia yesterday may be in Queensland to-morrow.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL.—There are road blocks.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—Then it seems that they require to be properly and thoroughly manned and administered, and that these should be backed by the co-operation of the public.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL.—The trouble is that the people will not co-operate. That is why additional powers are required.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—I have emphasized that the powers proposed by the Bill must be exercised thoroughly and judiciously. Any practising lawyer will aver that the penalty clause, if not carefully interpreted, might lead to grave injustices. The matter of proof arises and the aspect of commonsense must be considered. Every reasonable precaution should be taken to bring to the notice of citizens the necessity for co-operation. If they persist in disregarding public safety, they deserve to be dealt with strictly. The powers provided by the Bill are really extended police powers, but the authorities should do everything possible to ensure that our citizens appreciate what they are required to do.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Power to inspector to stop vehicle).

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—In reply to Mr. Smith, I believe that the powers of the officers at present are exercised judiciously and sensibly. I can see no reason why these powers will not be so applied. If they are not, the position will be rectified.

In reply to the remarks of Mr. Mansell, the Department appreciates the co-operation extended to its officers following the outbreak in the Mildura area. The officials and the growers got together and did a remarkable job in a short period. I pay tribute to Mildura growers for what was achieved in that district. Fruit fly has been the subject of discussion at almost every meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council. In New South Wales the fruit fly is accepted as something that cannot be got rid of, and the authorities do the best they can. They are not as sympathetic towards Victoria and South Australia as they might be. Possibly, if we were in the same position as they are, we might not be as anxious to go to the lengths that are proposed in this Bill. However, fruit fly has not spread here to any great extent. It would be disastrous to the fruit and vegetable industry if extensive areas in Victoria became infected.

It is realized that fruit fly is hard to combat. If there are to be road blocks on every road leading into the State, the cost will be extremely high. I agree with Mr. Mansell that we should do everything possible to keep the plague out of Victoria. I think members will agree that up to date a good job has been done and that the organization now is more effective than it was twelve months ago. The standard will be maintained.

I would inform Mr. Brennan that a lot of money is being spent in publicity through the press, advertisements in railway trains, lectures in schools, notices on the screens of picture theatres, and in other avenues. If members can mention any medium that has

not been explored, the Department will look into the matter. In the inner country areas the people are as anxious about this problem as growers in Mildura and in other distant parts. Apple growers in Doncaster are concerned. There was an outbreak in Kew, but not in Doncaster. Due to the prompt action of officers of the Department of Agriculture, the area was proclaimed and dealt with. We are fully alive to the danger of the fruit fly to our fruit and vegetables, and we will do our best by research work to combat it. I understand the Government entomologist of Queensland is about to visit America where the idea of dealing with the plague by a parasite is being developed. The Department is fully alive to its responsibilities in this matter.

**The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE** (North-Eastern Province).—The road block established at Wodonga probably has, through the number of cases it has detected, done more to prevent infestation in Victoria than any other station. It is situated on the narrow roadway between Wodonga and Albury. Many people living in Wodonga work in Albury, and they cross the border every day. No matter how many times a day they traverse the road, they are stopped by the inspectors. I am wondering whether an honour badge could be instituted to be placed on the cars of these permanent travellers so that they will not be compelled to stop each time they come to the station. At a busy period of the day a long wait is involved because a number of cars are lined up. I feel that a system should be introduced under which these permanent travellers could be put on their honour not to carry fruit from Albury, so they could be allowed to pass this point without an inspection. That would assist not only in the publicity campaign but also would meet the convenience of those who desire to co-operate with the authorities. Further, it would halve the number of cars waiting at the inspection point. Traffic would be speeded up and much time would be saved.

Several residents of Wodonga have told me that they would be prepared to give an undertaking that they would

not transport fruit. Some of them come home for their midday meals, but they have to stop and be inspected on each occasion. They believe that could be overcome by the issue of a pass to local residents doing business between the two towns. It would assist to speed up the inspection of other cars by the inspectors.

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL** (North-Western Province).—I agree with the remarks of Mr. Swinburne. We find a similar position operating on the bridge at Mildura. Fruit produced in New South Wales is marketed in Victoria. The position on the New South Wales side is controlled the same as it is in Victoria. If my son brings oranges or grapefruit over the river to be packed, he is stopped on each occasion. Every time I come over I bring a dip tin of grapefruit or oranges, and I am pulled up repeatedly. The inspectors do their work efficiently, but a string of cars is held up at that point. Recently the Premier and his wife were at Mildura, and they had fourteen grapefruit which I had given to Mrs. Bolte. As soon as I came across, I had to get a certificate for her. When Mrs. Bolte arrived at the aerodrome, an inspector asked her if she had a certificate but the secretary had it in his case. Before we got into the reception room, she was asked, "Have you a certificate?" There was nothing officious about it and it was all done nicely. I pay tribute to the officers for the way in which they do their work, and I ask the Minister to take a note of that.

**The Hon. J. A. LITTLE**.—I hope the inspectors are as nice to all other people.

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL**.—They are.

**The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN**.—They destroy the fruit nicely and courteously.

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL**.—If the fruit is clean, they give a certificate. If Mr. Brennan had infested fruit, I am pleased that he was caught.

**The Hon. J. A. LITTLE**.—You do not suggest that the honour system mentioned by Mr. Swinburne should cover all people who bring in fruit.

**The Hon. A. R. MANSELL**.—I do not. There is only the water of the Murray between us. We grow fruit on the New

South Wales side of the border and it is packed and transported into Victoria. There are fruit fly inspectors on the New South Wales side and the fruit must be cleared; otherwise, it cannot come forward. The inspectors know the areas that are clear.

The Hon. J. A. LITTLE.—A citizen from the centre of New South Wales might come along with one orange, which is taken from him. It would be difficult to explain why he should lose one orange, whereas cases of oranges can be brought in. He would want to know what the law provided.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL.—Mr. Brennan mentioned the need of publicity. Growers in Mildura decided to pay a levy of 3d. a case to augment the work of the Department. There is much publicity. Lectures are given in the schools regularly, and the scholars know what is involved. As soon as a person gets off the plane he is asked, "Have you any fruit?" The fruit is placed in a container and treated. I repeat that this work is done most efficiently.

The Hon. ARTHUR SMITH (Bendigo Province).—I appreciate the explanation of the Minister to the query I raised. I was not doubting the integrity of the officers, but the Department of Agriculture should investigate the possibility of a check being made around the clock. I think a few people who pass through at night are not checked.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN (Monash Province).—I appreciate the remarks of Mr. Mansell, which indicate clearly that he is keenly interested in this problem. However, I emphasize that the fruit destroyed in our place was not infected but was merely grown in an area which was blanketed. We agreed that it was a wise precaution to destroy all fruit in that particular area. Our consciences are absolutely free.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I undertake to have the matters raised investigated.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

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

## EDUCATION BILL.

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

## ADJOURNMENT.

RENTAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU: PROPERTY IN SOUTH MELBOURNE—LATROBE VALLEY WATER AND SEWERAGE BOARD: OUTFALL SEWER—PORT PHILLIP BAY: REGULATION OF SPEED BOATS.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

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

The motion was agreed to.

Sir ARTHUR WARNER (Minister of Transport).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

The Hon. BUCKLEY MACHIN (Melbourne West Province).—I should like to ask the Minister in charge of the House to direct the attention of the appropriate authority—I think it is the Fair Rents Board—to conditions obtaining at South Melbourne in regard to the tenancy of a property situated at 38 Market-street. Prior to October, 1956, this dwelling was let at a rental of 17s. 6d. a week. Following a fire on the property, the tenant was forced to quit, and the house was then renovated and purchased by a reputable firm, whose name appears in the rate book of the South Melbourne City Council. At present, a Greek woman, her daughter, and their respective husbands, together with a boy aged 12 years, are residing in the dwelling which occupies a frontage of 24 feet and a depth of 60 feet. The rental they are paying is £7 a week. Last night I visited the house, at the rear of which is a wash-house with a wooden bench at one end and a tin bath and a pair of troughs at the other end. There is no hot water service and no copper. In the kitchen, there is a gas stove—the only cooking facility—which was installed by the present tenants. The house was scrupulously clean, but there was nothing to justify a rental of £7 weekly. Firms which are supposed

to be reputable, and which have so-called reputable estate agents acting on their behalf, should not be permitted to "take on" migrants who come to this country and who, during naturalization ceremonies, are exhorted "to be one of us." The unfortunate victims in this instance are unable to speak our language. They have no means of protection. They must have shelter. It is an indictment of our rent control system that this state of affairs should be allowed to persist. I ask the Minister of Transport to take up the question with the appropriate authorities with a view to providing some measure of protection to members of the community.

**Sir ARTHUR WARNER** (Minister of Transport).—If the house in question has only recently been let to the present tenants, the matter would not come within the purview of the Fair Rents Board. The Rental Investigation Bureau was established specifically for the purpose of inquiring into unfair rents, and although approximately 200 complaints have been investigated, very few genuine cases have been discovered. Possibly in the case cited by Mr. Machin, the present tenants are purchasing the property on the basis of repayments at the rate of £7 weekly. However, if the relevant information is passed on to Mr. Condon, secretary of the Bureau, he will inspect the property and discuss the matter with the landlord.

**The Hon. R. W. MAY** (Gippsland Province).—I desire to refer to a matter of great concern in Gippsland, namely the Latrobe Valley outfall sewer. It is now some time since the Premier carried out an inspection of the outfall sewer. I wish to be perfectly fair to the Government and to the Premier, as it has been a busy time for them. However, the Government should be quite fair to the people of Gippsland. The longer the present situation is allowed to continue, the greater will be the seepage, and the concentration of a very toxic poison in the ground will be increased. Further, the more time that elapses, the greater will be the concentration of seepage, and the longer will it be before the land can be reclaimed. The effluent is

having disastrous results and, to my way of thinking, it is diabolical that such a blot on Gippsland should be permitted.

On 4th November, I wrote to the Premier concerning this matter, and I received the following reply:—

Dear Mr. May,

With reference to your letter of 4th instant, concerning the Latrobe Valley outfall sewer, I wish to say that, following on my inspection of the area last month, I indicated that I proposed to make another visit to the district to investigate complaints from local residents.

You will appreciate, I am sure, that I will not be able to make this further visit until Parliament rises.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY E. BOLTE.

I have received letters from various people who reside in the region of the outfall sewer drain, and although I shall not quote them in full, some extracts should prove interesting. The first, written by H. W. Adeney, president of the Outfall Sewer Defence Association, states, *inter alia*—

I made a brief inspection of portion of the outfall sewer open channel to-day (November 4) and found that very serious seepage is occurring. The Board does not appear to be taking any action to combat these bad spots. It seems to me that in all probability the whole channel is seeping but only the very bad portions are visible on the ground.

The odour from the channel varies with the weather conditions but continues to cause serious discomfort from time to time.

As yet the drainage facilities have not been tested as the year has been an abnormally dry one, but considerable concern is felt if we should have another year of record rainfall.

In another letter, written from Longford, via Sale, on 5th November, 1957, Victor Bond, states—

As our Parliamentary representative I appeal to you for immediate action to stop the extensive seepage and pollution of my waterholes and springs on my property at Longford.

I have about 20 to 25 chains of seepage which is killing all vegetation with which it comes into contact, all the springs near the channel are polluted and two waterholes are heavily polluted and unfit for stock. As my 12,000 sheep will be dependent on these dams in the summer, I will have heavy casualties if dams and springs are not fenced off.

There are 1,000 acres in my property worth in the vicinity of £50,000 but under the present set up of this open outfall sewer it is worth about two pinches of salt. I demand fair play and immediate piping of this monstrosity of a thing.

In a report published in the *Sun News-Pictorial*—

**The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).**

—The honorable member has read sufficient to indicate the nature of the grievance which he wishes to bring forward. Newspaper reports on this matter are scarcely admissible.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—The president of the Shire of Rosedale stated that eels crawled out of a creek which had been polluted with the seepage from the sewer, and died in close proximity to it. Ducks, which landed on the surface, failed to rise again because of the toxic nature of the pondage area, and in the vicinity of the seepage, worms had come to the surface and died. This is a most serious position. The people have advocated the progressive piping of this effluent to the sea. I suggest that the Government give serious consideration to piping this drain section by section, and that, in the interests of the people concerned and the natural beauty of the Gippsland Lakes, it should declare its policy in regard to the outfall sewer.

**The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN (Monash Province).**—Mr. President, would I be in order in making a slight correction to some observations I addressed to the Minister of Transport in regard to speed boats?

**The PRESIDENT (Sir Clifden Eager).**  
—Is it a personal explanation?

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—Yes.

The PRESIDENT.—The honorable member may proceed.

The Hon. T. W. BRENNAN.—In order to obtain authoritative information in regard to this matter, I consulted the Harbor Trust Commissioners and I was supplied with a copy of the regulations. I was subsequently advised by telephone

that one of the regulations had been repealed. The new regulation is as follows:—

Regulation 40 (2)—

A mechanically powered vessel having a draft of less than seven feet of water shall not be navigated in the Port—

(a) In any manner whatsoever dangerous to any persons swimming or bathing in the vicinity of the vessel, or,

(b) At a rate of speed such that the vessel shall by its wash endanger the safety of any person, boat or structure in the Port, or,

(c) At a higher speed than:—

(i) Five nautical miles per hour over the ground in any waters lying within a distance of 300 yards from the low-water mark on the nearest foreshore;

(ii) Except with the consent of the Commissioners, ten nautical miles per hour over the ground in any other waters within the Port.

The motion was agreed to.

*The House adjourned at 11.2 p.m. until Tuesday, November 26.*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, November 19, 1957.*

The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald) took the chair at 4.4 p.m., and read the prayer.

### STATE RIVERS AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.

CENTRAL PLANT DEPOT,  
GOLDEN SQUARE.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

1. Whether action is being taken to obtain additional work for employees of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission's central plant depot, at Golden Square; if so—(a) on behalf of which public Departments the work will be effected; (b) what is the nature of the work; and (c) for how long will it continue?

2. When is it intended to increase the staff at the central plant depot?

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—The answers are—

1. (a) Work is being undertaken for the Railway Department, the Country Roads Board and the Bendigo City Council, in addition to work on plant owned by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. Other authorities and Departments have been advised that repair and overhaul facilities for mechanical plant are available at the central plant depot.

(b) The work comprises the overhaul of tractors, graders, excavators and rotary hoes.

(c) There is sufficient work in sight to keep the present employees of the central plant depot fully employed.

2. In view of the restrictions of the operations of the Commission and other authorities as a consequence of the limitation of loan funds, employment cannot be given to any additional labour at the workshops.

**MURRAY VALLEY DRAINAGE DISTRICT:**  
**BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION AND EARTHWORKS.**

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

1. What amount has been made available for bridge construction in the Murray Valley Drainage District during the current financial year?

2. How many bridges have been constructed and what is the length and width of each?

3. What yardage of earth has been moved in connexion with earthworks carried out by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for which the sum of £50,000 has been allocated?

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—The answers are—

1. A sum of £100,000 has been tentatively allocated to the construction of bridges, culverts and other structures during 1957-58, out of a total allocation of £175,000 for works in this district. Of this amount, it is expected that approximately £60,000 will be spent on bridges and culverts.

2. The following road and occupation bridges have been completed during the present financial year:—

- One 66 feet long by 20 feet wide;
- five 44 feet long by 20 feet wide;
- two 22 feet long by 20 feet wide.

Further bridges are approaching completion.

3. The quantity of earth moved by Commission plant from 1st July, 1957 to 8th November, 1957, was 134,000 cubic yards, involving an expenditure of £17,804. This work is being continued.

## HOUSING COMMISSION.

### CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF UNITS: CONTRACT AND DAY LABOUR COSTS.

**Mr. MUTTON** (Coburg) asked the Minister of Housing—

1. Whether contracts let recently by the Housing Commission for maintenance work on 100 housing units at the Commission's Heidelberg estate involved a cost of £3 per unit more than the estimated cost if the work were carried out by the Commission's own day labour staff?

2. Whether the foundations of houses built in the Heidelberg estate were not laid at sufficient depth to rest on the clay sub-soil?

3. Whether there is no steel reinforcement in many of the foundations of houses built in the Reservoir area?

4. Whether houses built at Traralgon for the Housing Commission by private building contractors needed re-blocking within four years of construction due to the use of hardwood instead of red gum for stumps and soleplates?

5. Whether the Housing Commission maintenance staff have been required to undertake the re-blocking of approximately 350 houses which were built for the Commission by private building contractors and that the cost of this work by the Commission's staff was considerably less per unit than the cost estimated by private contractors?

6. Whether pre-fabricated houses imported from Austria and erected for the Commission by a private building contractor were so poorly built that sagging of the roofs was clearly visible?

7. Whether, in the renovation of and conversion to residential standards of houses in the Olympic Village, the Housing Commission's maintenance staff completed several sections of the work at a cost much lower than that quoted in the lowest tender received from private contractors for the same work?

8. Whether Housing Commission maintenance staff have been engaged on major repairs to Commission houses at the same time as minor repairs and renovations have been carried out in the same houses by private contractors?

9. Whether increasing use is being made of private contractors for maintenance work on Commission houses whilst dismissals are threatened for certain of the Commission's own maintenance staff, many of whom have given long and loyal service to the Commission?

**Mr. PETTY** (Minister of Housing).—The answers are—

1. Five small contracts for house maintenance preparatory to external repainting at Heidelberg, covering a total of 167 units

at an average cost of approximately £9 per unit, were recently let. There is no reason to believe that the tenders accepted were £3 per unit in excess of cost by day labour.

2. These foundations were laid to depths specified by the architects. It is not necessary to lay foundations right on the clay subsoil as in some localities there is firm ground with adequate supporting power above the clay subsoil level.

3. This is likely to be the case as the specifications do not call for reinforcement in villa construction foundations where foundation conditions are good. The Commission specifies reinforcement only where such ground conditions are poor or non-uniform.

4. No. To the 7th June, 1957, 147 hardwood stumps had been replaced at Traralgon in houses aged five to six years. Current specifications require concrete stumps throughout the State.

5. Replacement of stumps is carried out when required, and recent prices submitted by contractors in the Latrobe Valley were lower than day labour costs.

6. Not to the knowledge of the Commission. Could the honorable member give addresses of the houses allegedly concerned?

7. This is not so. The Commission did not fully exploit the contract field but employed its own day labour staff in the interests of speed.

8. This could happen as a coincidence. Major maintenance, such as external repainting, is planned months ahead and it could be that a sewer blockage or broken window has to be attended to during the currency of the major work.

9. The Commission intends to carry out its maintenance work by the least costly method, having regard to the quality of the work, and to this end is obliged to let some of its maintenance work to public tender so that costs can be compared.

#### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

##### WARRAGUL HIGH SCHOOL: PROPOSED NEW BUILDING.

**Mr. COCHRANE** (Gippsland West) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Whether, in accordance with advice from the Education Department, received by him (Mr. Cochrane) by letter dated 23rd January last, that the Public Works Department had been asked to prepare an over-all plan for the siting of a new standard high school building at Warragul, any such plan has been completed; if not, what progress has been made in its preparation?

2. Whether any plans and specifications for the proposed new school building have been completed?

3. Whether it is anticipated that construction of the new school building will be commenced during the current financial year; if not, when?

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—The answers are—

1. Yes.

2. No.

3. I am advised that plans and specifications for first and second sections of a new high school building should be completed this financial year. It is not practicable at this stage to say when construction will be commenced.

#### MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND TRUSTEES.

##### APPOINTMENTS: HOLDING OF OFFICE: DUTIES AND MEETINGS.

**Mr. CLAREY** (Melbourne) asked the Minister of Lands—

1. Who are the present trustees of the Melbourne Cricket Ground?

2. What was the date of appointment of each trustee and for what period or periods each holds office?

3. What are the grounds, if any, upon which a trustee—(a) may be disqualified from holding office as such; (b) may forfeit his position; or (c) may be removed from office?

4. Whether trustees are obliged, as trustees, to perform any specific duties, or to attend at any minimum number of meetings?

5. Whether meetings of the trustees are held regularly; if so, at what intervals?

6. How many meetings of the trustees have been held during the current year and on what dates?

**Mr. K. H. TURNBULL** (Minister of Lands).—The answers are—

1. and 2. The following gentlemen are the present trustees of the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the dates of their appointment are:—

Name; Dates of Appointment.

Hon. Henry Stephen Bailey

Hon. William Slater

Hon. Thomas Hayes

Frank Livesey Mauger

Hon. Arthur Augustus Calwell

Stanley Radcliffe Lewis

Survivors of trustees appointed under Melbourne Cricket Club Act 1933.

Right Hon. Robert Gordon Menzies; 30th May, 1934.

Hon. Patrick John Kennelly; 9th October, 1946.

Hon. Leslie William Galvin; 15th October, 1947.

Sir John Gladstone Black McDonald, 16th July, 1952.

Hon. Patrick Leslie Coleman, 15th December, 1954.

Hon. Henry Edward Bolte, 30th November, 1955.

Hon. Gilbert Lawrence Chandler, 7th March, 1956.

Edwin Leonard Moran; 19th June, 1957.  
Hon. Arthur Gordon Rylah, 11th September, 1957.

William Trevor Long, *ex officio* as Secretary for Lands.

There is no limitation on the term of appointment of the trustees, except that William Trevor Long holds office so long only as he holds the office of Secretary for Lands.

3. The Melbourne Cricket Ground Act 1933 provides that if a trustee other than the Secretary for Lands dies or goes to reside out of the State of Victoria or desires to be discharged from or refuses or declines to act or becomes incapable of acting, the Governor in Council may appoint a new trustee in his place, but the number of trustees (including the Secretary for Lands) shall at no time exceed sixteen.

4. The duties of the trustees, as defined by the Melbourne Cricket Club Act 1933, are to hold the ground upon trust for the public to be maintained and used as and for a cricket ground and when not required for cricket for such other purposes as the trustees think fit and to manage and control the ground at their discretion.

The Act provides for the holding of meetings at which half the trustees shall constitute a quorum, but there is no provision that trustees shall attend any minimum number of meetings.

5. Meetings of the trustees are held as required and a sub-committee, comprising six trustees, meets very frequently.

6. Six meetings of the trustees have been held during the current year on the following dates:—25th January, 15th April, 30th May, 29th July, 26th August and 4th November.

The members of the sub-committee referred to in answer No. 5 are—Messrs. Bolte, Calwell, Kennelly, Lewis, Long, and Slater.

## SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE.

### SUPREME COURT OFFICE FEES.

**Mr. RAFFERTY** (Caulfield), chairman, presented a report of the Subordinate Legislation Committee on a regulation amending the Supreme Court office fees.

It was ordered that the report be laid on the table.

## PAPERS.

### MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD: ABANDONMENT OF TRAMWAY.

The CLERK, pursuant to the directions of several Acts of Parliament, laid certain papers upon the table.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition) (*By leave*).—One of the papers referred to by the Clerk related to a proposal to abandon a certain tramway service. I should like the Chief Secretary to indicate which tramway service it is intended to discontinue.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary) (*By leave*).—It is proposed by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board to abandon a short portion of the electric tramway in Mary-street and Beaconsfield-parade, St. Kilda, contingent on the Board being authorized to construct a new electric tramway in Park-street from Murray-street to Fitzroy-street. Application for approval by the Governor in Council to construct the latter tramway was made under the seal of the Board on 4th November, 1957. Actually, the proposal involves an adjustment of the tramway route. Attached to the relevant paper is a plan showing full details of the project.

## MOTOR CAR (REGISTRATION FEES) BILL.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. This measure amends the Second Schedule of the Motor Car Act 1951 by deleting the provision which imposes double registration fees on diesel driven motor vehicles. The decision to alter the law follows the recent announcement that the Commonwealth is to distribute to the States a proportion of the diesel oil tax on a formula that has been determined. It is estimated that as a result of this amendment, revenue from motor car registration fees will be reduced by approximately £200,000, but according to the latest advice from the Commonwealth, Victoria is likely to benefit to the extent of £700,000 through its participation in the allocation of the diesel oil tax.

Sub-clause (1) of clause 1 contains the short title, construction and citation. Sub-clause (2) provides that the Act will come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation by the Governor in Council published in the *Government Gazette*. The reason for including this provision is that the Government, being somewhat cautious, does not intend to

proclaim this legislation until it is certain that Victoria will participate in the diesel oil tax.

Sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (g) of Part B. of the Second Schedule of the principal Act provides that diesel-driven engines shall be assessed at double the registration fee applicable to other vehicles. By the deletion of this provision, as provided for in clause 2, the fee for diesel engines will be the same as for a motor vehicle driven by a petrol engine. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until next day.

#### GEELONG HARBOR TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The message from the Council relating to an amendment in this Bill was taken into consideration.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—The original request of the Geelong Harbor Trust Commissioners was for power to permit of increases being made in the maximum penalties under regulations similar to those provided under the Act. The Government approved of this principle. However, this provision was inadvertently omitted from the Bill. The object of the Council's amendment was therefore to provide that, in paragraph (u) of sub-section (2) of section 102 of the principal Act, as amended by sub-section (3) of section 12 of the Geelong Harbor Trust (Amendment) Act, No. 5607, the maximum penalty that may be fixed for a breach of any regulation be increased from £20 to £50 and the maximum daily penalty be increased from £5 to £10. By an oversight, the Government omitted to include in the penalties under the regulations the same relative increases as were provided in the body of the Bill. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—Paragraph (b) of sub-section (2) of section 12 of Act No. 5607, which amends the principal Act, pro-

vides, in relation to penalties, that every person guilty of an offence against the legislation shall be liable—

If no penalty is expressly provided to a penalty of not more than Twenty pounds, and in the case of a continuing offence to a further daily penalty of not more than Five pounds.

By the Council's amendment the expressions "Twenty pounds" and "Five pounds" are to be deleted and the words "Fifty pounds" and "Ten pounds" substituted. The increases are consistent with the penalty increases proposed in the Bill. As the increases will be covered by regulations, the Opposition cannot, at this stage, have any objection to the amendment, but it should have been given some indication of this proposal, in view of the fact that the Bill has been considered in another place. I am assured by my colleague, the honorable member for Brunswick West, that the proposed amendment is in keeping with the spirit of the Bill. Had it been more involved the Opposition would have requested a short adjournment in order that the matter might be investigated more closely. In the circumstances, the amendment is not opposed.

The motion was agreed to.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

The message from the Council relating to the amendments in this Bill was taken into consideration.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—There are six amendments to be considered, all of which the Government proposes to accept. Clause 8, as it was considered by this House, provided for the substitution of a new section 125 in lieu of the existing sections 121 to 125. Sub-section (2) of proposed new section 125 provides that the municipal clerk should be the returning officer. Sub-section (5) provided—

No returning officer or deputy returning officer shall be a candidate for the office of councillor at the election.

The amendment made by the Council inserts the words "a councillor or" after the words "shall be" in sub-section (5), and will have the effect of

providing that no returning officer or deputy returning officer shall be a councillor or a candidate at the election for a councillor. The Government did not intend to go so far, otherwise the amendment would have been incorporated in the Bill when it was drafted. However, the Minister in charge of the Bill in another place, who is skilled in local government matters in a practical way, accepted the amendment. Therefore, the Government accepts it in this House. Doubtless it will have the concurrence of the Opposition. I move—

That amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

**Mr. HOLLAND** (Flemington).—This matter was raised when the Bill was debated in this House, and Opposition members pointed out that such an amendment as that made by the Council would be desirable. Therefore, we agree with it.

The motion was agreed to.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—Originally, although the Bill provided for the appointment of returning officers and deputies at elections, no provision was made for the appointment of deputies to returning officers for polls in connexion with constitution, union, severance or subdivision of municipalities, the adoption or rescision of rating on unimproved capital values and proposals to borrow money. The matter was referred to during the debate in this Chamber, and I gave an undertaking to have it examined and if necessary to have an appropriate amendment made in another place. My promise has been fulfilled and the amendment made by the Council to new sub-paragraph (iii) of paragraph (i) of sub-section (2) of section 36 of the principal Act, contained in paragraph (a) of sub-clause (2) of clause 8, provides that the municipal clerk shall appoint a deputy at polls on questions of constitution, union, severance and subdivisions of municipalities. I move—

That amendment No. 2 be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—The third amendment made by the Council relates to new

paragraph (3) of section 325 of the principal Act, as contained in paragraph (b) of sub-clause (2) of clause 8, and inserts a similar amendment in relation to unimproved rating polls to that made in paragraph (a). I move—

That amendment No. 3 be agreed to.

**Mr. HOLLAND** (Flemington).—I wish to thank the Minister of Public Works for having examined the proposal that was enunciated in this House previously and for having agreed to have the provision amended.

The motion was agreed to.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—The fourth amendment made by the Council inserts similar words to those to which I have just referred in new sub-section (3) of section 400 of the principal Act, contained in paragraph (c) of sub-clause (2) of clause 8. That provision relates to the taking of polls on proposals to borrow money. I move—

That amendment No. 4 be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—Clause 10 amends section 131 of the principal Act, and provided originally for the returning officer in a borough to appoint places for the taking of a poll within the borough or within the subdivision concerned, but that if sufficient places could not be obtained within the subdivision the returning officer could appoint a place not more than one quarter of a mile from the subdivisional boundary. The amendment made by the Council provides that the words “half a mile” be inserted in lieu of the words “one quarter of a mile.” By this amendment the returning officer will, if necessary, be able to appoint a place for the taking of a poll up to half a mile from the subdivisional boundary. In regard to this amendment, I ask honorable members to consider this matter not in relation to boroughs near the metropolitan area but in relation to areas where geography and topography are factors in determining whether a booth shall be a half a mile or a quarter of a mile from the subdivisional boundary. I move—

That amendment No. 5 be agreed to.

The motion was agreed to.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—During the debate on the Bill in this House, I agreed to re-examine clause 12, which proposed by the addition of a new paragraph to subsection (1) of section 249 of the principal Act to make land used exclusively in connexion with the provision of ambulance services exempt from rating. I wanted to determine whether the provision could be more tightly drafted. The amendment made by the Council provides that instead of land used exclusively in connexion with the provision of an ambulance service being exempted, land used exclusively for the purpose of an ambulance service certified by the Hospitals and Charities Commission to be an ambulance service subsidized under the Hospitals and Charities Acts shall be exempted. The amendment will ensure that the land must be used for the purpose of an ambulance service and that it must be a public organization, otherwise the Hospitals and Charities Commission would not subsidize it. Similarly, any residence on the land must be used for the ambulance service and not merely as a residence. During the debate in this Chamber, the honorable member for Williamstown referred to the position of a privately-operated ambulance service. I think the amendment overcomes any difficulty in that regard. The Hospitals and Charities Commission would not subsidize a service if it were not a public one, and if it were not certified the land in connexion with that service would not be exempt from rating. I move—

That amendment No. 6 be agreed to.

**Mr. HOLLAND** (Flemington). — Again, I thank the Minister of Public Works for investigating this point, which was raised by the honorable member for Williamstown. Opposition members considered that the original provision was too wide, and, in view of the calls being made on municipal councils in regard to rating exemptions, we believed that it should be clarified so that only land used in connexion with a public ambulance service would be brought within the ambit of exemptions.

The motion was agreed to.

## **SHEPPARTON LANDS BILL.**

The debate (adjourned from November 6) on the motion of Mr. K. H. Turnbull (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—This enabling measure, which will permit of effect being given to the wishes of the City of Shepparton, is necessary because of the many factors that govern the life of a growing municipality. As a layman and as a member of Parliament, I should like to pay a tribute to the municipality itself and to the able management of the Shepparton council over the years. I consider the municipality to be one of the most progressive I had the opportunity of dealing with when I was Minister of Education. I know that it has enlightened plans for development in regard to education and has made representations to the Department to provide a balanced distribution of schools in its area. It desires that the best educational facilities possible shall be available. The council has been consistent in the development of the city. One of the most outstanding features that impressed me when I visited this city on official occasions as a Minister was the courtesy extended to me and members of my party. Moreover, a deep impression has been made upon me by the plans made for the development of the municipal chambers. The present building is not drab but is quite modern and has been furnished attractively. A tendency to lean towards the arts is in evidence. If the Minister of Education has been there, he will agree that the system of borrowing, acquiring and accepting gifts of works of art is a good one.

The Bill merely proposes to allow a certain piece of land in Maude street that has been set aside as a site for municipal buildings to be used for other purposes, and for another area of land in Wellsford-street to be used instead. No money will change hands; in fact, no reference has been made to comparative values. By the passage of this measure, the City of Shepparton will be enabled to further develop the rear of the present buildings, and the new area

will become the civic centre. The Opposition has no objection to the proposed transfer. It would have been impossible 47 years ago, when the then council of the Shire of Shepparton arranged for the reservation of the land in Maude-street, to foresee that Shepparton would become so large by 1957. Anybody who has had any association with the district will realize that the progressive moves which have been made are only the beginning of further expansion. From experience in my own municipality, I am aware of the difficulties that arise in local government. If it is not possible for an adequate civic hall, consistent with the importance of the municipality, to be provided, much of the social and cultural work of the city is apt to be "lost" because it is distributed over smaller halls and is not as effective as it otherwise would be.

I laud the proposal contained in the Bill under which the Shepparton City Council will be enabled to use the piece of land at the rear of the property in Maude-street for the benefit of the citizens, to be associated for the time being with the building which constitutes the municipal offices. In the course of time, the council will erect a new municipal centre on land in Wellsford-street, closer to the river. That appears to me to be a little away from the centre of the city, but apparently the councillors consider it is near enough to meet the needs of people who have to go to the municipal offices. There is no need for me to prolong the discussion on the Bill. The exchange provided for is a good one, and the arrangement will meet with general approval when the facts are understood. The people of Shepparton have displayed great civic mindedness, and the municipal council has shown drive and determination in endeavouring to meet the demands of the citizens for the greatest amenities possible, and in taking measures to beautify the city, provide recreation facilities, and so on. The Bill represents a contribution towards local government and is an encouragement to the people. The Opposition supports it.

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley).—This Bill is the result of considerable representations made to the Government over

a period by deputations from the councillors of the City of Shepparton and by myself and other members. Its passage will greatly assist the development of the city. Shepparton has always had splendid municipal representatives. First, this area was a shire; later, it became a borough; and in 1950 it was elevated to the status of a city. At present, the council functions under restrictive conditions in its offices. The Bill simply proposes an exchange of one piece of land in Maude-street for another area in Wellsford-street, of which the city council holds the freehold title. Although the councillors have been functioning under difficulties, they have been able over a period of years to establish good offices, although limited in extent. Moreover, a fine art gallery and two reception rooms have been provided, which represents a creditable effort.

I compliment the Government upon its initiative in bringing in the Bill providing for an exchange of land. The council will be enabled to dispose of certain offices and use the proceeds for the development of the property in Wellsford-street. The new offices will still be in the centre of the city, although a little towards the western part of it. The land in Wellsford-street is well situated to the east of the Goulburn river, and a civic centre—including municipal offices and a town hall to provide for the requirements of the City of Shepparton and the surrounding districts—in the locality proposed will be in a very appropriate setting. When the town plan for Shepparton was adopted after much consideration, the land in Wellsford-street was set aside for a civic centre, and in my opinion it will prove admirable for the purpose.

The question of comparative values has been raised. It is the opinion of officers of the Lands Department, after investigating the situation, that the exchange is fair, and I am sure the Minister agrees. I commend the Government upon introducing the measure, which will prove of great value to the residents of Shepparton and district. The plan that the councillors have in mind as a complete scheme is a progressive move and is in line with the

general outlook of the people of Shepparton. A visitor to the city, when entering by road, sees the lake which has been developed by the council, and the various recreational facilities, including bowling and croquet greens and tennis courts. A little farther along is the site for the future civic centre near the Goulburn river; it is an admirable situation. The councillors and town clerk must be complimented on their enterprise in submitting the proposal. I commend the Bill to the House; I consider that its passing will be one of the big steps in the future history of Shepparton.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### ELPHINSTONE LANDS EXCHANGE BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 6) on the motion of Mr. K. H. Turnbull (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands).—This is a Bill providing for the revocation of the reservation of certain land in the Parish of Elphinstone temporarily reserved as a site for public recreation, and for the exchange thereof for certain other land in the said parish to be reserved as a site for public purposes. At the outset, I compliment the Minister of Lands on his sympathetic consideration of the request made by the people of Elphinstone for the proposed exchange and for the speedy manner in which he has dealt with it. I have been associated with the negotiations since their beginning about the middle of last year, and I consider that the facts were fully disclosed by the honorable gentleman in his second-reading speech.

In 1908, an area of about 30 acres of land was reserved for recreational purposes. In the interim it has become apparent that at that time a recreation ground was regarded merely as a picnic ground. The Minister of Lands accurately described the area as tending to be steeply undulating. It is quite unsuitable for development as a recrea-

tion reserve. Last year, the committee of management headed by the chairman, Mr. E. Frye, and the secretary, Mr. R. F. Fletcher, approached Mr. W. A. Creed, who is the proprietor of about 10 acres of land eminently suited for development as a recreation reserve, concerning the possibility of effecting an exchange of land. The purpose of the Bill is to give effect to an exchange of the two blocks of land.

As the Minister of Lands stated, it may appear that Mr. Creed is receiving the better end of the bargain because he is to acquire 30 acres in return for 10 acres, but the valuations cited by the Minister indicate that the exchange is a fair one. The 30-acre block is valued at £10 an acre and the 10 acres owned by Mr. Creed are valued at £30 an acre. On that basis the State will be a party to a very fair deal. When the Bill becomes law, the citizens of Elphinstone will be enabled to enjoy the facility of a recreation ground. They have been successful in fielding two good cricket teams in recent years, but have had to avail themselves of the use of private property, which is not altogether suitable for the conduct of home matches. I am delighted that the Minister of Lands has been able to make the necessary arrangements covered by the Bill, which I trust will be given a speedy passage.

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley).—The Country party supports the Bill, which will give effect to a straight-out exchange of land of 30 acres valued at £10 an acre for 10 acres valued at £30 an acre.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### BENDIGO LAND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 11) on the motion of Mr. K. H. Turnbull (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands).—This is a Bill to provide for the purchase of certain Crown land situated in the City of Bendigo by the trustees of Bendigo branch No. 5 of the Australian Natives

Association, and for the Crown grant thereof to the said branch. The history of that branch of the Australian Natives Association goes back to the early days of Bendigo. As the Minister of Lands informed the House, the branch has occupied the land covered by the Bill since 1893, and has erected a substantial two-storey structure on the site. Now the branch desires to obtain a freehold tenure of the land. The Opposition supports the Bill, but would like my colleague, the honorable member for Melbourne, who is more conversant with the matter than I, having been associated with the Australian Natives Association for a very long period, to explain our attitude.

**Mr. CLAREY** (Melbourne).—This is a very simple Bill, but the history behind it is rather interesting. The circumstances were briefly and clearly set out by the Minister of Lands in his second-reading speech. In the early 1890's, the land in question, which comprises a little more than two roods and is situated in View-street, Bendigo, was owned by the State Department of Defence—before the Commonwealth came into being. As the land was not being used by the Department, arrangements were made whereby an annual lease was granted to the Bendigo branch No. 5 of the Australian Natives Association to permit it to erect a building thereon. The building was officially opened in August 1894. It was the intention of the parties that the lease should be continued indefinitely unless the land was required for defence purposes, in which case the Australian Natives Association would be required to vacate the premises but would be reimbursed for the improvements erected on the land. I do not know what the original cost of the building was, but early minutes of the branch disclose that at a meeting held on the 31st May, 1893, consent was obtained from the Honorable Robert Reid, the then Minister of Defence, to build a suitable hall for the use of members. Mr. Beeby, an architect of Bendigo, submitted plans for the building which were accepted, the estimated cost being £3,000. By means of debentures taken

out by members and receipts from various functions held, the pioneers of the branch were able to have erected the substantial building referred to by the Minister of Lands. In passing, I might mention that, as far as can be ascertained, no rent was ever paid by the branch from 1894 onwards, either to the State Department of Defence or to the State Government.

When Federation took place the defence functions were, of course, taken over by the Commonwealth. In the normal process, the Commonwealth Department of Defence would have taken over the land, but it was found—I do not know the exact circumstances—that the land was not required for that Department's purposes, and it was agreed that it should be retransferred to the State of Victoria. I do not know whether the late Sir John Quick, the then honorable member for Bendigo, had something to do with it, being an active member and supporter of the Australian Natives Association, but the Bendigo branch No. 5 of that Association continued in occupancy of the land. The matter may have been overlooked for a number of years—I have not had an opportunity to peruse the file in the Lands Department—but that does not affect the present issue. As the Minister pointed out, the retransfer to the State was registered in the Titles Office in 1952, so apparently that office was considerably behind in its work. Then it became generally known that Bendigo branch No. 5 of the Australian Natives Association did not own the land on which its building stood. The secretary of that branch in a letter dated 15th November, advised me, in reply to certain inquiries, that the trustees who were in office in 1952, received a shock when they found that the land did not actually belong to the Association. However, as a result of conferences and negotiations with the present Minister of Lands, it was agreed that, on payment by the branch of the sum of £4,500, the branch would receive a Crown grant of the land in question.

I think the valuation is a fair and reasonable one in the light of all the circumstances. I have no doubt that if

the land were vacant it might be worth more than the amount mentioned, but with a building on it that could be used only for certain limited purposes, the allotment might not bring the sum of £4,500. The branch already has the money for that purpose in hand. Over a period of years it has accumulated a substantial amount out of its ordinary management fund. As the Australian Natives Association was founded in 1871, and the Bendigo branch No. 5 was formed in 1874, it will be seen that it is one of the oldest branches of the society. Over the years it has also been one of the most virile branches of the association and, indeed, one of the most active branches of any friendly society in Australia. To-day, despite the diminishing membership of friendly societies, the Bendigo branch of the Australian Natives Association has more than 1,200 financial members on its roll and, in addition to ordinary friendly society activities, is doing excellent work. It is running a co-operative housing society and its hall is used for functions other than those connected with the Australian Natives Association. For this facility extortionate charges are not made. For the last six months, the total rents received from the letting of the hall amounted to £326, out of which the branch had to pay £88 8s. 6d. for lighting, rates, and insurance. All members must agree that the society is not a profit-making concern and is carrying on an admirable activity. If anything happened and the affairs of the association were to be wound up, any surplus remaining after members had been paid their just dues would be paid to the Government.

If the branch can obtain the freehold, it will be enabled to raise moneys for further extensions and improvements to the hall. In view of the fact that for one reason or another something has been brought to light after 50 years and that the branch is able to pay £4,500 for the land in question, I believe both as a representative of the Opposition and as the General Treasurer of the Australian Natives Association, the Bill is one for which the Government should be commended.

**Mr. STANISTREET** (Bendigo).—I am happy to have this opportunity of seeing brought to a successful culmination action that was commenced to provide for the purchase of the land described in the schedule of the Bill. As has been stated by the Minister of Lands and the honorable member for Melbourne, Branch No. 5 of the Australian Natives Association is situated in View-street, Bendigo. This position has been known since the early days of Bendigo as Camp Hill, and, as has already been pointed out, it was a military reserve in the early days of Victoria. However, with the various transfers and controls of the site and the handing back of it to the State of Victoria, trace has been lost of the title to the land. I am pleased that the Minister and his Department have seen fit to make this land available to the trustees of Branch No. 5 of the Australian Natives Association at Bendigo. It will enable the Branch to seek further advances and to improve this particular section of View-street, in which it already has an excellent asset. I am sure that all members will support the passage of the measure.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### TEACHING SERVICE (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 6) on the motion of Mr. Bloomfield (Minister of Education) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—This Bill affects directly and indirectly the workaday conditions of thousands of people of Victoria. Advances made to-day in education are dependent largely upon the continuity of the service of teachers and the ability of the authorities to induce persons to join the service and to remain in it when they have demonstrated their qualifications. The Bill is allied to the Teaching Service Act of 1946 which it was thought, at the time of its enactment, would give satisfaction to members of the Teaching Service. It was always accepted

that there would be an independent tribunal to assess the responsibilities and qualifications of teachers and to award adequate salaries to make the profession attractive and also to retain teachers in the Service. The amendments in the Bill are of considerable importance, and some have been brought about by the opinion of the Crown Solicitor that certain administrative acts of the Department have not been consistent with the Act.

The Teachers Tribunal has done, and will continue to do, a good job of work in relation to the conditions of employment, the classification and the rewarding of teachers with salaries consistent with their qualifications and seniority. The authority will continue to improve the status of teachers in the Teaching Service. The Bill should have been introduced earlier. The chairman of the Tribunal is appointed at a salary determined by the Governor in Council, which is, really, the Government. A representative of the Government—he could come from the Public Service, or from outside—is appointed to the Tribunal, and the other member, who is not the least important, is elected by the members of the teaching profession, but need not be a teacher. There has not so far been a lady occupying this exalted position, but there is nothing in the parent Act to prevent one from being appointed to the Teachers Tribunal.

At present, a complication arises from the fact that the members of the Tribunal are appointed for a period of three years, and in the case of the representative of the Teaching Service there has to be an election before the person can be reappointed. If the Government desires to increase the salary of the Government representative, or of the elected representative, the member concerned must resign, because the Act provides specifically that his salary must be determined before appointment. I have in mind an occasion when the Government representative, Mr. Cremor, had to resign so that the Government might fix the salary to be paid. He was then reappointed by order of the Governor in Council on the same day, or the

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following day. That is a ridiculous situation. Provision is made in this Bill whereby the laborious process of temporarily dispensing with the services of an officer and then reappointing him is no longer necessary, even though a new appointment may have to be made within the allotted three-year period.

The Opposition is not in conflict with the Government on this measure. It believes that the Government is acting rightly in fixing the salaries, particularly that of the elected member of the Teaching Service. At present, if the elected member is a teacher, his salary is maintained and an allowance is provided to bring the amount of his remuneration up to a level which the Government considers appropriate. Under this Bill the Government intends to state a salary, consistent with the work entailed and the times, and to dispense with the payment of an allowance and of the normal teaching salary of the elected member. The honorable member for Elsternwick would perhaps agree that we are fortunate in Victoria to have a Teachers Tribunal which has given such good service, not only to Victoria but to the teaching profession generally. One could not expect all decisions made by a tribunal which has the responsibility of assessing salaries of 16,000 people of various classifications and varying qualifications to be received wholeheartedly and unanimously as good decisions.

Since the inception of the Teachers Tribunal in this State a "new look" has been given to the teaching profession. The elected member, Mr. Brown, has given complete satisfaction to the people he represents. He is a man of great balance who gives of his best in the carrying out of any task allotted to him. In making that statement, I am not reflecting on the other members of the tribunal. I have had dealings with Mr. Brown, and I consider that he is essentially honest and capable of seeing two points of view and is prepared to give way if another point of view is stronger than his own. The Opposition believes the salaries of members of the Teachers Tribunal should be reassessed according to times, conditions and the

nature of the duties performed. I wonder whether the Minister, in submitting this proposal, has taken into consideration that a teacher's status in the Department may be altered in some way. At the present time, if an elected member is a teacher any rights of promotions that would accrue to him as an ordinary teacher are protected. In other words, if he is entitled to a salary increase as a teacher while a member of the tribunal, his allowance is reduced. It is sound common sense to specify a salary instead of a combination of a teaching salary plus an allowance.

Although there is no specific reference to it in the Bill, I should like the Minister to ensure that the rights of an elected member are protected so that if at the end of three years he is defeated and has to return to the Teaching Service he will not be in a worse position than he would have been had he remained in the service. Mr. Brown has never approached me in this connexion, nor has anyone on his behalf. Of course, it is not mandatory that the elected representative shall be a teacher. If by any chance an officer of the union was nominated as the teachers' representative and elected, he would be in a different position. I see nothing in this Bill relating to maintenance of his rights. Possibly the Teaching Service Act of 1946 makes provision in that regard, and as I am of the opinion that the Government has no intention of worsening conditions for any elected representative. I ask the Minister to consider that aspect.

Whilst the Government has power to reassess at the end of every three years the salary of either the teachers' representative or the Government's representative, there is not any express condition in the Bill that the chairman's salary shall be reviewed from time to time. I consider such a matter should be kept in mind. If at the end of each three years the Government reappoints Mr. Cremor, or someone else, and Mr. Brown stands for election and is re-elected or is replaced, new salary rates may be stated. The chairman's salary

should be reviewed in accordance with the times and the salaries set for the elected and appointed representatives.

Legislation was introduced last year—many members accepted it with some reservations—for the appointment of married women as permanent officers of the Department. It was realized that there were great advantages to be derived from giving these people an opportunity, in a voluntary way, of becoming permanent teachers. That legislation provided for a provident fund scheme instead of superannuation. Although it was hoped to receive some applications, it was not anticipated that so many married woman teachers would seek permanency or that their applications would cause complications in regard to their official status and length of service as permanent teachers. As was explained by the Minister, it was not possible to deal with all those applications at the one time. Secondary teachers' applications were submitted on 14th December, 1956, and appointments were able to be made from 1st January, 1957. In the case of primary teachers, applications were submitted to the tribunal in February, 1957, and it was intended that their appointment should take place on 1st January, as was the case with the secondary teachers. The Crown Solicitor has pointed out to the Government that this would be incorrect and probably contrary to the powers of the Education Department and the Government, and to the spirit of the Act. Therefore, it is necessary for the Government to validate that action so that not only the appointment of married woman teachers from 1st January of this year will be validated, but also incoming teachers or students to be trained as teachers will be covered. The Opposition does not oppose that principle. As a Parliament we had hoped to induce many married women to become permanent teachers. It was intended that if they made application by a certain time continuity of service would be preserved and they would become permanent teachers as from 1st January, 1957. If this Bill brings about that state of affairs, we support it.

Another important provision is that relating to young men and women entering the teaching profession. It has been the practice that they be admitted to the Department as from 1st January of the year of their appointment as trainee teachers. Owing to the fact that examination results are not published until towards the end of January, it is not possible for the Department to notify these young people on the 1st January whether they are to be accepted. If they take up employment in banks or insurance companies, they are guaranteed employment from 1st January. If we lose them to industry—I say “we” because I believe this is a parliamentary problem—there is a possibility that they will not be so keen to continue their training as teachers. If this Bill rectifies the situation that has developed and to which attention has been drawn, the Opposition supports it. Some consider that married woman teachers are entitled to be paid as from 1st January because they have worked previously and are entitled to payment for holidays. On the other hand, are young people coming into the Teaching Service entitled to these holidays, which they have not earned? I do not consider this period as a holiday. The arrangement is that they commence duty on 1st January, which is the recognized date. The Opposition accepts that position.

I have recently received complaints of applications being called for positions in the Education Department, and although the tribunal has examined applicants it has made no appointment. If the tribunal makes an appointment and an applicant is dissatisfied, he is able to exercise his right of appeal. However, if the tribunal decides not to fill the position no teacher can appeal. As a result, men with qualifications and seniority are unable to seek the higher post. Opposition members endorse the Government's action, as we believe that all applicants for positions should have a right to appeal against the tribunal's decision if they feel so disposed even if the decision is not to appoint anybody to the post advertised. I know of the case of a secondary-school teacher who

is aggrieved about the existing situation. He asked me to approach the tribunal on his behalf but I refused to do so. I told him that he had had an opportunity to submit an application and that the tribunal had acted according to the law and general procedure in deciding not to make an appointment. Ultimately, the position will be re-advertised, and the teacher concerned will, if he so desires, be able to make another application. The amendment proposed by the Government will clear the air and will lead to greater satisfaction amongst teachers. Therefore, the Opposition supports it.

I believe that all the amendments proposed in this Bill are worth while. Nevertheless, the Opposition would have welcomed a method by which the rights of promotion within the Teaching Service of an elected member could be protected. I urge the Government, before the legislation is passed by both Houses, to investigate the position in that regard so that the rights of the present appointee or of his successor may be preserved so far as promotions and increased emoluments as a teacher are concerned. If a person outside of the Teaching Service is elected to the tribunal the position will be different. He will be paid a salary as a tribunal member according to the provisions of the legislation and will be entitled to no increases as a result of changes in the Teaching Service. The Opposition supports the measure and hopes that it has a speedy passage.

**Mr. SUTTON** (Albert Park).—This is a simple, commonsense Bill and its provisions were honestly and adequately set out in the second-reading speech of the Minister of Education. The Leader of the Opposition imparted life to the dead bones of the measure when he made his contribution. As parliamentarians, we are fortunate that we have not the intricate job of attempting to prescribe salaries and working conditions for teachers as was the lot of members ten years ago. Members of Parliament are essentially unqualified for that job, and Parliament should not be regarded as a wage or salary fixing authority. Year after year teachers

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agitated for reform in this direction and time after time they were offered a tribunal with strings attached to it. It is to their great and permanent credit that they rejected those offers. They have been rewarded by the institution of a tribunal which has done extraordinarily good work. I know each of its members, and I am especially well acquainted with the elected member, Mr. Douglas Brown, to whom complimentary references have been made by the Leader of the Opposition. Some other members of the House also know him. He was an efficient and zealous teacher, and no man I know has greater moral courage. The integrity of each member of the tribunal is unassailable. I was not aware, until the Leader of the Opposition revealed it, that there were so many oddities in the Teaching Service Act, but I suppose inevitably that is the result of the passage of the years. Although time solves many problems it also brings others in its train. I rose merely to say that I wholeheartedly agree with the general provisions of the Bill and realize that much has to be done to iron out difficulties associated with the legislation. I am reasonably confident that this measure will make such a contribution. It is to be clearly understood that the elected member of the tribunal need not necessarily be a member of the teachers' union, but usually that is the position, mainly and simply because the vast majority of teachers are members of that very constructive organization. I can add nothing to the illuminating speech delivered by the Leader of the Opposition, which complemented the second-reading speech of the Minister of Education. My plea to the Minister is earnestly to heed the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition, and I am confident that he will.

**Mr. GAINEY** (Elsternwick).—Having been in the position of being on the inside of the teaching world looking out for a number of years, I should like to pay a personal tribute to the work of the Teachers Tribunal, particularly for the unbiased manner in which it has carried out its duties over a long period. I can testify to the qualities of the elected

member, because I have approached him frequently in regard to matters affecting returned servicemen. I applaud him for his forthright character, dependability, and his ability to weigh all things in the balance before making a statement either in support of or against an applicant. Mr. Brown's rights as a teacher are, to my knowledge, fully protected. The amendment proposed in regard to the method of arriving at his payment as a member of the tribunal is commendable, and I support the Government's action. I do not think it is likely that he will be defeated in an election as he has rendered such yeoman service and given general satisfaction. However, defeat is possible, and in such an event he would return to the Department as an ordinary teacher and be paid the salary applicable to the position. I believe the salaries paid to persons whose job it is to assess rates of remuneration for others should be subject to revision. The chairman of the Teachers Tribunal has set a high standard so far as ideals are concerned, and his fellow members have followed his lead.

The Leader of the Opposition touched on an important matter when he referred to the system under which new appointees to the Teaching Service are paid from the 1st January of the year of their appointment. In my opinion, that is a wise provision, as I have vivid recollections of the Education Department losing promising prospective teachers who were offered salaries commencing from a date earlier than that proposed by the Department. The amendment to section 49 of the principal Act, as contained in clause 4, is a move in the right direction. For reasons best known to the Department, positions have been advertised in the past but no appointments have been made. The proposal in the Bill will give aggrieved individuals the opportunity of obtaining justice, and consequently it is to be commended.

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL** (Brunswick West).—Much has been said in praise of the members of the Teachers Tribunal, and I should like to pay a tribute to the Government which introduced the legislation setting up this

body. The Act establishing the Teachers Tribunal was one of three important legislative measures placed on the statute-book in 1946 by a Labour Government. Prior to the appointment of the Teachers Tribunal, the Police Classification Board, and the Public Service Board, the fixation of salaries of members of the three services was left in the hands of the Premier of the day. Unfortunately, this State has had some very conservative Premiers, who, in my opinion, had no judgment as to what was proper remuneration for Government officials, whether they were highly placed or in the lower ranks. The employees of the Government were paid most inadequate salaries and the Premiers in office from time to time must share the blame.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Including Labour ones.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—I do not intend to name any of them. Maybe they were members of the Liberal party, the Country party or even the Labour party. Among the most underpaid servants of the Government were members of the Police Force.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—How do you relate what you are saying to the Bill under consideration?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The teachers employed by the State, too, were inadequately paid. In 1946, the Cain Labour Government introduced the three Bills to which I have referred, and gave the three Government services a new charter as far as salary rates were concerned. Since the three tribunals were established, steps have been taken gradually to bring about wage justice and pay Government employees somewhere near their entitlement because of their professional and other qualifications. I do not admit that the stage has been reached where they are being properly paid for the services rendered. Nevertheless, the Teachers Tribunal has done a great service to this State and to the teachers. If teachers are not adequately paid, properly equipped persons to train children will not be attracted to the service. One of the great results of the setting up of the Teachers

Tribunal has been that Victoria has built up a far better Teaching Service than it had hitherto.

On each of the tribunals which I have mentioned, there is an elected member. After claims for increased salaries have been heard, the tribunal concerned must consider the application *in camera*. That is when the main work of the elected member starts. I have no doubt that he argues from sunrise till sunset in an attempt to place before the other members of the tribunal what he considers to be adequate remuneration for the valuable services performed. When the Teachers Tribunal was originally established, teachers were receiving £400 or £500 a year. It was thought that the elected member would participate in the functions of the tribunal, on one or two days in a week and that is the way in which his emolument was fixed. He continued to receive his teacher's salary of £400 or £500 a year and has been paid the allowances to which reference has been made. It has turned out to be a splendid tribunal. All of the three tribunals have been sitting almost daily, with the result that, if a comparatively junior officer has occupied the seat of the elected member, he has received an inadequate remuneration of £600 or £700 a year.

Various Governments have tried to arrive at an adequate salary by lifting the allowances before the election of a particular officer; or by reducing them if he happened to be—as in one case—a more highly paid officer. A most proper way is now proposed. The elected officer is to become a permanent member of the tribunal, and his remuneration will be fixed whether the person concerned is a senior or a junior officer of the Department. In the initial stages, many junior officers were elected, and for years they were inadequately paid for their services.

I commend the Minister of Education for the proposal now to do directly what was being done indirectly. Hitherto, if the Government wished to increase a salary, the procedure was that the member concerned had to resign from the tribunal; he was then given a rise of,

say, £50, and reappointed. I do not know what the new procedure will be in certain circumstances, but I feel that even where the classifiers might have to report that there was nobody suitable for the purposes of appointment, the difficulty could surely be overcome. There must be scores of teachers who conscientiously believe they are adequately fitted to perform the functions of the elected member on the tribunal. Again, I congratulate the Minister on bringing down this measure. I pay tribute to the great Cain Government which established the Teachers Tribunal, as well as the two other bodies to which reference has been made, and which enabled teachers, public servants and—above all—policemen to realize that there were bodies to which they could put their cases without the need for making backdoor representations to the Ministers of the day. I emphasize that these tribunals have been a great success. They have not yet completed their work. Their members are not yet sufficiently paid, but they are now benefiting by fixed salaries which are more adequate than those they received in the past.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

*The sitting was suspended at 6.5 p.m. until 7.17 p.m.*

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Payment of members).

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—Apart from general references to the Bill, I think there was nothing in the speeches of honorable members requiring comment except for one observation of the Leader of the Opposition relating to this clause. He expressed the hope that the Government would safeguard the rights of teachers who might be appointed to the tribunal. My belief is that the position is safeguarded by section 7 of the Teaching Service Act, to which the Leader of the Opposition referred. Sub-section(1) of that section provides, *inter alia*—

If any member is at the time of his appointment or election an officer of the Public Service or a member of the Teaching Service he shall, subject to the Public

Service Act 1946 or this Act (as the case may be) continue to be an officer of the Public Service or a member of the Teaching Service.

That provision protects the officer, and there is nothing in this Bill that would amend or—so to speak—devitalize it.

Within the last three weeks I incautiously expressed an opinion that everything was all right with a Bill. The Leader of the Opposition subsequently made a valuable suggestion, whereupon I undertook that the matter raised by him would be examined. That was done and it was found necessary to re-examine the point, and I now give the same undertaking as I gave previously.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I thank the Minister of Education for his offer to examine the matter I raised. I feel, as he does, that section 7 probably covers the situation. However, by that section a different method of payment is provided. The teacher representative on the tribunal, provided he was a teacher, still remains a member of the Teaching Service. I should think that would apply to any member whether he was on leave or was acting in the capacity of an elected officer to the tribunal. I am sure that adequate provision would be made for any unintended irregularity that might arise from this legislation.

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.

#### FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION FUND BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 6) on the motion of Mr. Fraser (Honorary Minister) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands).—This Bill is to provide for the establishment of a Foot and Mouth Disease Eradication Fund and for the compensation of owners of animals and property which may be destroyed in order to eradicate or prevent the spread of the disease. It is one of the most far-reaching

measures ever presented to this Parliament. In its full implication, it is emergency legislation to cope with a disastrous situation that we all hope will never occur. It is the most fervent wish of every member that this measure, when passed, will never be brought into operation. Honorable members generally will be aware of the terrible havoc caused in many countries overseas through the incidence of foot and mouth disease. We can count ourselves fortunate indeed that we in this great continent have not had to cope with that dreaded livestock disease. In his second-reading speech the Honorary Minister referred to the fact that the disease is widespread throughout Europe, with the exception of Scandinavia, and is also enzootic in most of the Asian, African and South American countries. He stated that Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America are the only countries in which the disease does not exist.

I recall that some years ago, when there was an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Mexico, the Government of the United States of America saw fit to bear the total cost of conducting a campaign in Mexico for the eradication of the disease so that its possible spread into the United States of America might be prevented. It would be impossible for anyone to calculate the colossal losses resulting from an outbreak on anything like a widespread scale in Australia. We may consider the incalculable damage that would be done to our export trade, not only in meat but also in wool. If honorable members have not studied the Bill closely, I suggest that they refer to clause 13, which sets out the various subjects for or with respect to which the Governor in Council may make regulations. Clause 13 provides, *inter alia*—

(1) The Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—

- (a) the seizure and destruction of any animal which is infected with foot and mouth disease or which may have been in contact with any animal suffering from foot and mouth disease;
- (b) the seizure and destruction of any property which may have been in contact with any animal infected with foot and mouth disease;

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- (c) regulating the movement of persons, animals and property for the purpose of preventing foot and mouth disease;
- (d) the quarantining of any animals, property or land;
- (e) the taking of such other steps as may be deemed expedient to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease and for its eradication; and,
- (f) generally, all such matters and things as are authorized or permitted to be prescribed or necessary or expedient to be prescribed for carrying this Act into effect.

In his second-reading speech, the Honorary Minister (Mr. Fraser) informed the House that members of the Police Force and the resources of public Departments would be used in the event of an outbreak. It is proposed that the Government shall be empowered to make regulations covering the movement and the sales of all animals in Victoria. For those reasons, this is one of the most important measures that have ever been introduced in this House, and the Opposition supports it. As a matter of fact, during the régime of the previous Government this question was discussed at meetings of the Australian Agricultural Council, and agreements on the lines of this measure were in course of preparation when the present Government took office. It has taken time to complete the various agreements between the Commonwealth and the States so that identical legislation may be enacted throughout the Commonwealth.

Clause 3 relates to the establishment of the Foot and Mouth Disease Eradication Fund. Clause 4 specifies the moneys to be paid to the credit of that fund, and clause 5 deals with the payments to be made out of the fund. The measure has been introduced as a result of agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. On the outbreak of this disease, the Commonwealth has agreed to provide 50 per cent. of the cost of compensation and the campaign for its eradication. Of the remaining 50 per cent. Victoria has accepted responsibility for 18.25 per cent. of that amount, or 9.1 per cent. of the cost of the campaign. The Bill announces the conditions under which compensation shall be

paid for stock and property destroyed. Apart from its regulation-making powers, the Bill is merely an outline of what is necessary to be paid to combat an outbreak of this disease. The Honorary Minister referred to the fact that the control and eradication of an outbreak will be undertaken under the Stock Diseases Act, and we must consider this Bill in conjunction with that legislation. Members of the Opposition support the Bill and trust that its provisions will never have to be brought into effect.

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley).—This is the most important Bill that the Government has introduced during its term, as the measure affects all livestock in Victoria—indeed, throughout Australia. The effect of foot and mouth disease in other countries has been a very pertinent lesson to us. The only countries free of this evil are Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United States of America. It is found in most parts of Europe, except Scandinavia. It is not spread entirely by stock. It is a virus disease that can be carried into an area and, consequently, the provisions in the Bill are properly wide and very strict. If through unfortunate circumstances the disease should be introduced into Australia, provision is made to combat it on a wide scale.

If it ever becomes necessary to take drastic action in Victoria and in other States to combat this disease, there will not be sufficient veterinary surgeons available to carry out this work. That will be deplorable so far as our livestock are concerned. Recently, an increment was granted to veterinary surgeons employed in the Public Service, but since that time there have been three resignations of veterinary officers. Therefore, it is clear that the action of the Public Service Board in that direction has not had the desired effect. I have been informed that the Public Service Board has given consideration to the question and has decided to grant veterinary officers starting in the Public Service an increase of £90 a year, but those who have had experience of eight or nine years in the Service are not to receive any increment. Therefore, I suggest that if veterinary surgeons are to be

available to carry out the provisions of the Stock Diseases Act and of this measure, it is most necessary that they should receive extra remuneration. It is to be deplored that these officers are not being sufficiently recompensed to induce them to remain in the service of the Department of Agriculture and to carry out these duties.

The honorable member for Midlands did not refer to the fact that this matter was debated in detail by the Australian Agricultural Council. The late Mr. Graham, when Minister of Agriculture in New South Wales, was most keen on technical efforts being undertaken in Australia to combat this evil. He knew only too well its effects on stock because, when overseas on two occasions to purchase stud stock, he had seen what a scourge this disease was in other countries. He knew that if there were an outbreak here the stud stock industry of Australia could be thrown into chaos. That has been the result of its effects in the Old Country. It is impossible, under quarantine regulations, to obtain stud stock from England or Scotland because breeders there cannot give a guarantee that their stock are free from foot and mouth disease. The disease has an effect on the fattening of cattle and sheep, and so it is most necessary that appropriate steps should be taken to combat the disease.

The Australian Agricultural Council urged that action should be taken, but it realized that compensation should be paid to people whose livestock suffered from the effects of this disease. The council proposed the setting up of a fund such as that provided for in clause 3. The Commonwealth Government will participate to the extent of 50 per cent., and the fund will be applied to the eradication of the disease in all States, as well as in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Of the remaining 50 per cent. Victoria's contribution will be 18.25 per cent., as was explained by the Honorary Minister in his second-reading speech. In effect, the Commonwealth has said, "We are prepared to accept 50 per cent. of the responsibility so far as this disease is concerned."

At first glance, clause 4 might lead one to gain the impression that Victoria will receive all the money, because paragraph (a) of that clause provides that there shall be paid to the credit of the fund—

All moneys payable to the State of Victoria by the several States and by the Commonwealth in accordance with any arrangement made between the State of Victoria the Commonwealth and the other States for the control and eradication of foot and mouth disease;

However, identical legislation will be passed in the other States. The clause provides for a contribution that will establish a pool. The Treasurers of the day will have to find the money to create it. The cost of any steps necessary to control the disease will be met by the pool. This matter is being placed on a national basis, and provision is made to pay the full value of animals destroyed which, I think, is quite right. The market value of property at the time of its destruction will be met from the pool.

The Bill shows that the Government is alive to the need for taking positive action to provide necessary safeguards. It contains provision whereby a person affected can apply to a Judge of the County Court for relief. That is an adequate safeguard to any sufferers. I agree with the honorable member for Midlands that this legislation is far reaching, as it must be if it is to achieve the desired effect.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

**Mr. FRASER** (Honorary Minister).—I appreciate the thoughts expressed by the honorable members for Midlands and Murray Valley during the second-reading debate, and I thank them for facilitating the passage of this Bill.

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.

## ACTS INTERPRETATION (SERVICE BY POST) BILL.

A message was received from the Council transmitting a report from the Clerk of the Parliaments calling attention to a clerical error in this Bill and acquainting the Assembly that the Council had made an amendment correcting the error.

The Assembly concurred with the Council in the correction of the error.

## EDUCATION BILL.

The House went into Committee for the further consideration of this Bill.

Clause 2 was agreed to.

Clause 3 (Interpretation).

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—Included in this clause is the following interpretation:—

“School age” (subject to section sixty-one of this Act) until a date fixed by proclamation under sub-section (2) of this section means not less than six nor more than fourteen years of age, and on and after such date means not less than six nor more than fifteen years of age.

It is obvious, having regard to the wording of this definition, that the Government has in mind the time when the compulsory school leaving age will be increased from fourteen years to fifteen years. When in New Zealand, I was somewhat intrigued to learn that it was not compulsory to send a child to school until the child had attained the age of seven years, but it was compulsory, unless an exemption had been granted, for children to remain at school until they had reached a much greater age than is applicable in Victoria. I have no doubt that your experiences in the United States of America, Mr. Chairman, would enable you to inform this Committee that in many States there it is compulsory for children to remain at school for a much longer period than here or even in New Zealand, but their retention at school for this longer period frequently has disastrous effects on some aspects of their education. Opposition members appreciate the difficulty of increasing the school leaving age this year. It would be necessary to provide many more additional classrooms and teachers and obviously, having regard to the rapidly expanding

population, the State would be unable to cope with that situation. I propose to deal with the question of the school age again when clauses 60 and 61 are being considered.

**Mr. SUTTON** (Albert Park).—The speech by the honorable member for Carlton during the second-reading debate might be regarded as a preliminary approach to discussions of this clause in Committee. He raised the question, "What is the end—that is, the purpose—of education in modern capitalist society?" That question ought to exercise our minds profoundly, whether we uphold or condemn the form of society in which we live. Clause 3 leads us to think deeply. It is of topical interest as well as of intrinsic importance in view of the release of the Russian satellite, and the fear among the peoples of the free world about the shape of scientific things to come. Fear is a potent producer of false theories. One of these is that the Russian menace can be countered only by the multiplication of scientific discoveries and achievements, and that education must be biased towards those ends, which are crassly materialist. We must resist that effort to pervert education; we must remember that, as Herbert Spencer said long ago, 'education "is a preparation for complete living;" and centuries earlier, and still ringing down the grooves of time, there was the solemn reminder that man does not live by bread alone.

When the present Government took office it introduced a University of Technology Bill, which has not been proceeded with. I do not say that it should have been, or that it should be, until prospects affecting all types of universities, existing and proposed, become clearer. I mention it only as a pointer to the fact that, during the Labour Administration of 1945-47, the Minister of Education—Mr. Francis Field—now a member of the Licensing Court, set up a special committee to report on the advisability or otherwise of establishing an institute or university of technology. The chairman of the committee was the then Director of Education, Mr. J. A. Seitz, and the report has come to be known as the

Seitz Report. It was not put into effect, for the Government was shortly afterwards thrust out of office on a bogus issue. It has not been forgotten, however, and Mr. Field, who has renounced party politics, is chairman of the Technical University Development Committee, which last year submitted a series of proposals to the Minister. I hope that these will reach fruition as soon as is practicable, though whether there should be an institute or a university I am not ready now to say.

The Technical University Development Committee advocates use of the Royal Melbourne Technical College as the nucleus of a university. New South Wales has a University of Technology, which was established as the outcome of the Technical Education Act 1949. When the legislation was introduced by the Minister of Education, Mr. Heffron, he gave the assurance that a study of the humanities would be "part and parcel of the courses."

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN** (Mr. Rafferty).—Order! I am finding some difficulty in relating the honorable member's remarks to clause 3, which is the interpretation clause. I ask him to confine his comments to the clause under discussion.

**Mr. SUTTON**.—What is the precise objection? Is it to my reference to New South Wales and the Labour Administration?

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN**.—The honorable member is departing from the clause under discussion, which is purely an interpretation clause. The matter that the honorable member has introduced does not come within its ambit. Again, I ask him to confine his remarks to clause 3.

**Mr. SUTTON**.—May I discuss technical education?

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN**.—Technical education is defined in this clause and, within the ambit of that definition, the honorable member would be in order in discussing that subject. However, it would be out of order to discuss technical education beyond the ambit of the definition contained in the clause.

**Mr. SUTTON**.—I have to accept your interpretation, Mr. Chairman, but I cannot felicitate you upon the accuracy of

it. The necessity for increased and improved technical education facilities and programmes is beyond dispute, but we should be careful not to allot technical education a place in the education scheme and to make it an end in itself. The verdict of eminent authorities seems to be on the side of the humanities as an indispensable partner with superior interests. The first of these whose opinion I shall cite is Sir Ian Clunies Ross, chairman of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, who delivered the oration at the centenary celebration of the University of Melbourne in August, 1956, in the course of which he said—

The drag on resources is all towards the scientific faculties and away from the humanities. But behind the glittering facade of scientific achievement stands the age-old, the unchanging element in the human situation—man, man so largely the master of nature but yet the victim of his own; man, whom science has so signally served but whose waywardness, prejudice, and passion it does not seek to understand or control . . .

Scientists, as scientists, are ill-equipped to understand or to contribute to the solution of the problems in national or world politics which the very nature and scale of their achievements set to their societies. More than ever do we need those trained at the highest level in an understanding of man, whether as an individual, as a political animal, or as a member of national or international societies.

If we meet the self-justifying ends of scientific and professional education, or scientific inquiry and technological development, if we starve non-scientific education or degrade it to a subsidiary place, then we shall eventually starve the community of those whose imaginative understanding of world problems is essential to their solution. In Llewellyn Woodward's words: "The ancient world decayed because it had too little science; the world of modern states may collapse because it has little else."

All of which simply means that there are problems that science cannot solve.

The philosopher, Bertrand Russell, can hardly be accused of being a traditionalist or of having an excessively spiritual outlook. In one of his books he has written—

The world at present is full of angry, self-centred groups, each incapable of viewing human life as a whole, each willing to destroy civilization rather than yield an inch. To this narrowness no amount of technical instruction will provide an antidote. What is needed is not this or that

specific piece of information, but such knowledge as inspires a conception of the ends of human life as a whole.

The classic statement on education is Cardinal Newman's *Idea of a University*. Newman regarded it "as essential that all subjects should be taught as a discipline, the emphasis being on principles rather than on facts; on why, rather than how, an operation is to be performed."

I could advance many other opinions from various sources as guides to Government and Opposition alike in the field of technical education, but they are all of the same tenor, and over-emphasis and repetition of idea might impair their value. I shall content myself, therefore, with quoting the opinion of a man whom members of the Government incline to elevate to deity level, and to whom members of the Opposition do not deny high intellectual capacity. I refer to the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, of whom the late John Curtin once said, "I always agree with Bob about everything except politics."

That story was told by Emeritus Professor Walter Murdoch, one of Australia's most felicitous writers—we have not many—in the *Herald* of 16th February last, in reply to a question touching on schools and curricula. He said that Mr. Menzies spoke wisely in an address which he gave at McGill University, Montreal, when an honorary doctorate was being conferred upon him. He spoke on "the value of useless learning." In part, he said—

There is nothing like this useless learning for inducing in the mind of man a sense of continuity and responsibility, broadening his horizons, teaching him the importance of accuracy of thinking and of generosity of heart.

Professor Murdoch remarked—

You have to read those words two or three times over, to see how extraordinarily well chosen they are.

Mr. Menzies also said—

A man who will never understand these things may become a mechanical genius and the enemy of mankind.

Summing up, Professor Murdoch said—It is altogether a good thing that our politicians should hear such things from the mouth of one of themselves.

I think it is. We shall do well to keep that in mind, and so also will the

politicians, experts, visionaries, and practical people. If they do not, there will be disaster.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I wish to relate my remarks to the definition of "technical education" contained in the Bill. It is amazing to me that although the Education Act of 1928 has been in operation for nearly 30 years, the definition contained in that legislation is almost identical with the one contained in clause 3. During that period there has been a second world war and a great expansion and broadening of science. I admit that I cannot fault the definition included in the Bill, but I was wondering whether some further sciences could be added to it. I do not suggest that mining be deleted from the definition. It is common knowledge that many great men were trained at the Ballarat and Bendigo schools of mines. I consider that in the future it will still be necessary to instruct students on the subject of metallurgy. Of course, many sciences and technical terms are associated with mining.

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY**.—Mining and metallurgy are generally bracketed.

**Mr. SHEPHERD**.—That is so, but metallurgy is not mentioned in the definition. Apparently, it is covered by the word "mining." Of course, one can mine for things other than minerals nowadays, and many minerals now in common usage were not generally known when the first Education Act was passed.

The basic principles of education have not altered greatly, although methods of teaching technical education are constantly changing for the better. In view of the fact that many Australian experts have visited overseas countries, one would have thought that other terms would be included in the definition of "technical education." There must be in this country many people who have a better knowledge of this subject than either the Minister or I, and who could suggest improvements to the definition of "technical education" in our legislation. I make no suggestion, but merely comment on that matter. Perhaps the fact that the definition has not been changed

is a compliment to the persons who framed it originally, or perhaps it is an indication that no alteration has been considered. If a person became proficient in all the arts and subjects mentioned in the definition, he would be a wise man. Technical education has a great future in this country, and there is an urgent need to keep pace with all the subjects that could be included in the definition of that term.

**Mr. LOVEGROVE** (Carlton).—In the light of what I had to say about the education system of this State during the second-reading stage, I believe I can make one observation without being misunderstood. I share the view expressed by the Leader of the Opposition. I understand that the definition of technical education, as contained in clause 3, is qualified by the words, "principles of any science or art as applied to industries."

Technical education to-day throughout the world, and particularly in Australia, is concentrated on the application of the sciences and arts to industry and commerce. The expansion of that aspect is most desirable. Nothing that I say should be construed as suggesting that there ought to be a reduction of the facilities, equipment, and instruction that is necessary to expand technical education as it is applied to industry. In the industry with which I am most conversant, there is a need for expansion of equipment. I share the reservation expressed by the Leader of the Opposition for the reason—not necessarily the main reason—that there is a tremendous wait in regard to and a great deal of publicity concerning the lack of scientific development in this country, particularly in relation to the manner in which technical education is specifically tied to industry. It should not be necessary in our society for technical education to be so confined. If it is necessary to develop the physical sciences in this country—I do not suggest that they are developing in the same manner as they have been developed in other countries—one of the easiest ways in which to achieve that objective would be to divorce research into the physical sciences from its specific and concrete application to

industry. If the basis of technical education is to provide trained personnel to turn the wheels of industry, then obviously the physical sciences will not be developed according to their long-range needs. They will be automatically regulated by the needs of industry. Under the modern capitalistic system, those needs are regulated by what Government supporters are pleased to call "the free market."

During the trade depression, industry did not need trained personnel and, at the start of the second world war, Australia was in such a desperate plight for trained personnel that they had to be obtained practically overnight, by emergency methods, so that the industrial machine of this country could be geared to a total war effort. That is an example of the regulation of technical education according to the needs of industry. Industry, because it is expanding, needs the services of technical education. However, I suggest that the future security of this country cannot be guaranteed by the equation of technical education and the needs of industry. Therefore, if progress is to be made not only at university and laboratory research levels—the latter have been liberally endowed by private enterprise throughout the world—but also at the levels accessible to the sons and daughters of the ordinary working men, additional emphasis must be placed on technical education to meet the requirements of industry and on technical education along the lines of pure research into the physical sciences.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I merely wish to refer briefly to the definition of "technical education." The Leader of the Opposition rightly stated that this definition was included in the 1915 Act, and the side-note to section 3 of it contains a reference to the 1910 Act, so I have little doubt that the definition would have been the same then. It is a tribute to the draftsman that, in spite of the most unpredictable developments between 1915 and the present time—and probably since 1910—he drew a definition with such width and comprehensiveness that it is still applicable.

Doubtless, the Opposition would have been glad if it could have found some amendment to suggest. The Leader of the Opposition suggests that "aeronautics" could have been included. So, no doubt, could "television" and many other more recent developments. But the expression "any science or art as applied to industries," is as near to a universal description of what we know as technical education as could be found.

The honorable member for Carlton has quite a different approach. He is not concerned with the adequacy of the definition, but with the fact that under this Bill it appears to him that technical education is confined to its industrial application. In a sense, that is correct. Our technical schools, I believe, are devoted mainly to the promotion of those skills and fields of knowledge which relate to industry. There are, however, two other fields of education with which we are concerned and which do not suffer from that limitation. The boy or girl who is taught science in a high school may go on to the purest research, divorced altogether from any industrial application or any possibility of such application. The same comment may be applied to university education. It may be scientific study for its own sake, or for the purpose of research, or it may come back to science as applied to industry. In those fields there is no limit. However, we are concerned at the moment only with clause 3.

I listened with great interest to the statements of the honorable member for Albert Park, who directed attention to what is a very considerable danger in public thinking nowadays. However, I do not feel that this is either the time or the place to refer to that aspect. I merely wish to say that, so far as this particular definition is concerned, no one appears to be able to suggest any improvement.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 4, providing, *inter alia*—

(3) Notwithstanding anything in any Act all professional officers, teachers and other officers in the teaching service shall during the pleasure of the Director have and exercise such powers and duties whether statutory or otherwise as are assigned to them in writing by the Director, and the

Director may with the approval of the Governor in Council so assign to any officer such of the powers and duties of a permanent head as he thinks fit, and in such event any of such powers and duties exercised or performed by such officer shall for all purposes have the same force and effect as if exercised or performed by the Director.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I move—

That the words "in the teaching service" be omitted with the view of inserting the words "in the Education Department."

The substance of sub-clause (3) is that the director, during his pleasure, may direct professional officers, teachers and others to exercise powers which he may assign to them in writing. It has been found, as a matter of practice, that there are officers in the Department—such, for example, as the secretary—who have to carry out functions assigned to them by the director, and these officers are not members of the Teaching Service. My friends opposite will immediately call to mind, as I do, Mr. Place, the secretary of the Department, who may have duties assigned to him by the director but who is not a member of the Teaching Service.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—The Opposition does not object to the amendment. At times, when the director is likely to be absent, and duties have to be assigned to any other person in the Department, there would be an inclination to lean towards Public Service officers working in the Department rather than to members of the Teaching Service. Of course, there would be an acting or deputy director if the director was away for any length of time. In the absence of Mr. Place, his powers and duties must be handed down to the person next in line.

The amendment is a wise precaution. I think many of the terms referred to in the earlier Acts were included merely because in former days there was no independent tribunal for teachers, and there was a great dependence upon the Teaching Service. However, to-day so many people under the Public Service Board are employed in the Education Department that it is necessary to make it possible for both groups to be covered.

The amendment was agreed to, and the clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clauses 5 to 7

Clause 8, relating to the Council of Public Education.

**Mr. MANSON** (Hawthorn).—I had not intended to speak to the Bill because it is supposed to be a simple consolidation, but I am a little perturbed about Division 2, which relates to the Council of Public Education. It states that there shall be twenty members of the council and that four of them shall represent the Education Department. My researches show that, of these four places, only three have been filled. I am worried because, in these days when education is such a burning subject, the Department should be interested enough to fill all its places and play its complete part in this council.

Clause 8 states also that there will be a representative of education in music. I find that this person, too, is missing from the present council, and again I am concerned that we are not taking full advantage of the opportunities before us to really "get our backs" into education in to-day's dire need. I merely direct the attention of the Minister to the fact that he has not filled all the places which are available under sub-clause (2), and I think he should do so.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—All I need say in reply to the honorable member for Hawthorn is that if he had called my attention to the fact earlier, the omission would have been repaired earlier. In view of statements made recently by the Leader of the Opposition and myself regarding the Council of Public Education, and its functions and the practical contact that there is between the Minister and the council, I think I may be excused for the omission. However, I will ensure that it is rectified as soon as possible.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 9.

Clause 10, relating to the functions of the Council of Public Education.

**Mr. MANSON** (Hawthorn).—Clause 10 contains two provisions. First, it states that the Council of Public Education shall report on methods of, or

developments in, public education of its own volition, and, secondly, that it shall report on any matters in connexion with public education referred to it by the Minister. My small research on this subject has disclosed that the last worthwhile report of the Council of Public Education is dated 1945.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—What do you call its “last worth-while report?” Did you read the most recent one?

Mr. MANSON.—A report on educational reform and development in Victoria was made in 1945. Since then, twelve years have elapsed, and apparently nothing sensational enough has happened in education for it to be reported on specially by this council. I appreciate that the Minister will probably tell me in two minutes' time that the council does produce an annual report, but all members of the Committee are concerned about the tremendous pressure on all education services in every country in the world to bring themselves up to date and keep pace with the times.

I am not accusing the Minister, the Department, the Government, or the council of having failed. I simply direct the attention of the Committee to the fact that this particular council's last report on general developments in education was made twelve years ago. Other countries have tackled this subject in a different way. For instance, in England, the Ministry of Education appoints from time to time consultative committees, and they have, in the last few years, produced reports on technical education, infant and nursery schools, education of the adolescent, and so on, in the realm of specialized subjects.

With the greatest respect, I merely draw this to the attention of the Committee and suggest that the Minister might examine the matter or inform members what is in his mind regarding it. I appreciate that this Bill is a consolidation of existing Acts and that at some later stage in the history of this Government we shall have an opportunity to discuss education generally. I felt that this was the appropriate time for me to raise this matter.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition). — I am indebted to the honorable member for Hawthorn for giving some support to a short comment I made during my second-reading speech. With all the kindness I can muster, I wish to say that I have nothing against the members of the Council of Public Education. I examined what I understood was the council's last worth-while report, which was for the year ended June, 1945, and, as the Minister asked the honorable member for Hawthorn whether he had seen the “most recent” report, I wondered whether it was in fact the latest report. The Minister's interjection appeared to indicate that it contained something of a momentous nature. With all due respect to the Council of Public Education, 1955 was not a very busy year for it. The report of that year was honest enough in that it indicated how many meetings the council had held during the year. The number was three. In addition, the council made two general visits. Some visits were made also to new high schools, which was a compliment to the schools concerned. The council visited also the Burwood Teachers' College. Sub-clause (1) provides *inter alia*—

It shall be the duty of the Council to report to the Minister upon—

- (a) methods of or developments in public education in other countries if in its opinion it is desirable to introduce such methods or developments into Victoria;

It is optional for the council to so report, but in the twelve years since the very good report referred to by the honorable member for Hawthorn was submitted, no report of substance has been furnished. Many members of the council report almost from minute to minute to the Education Department on the needs of education. Some hold responsible positions in the Department and from time to time have submitted reports to the Minister for inclusion in his annual report. Great scope for the council exists. Provision is made for the payment of expenses incurred by its members and for travel within the State.

It should be possible for a body of that size and importance, made up of persons of outstanding capabilities and qualifications, to give a firm lead to education in Victoria. The Opposition will not suggest any amendment of the legislation concerning the presentation of reports. The council registers schools and teachers and makes recommendations in regard to minor matters. It is important that it should be "pepped up," not by direction, but by a desire to assist the Minister of Education and the Government by indicating what ought to be done in regard to specialized forms of education. It would be to the advantage of the Minister if the council could see eye to eye with the views being expressed by members.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I am indebted to the honorable member for Hawthorn for referring to the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition during the second-reading debate, but let us be quite clear on the subject. It is the duty of the Council of Public Education to report to the Minister of Education on certain matters and to Parliament as to its activities during the year. I am unable to agree with the honorable member for Hawthorn that the last worthwhile report made by the council was in 1945. From time to time I have received and examined reports submitted on a multiplicity of subjects which the council has examined. It has been stated that no substantial report had been prepared for ten or twelve years, but in fact from time to time the council has submitted valuable reports and given opinions on a number of topics related to education. However, I am indebted to both honorable members for indicating that still more use might be made of this body. Frequently I consult a number of members of the council in their individual capacities. I have had many discussions with Sir John Medley during my period in office; I have conferred with Dr. Radford, who is always very willing to help the Department with his specialized knowledge of many branches of education; and I have had almost more interviews than I would care to recall with Mr. Dunn of

the State School Committees' Association. In addition, as Minister I have been in constant contact with four members of the Education Department.

**Mr. SUTTON.**—But have you had talks with them as members of the council or as individuals?

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD.**—The question of the honorable member for Albert Park is like asking me whether I converse with him as such or as a former Speaker of this House. It is not very easy to disentangle one personality from the other. I might discuss something with an inspector or some other person to get an idea of what is going on. However, I accept the sensible suggestion that has been made.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 11 and 12.

Clause 13 (School committees).

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—This important clause deals with the composition and appointment of State school committees, and enlarges the membership to a maximum of twelve. It is intended that some of the members of the committees shall be retired by regulation so that continuity of administration might be maintained. I wonder whether the Minister of Education has considered the point I mentioned previously concerning the non-inclusion in the Bill of a reference, other than that made in clause 82, to advisory councils of schools. Perhaps the honorable gentleman will indicate whether he intends to include that matter in the legislation. State schools, technical schools and so on are clearly defined in the Bill, and school committees and parents' associations are recognized in some part of it, but I consider it would be foolish not to include a reference to advisory councils.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I am attentive to everything that is said by every member of this Chamber and pay particularly close attention to all utterances of the Leader of the Opposition. But it appears to me that the present system has worked satisfactorily for many years. Under paragraph (n) of clause 82, the

Governor in Council may make regulations regarding the appointment and tenure of office of an advisory council for each high school, and a council for each technical school, and the duties to be performed by such councils. Surely that provision is as wide as it need be. No suggestion has ever been made that it is not. No complaints have been made by the High Schools Advisory Councils' Association that the councils' status was not sufficiently recognized in the legislation. While it may possibly pay them a small compliment specifically to name them in the Bill, in the absence of any demonstration of anything having gone wrong with the existing system and in the presence of every manifestation of contentment with it, there is apparently no need to change the system. However, the Government would be glad to consider any amendment advanced by the Leader of the Opposition which possessed some practical advantage. No one knows better than the honorable member that power to do certain things by regulation is flexible and can be adapted to circumstances of the moment and, if necessary, changed. In a case where it is not a question of paying someone a salary or of doing something that might be politically suspect, to deal with matters by regulation appears to be an ideal method. I have considered the matter closely and in the absence of any complaint over a long period, I can see no reason for changing the existing state of affairs.

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL** (Brunswick West).—I am a member of the council of the Moreland High School and of the council of the girls' school at Brunswick. I agree with the Minister that the power contained in paragraph (n) of clause 82 is wide enough to prescribe the type of person who may be appointed to such a council. Business interests may be represented or even the local member of Parliament may be appointed. I think re-enactment of the present regulations establishing the councils meets the situation. The head masters of both high schools with which I am associated

very much appreciate the assistance of the advisory councils. They assist the head masters in obtaining various amenities for those secondary schools. The Department is very co-operative in most cases with the result that amenities in secondary schools are greater than those in State schools. If the existing legislation is re-enacted, I feel sure it will not in any way disturb the advisory councils or the work they perform. I am sure the Minister has many representations made to him from the various honorable members, like myself, who are members of those councils. I appreciate the work carried out by the Department in co-operation not only with the councils but also with the head masters of those schools with which I have the honour to be associated.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I appreciate the comments made by the Minister and the support given to me by my colleague, the honorable member for Brunswick West. I believe in preserving the identity of and giving all praise to the advisory council. If an advisory council is as important as has been suggested, such bodies should be included in this clause. The Minister genuinely considers he is right on this point. He may be, but I have yet to be convinced that some of the schools that have advisory councils come within the category mentioned in clause 82. The Minister referred to paragraph (n) of clause 82, which relates to the making of regulations with respect to—

the appointment and tenure of office of an advisory council for each high school and a council for each technical school and the duties to be performed by such councils;

I consider that that paragraph should remain in the Bill. Is a girls' secondary school a high school? If so, it would not be right to appoint the honorable gentleman to the advisory council of the girls' school in Brunswick, nor would it be right to appoint Mrs. Shepherd to the advisory council of the girls' school at Footscray. I understand that some consolidated schools in the country have advisory councils.

**Sir HERBERT HYLAND**.—They have; there is one at Foster.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I am assured they do have advisory councils at consolidated schools. I understand a consolidated school is a State school, not a high school. In this particular legislation the Government has no power to appoint an advisory council to any but a high school or technical school. I consider there is not sufficient power in paragraph (n) of clause 82 to appoint or maintain many of the existing advisory councils. I suggest that in clause 13, or any other clause where it is applicable, there should be reference not only to school committees but also to advisory councils. I ask that the Government consider the matter I have raised.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—It appears to me that the objection of the Leader of the Opposition relates not to clause 13 but to clause 82. If there is substance in what he says, two consequences follow. The first is that as Minister of Education some years ago he wrongly condoned many advisory councils in connexion with girls' secondary schools and consolidated schools.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—That is true.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—Secondly, clause 82 should be reconsidered to ascertain whether its provisions are wide enough to cover all schools governed or controlled by councils. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned two types of schools, but, excluding technical schools, I should think there are four or five schools which are secondary schools and which have councils. If progress is reported to-night, before we reach clause 82, I shall consider this matter before the debate is resumed; otherwise, I shall undertake to attend to the matter when the Committee reaches clause 82.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 14.

Clause 15 (Regulations).

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—Paragraph (e) of this clause provides that the Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—

the constitution duties and powers of any mothers' club parents' association or other body organized to promote the welfare of a State school;

Now that the Government has seen fit to bring mothers' clubs within the ambit of the Education Act, I should prefer that mothers' clubs be placed on a basis similar to school committees, as provided for in clause 13. I appreciate that mothers' clubs operate in both the country and the metropolitan area, but, speaking as a country member, I consider that although the school committees do a marvellous job, they would not achieve anything without the help of mothers' clubs in raising funds to provide necessary amenities.

Mr. BOLTE.—They raise the money for the school committees to spend.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—That is so. This provision does not do justice to mothers' clubs. Certainly, they are given partial recognition, but I consider they should be given more general recognition for the magnificent work they have done. The work the mothers' clubs do is well known, and I am of opinion that they deserve something better than is contained in paragraph (e) of this clause.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—Honorable members have rightly expressed the highest praise for the work done over many years past, which, I trust, will be continued for many years to come, by these splendid organizations. Although there are members, such as the Leader of the Country party, with extensive electorates, I consider that over the last eighteen months I have acquired as close a knowledge of the work of these organizations, and as great an appreciation of their services as many other members with much longer service in this House. It is with the fullest realization of the fact that without mothers' clubs we would be in most dire straits that this clause has been inserted. I say that without reservation. There is no doubt that the whole educational picture in Victoria would be completely different, and very much worse, if it were not for the exertions of these ladies, whom I would describe as being almost without equal among the social workers in this State. This provision will enable the Government to regulate with respect

to the status, duties, and powers of these organizations. It is extraordinarily difficult to set down in print within the confines of an Act of Parliament regulations to cover every eventuality. My experience as a lawyer has been that when one starts to define powers closely—

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—You limit them!

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—I am indebted to the honorable member for Brunswick West. That is the fact. The power to do, say, A, B, and C is specified, and D, perhaps, has not been thought of, but later D eventuates. Someone might say that the powers are set out under A, B, and C, and that if D had been intended it also would have been included. If the powers and duties of these bodies are prescribed by regulation, and it is found that some change is necessary, then it can be attended to speedily. Conversely, if an attempt is made to provide in the Bill for every eventuality, then my experience leads me to believe that the effect desired by the Leader of the Country party would not be achieved. Other bodies—I refer particularly to school committees and councils—also have responsibilities and obligations. There must be some determination upon where these organizations fit in and how they shall work together.

Mr. BOLTE.—Where the responsibilities of one start and those of the other finish?

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—Yes. As Minister, I shall have friendly and agreeable, but nevertheless animated, conversations with these bodies so that a mutually satisfactory conclusion may be reached. I would find it extremely difficult to draft or even give instructions for the drafting of a provision to achieve what has been suggested. However, if the Leader of the Country party submits an amendment setting forth specifically how he would like these powers to be included and how they will be co-ordinated with the functions of school committees, the Government will give it close attention. My advice, not so much as a politician but as one who has had to earn guineas

by interpreting or advising on documents, is that the matter is best left as it is.

Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition).—I do not want to pursue the line of argument adopted by the Leader of the Country party, but I support his contention that mothers' clubs—whether we like it or not, or whether Parliament is prepared to refer to them specifically in legislation or not—are most important school organizations. In any conferences held with the Minister, whether in association with school committees or not, the representatives of mothers' clubs always seem to put forward an adequate case.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—They are extremely persuasive.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Yes, but they are always fair. Paragraph (e) of clause 15 provides that the Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—the constitution duties and powers of any mothers' club parents' association or other body organized to promote the welfare of a State school. Can the Minister of Education give any indication of what is anticipated by the use of the words "or any other body?" For instance, is it intended to cover the formation of a school advisory council?

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—It might be an organization of parents, citizens and friends.

Mr. BOLTE.—Or progress associations.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—If my experience on local councils is any guide, progress associations would be outside the ambit of educational matters. Probably the purpose is to allow the Minister to enlarge the scope of the clause by means of regulations. In the February, 1957, issue of the publication *School Bell* there are set out four pages of instructions concerning regulations covering school committees and their activities in association with mothers' clubs. The honorable member for Elsternwick assures me by his smiling countenance that there have not always been easy relationships between these organizations, even though they have been working for the same school and the same children. I think the Minister's problem

is a difficult one and his explanation should be accepted unless at this late stage we are prepared to write something definite into the Bill. Any amendment would have to be framed in a manner that would permit of a wide interpretation. I believe the object can be achieved only by regulations. If these bodies are tied down too drastically they will be very concerned. If we are honest we must admit that unless they are recognized in legislation there is no power to make regulations concerning them. Without that power chaos could arise at some schools and it would continue for some time. Correctly and properly handled, the right type of regulations should smooth out these matters and ease the way to giving mothers' clubs greater recognition and support.

**Sir HERBERT HYLAND** (Gippsland South).—I do not think much of the explanation given by the Minister of Education. He got around the point in every possible direction, as one would expect from a qualified barrister. Clause 15 refers to the making of regulations relating to many matters. School committees were dealt with in clause 13, and their functions are set out completely and fully in clause 14. Regulations can be proclaimed to deal with any matter not covered by those provisions. My point is that full recognition should be given to mothers' clubs on some other basis. I do not believe in the old story that it cannot be done. Nobody should put forward such a plea until it is proved that solution is impossible. I am certain that the Parliamentary Draftsman, aided by the Director of Education, could produce something workable. I consider that I have made my point that mothers' clubs are entitled to more recognition than they have been given. Even after the passage of this Bill they will still be in a subservient position to school committees, yet I am sure all honorable members realize that the organizations which raise the money for the needs of the schools should be placed on a similar level with school committees. However, the Minister states that it is difficult to frame a suitable provision. It is of no use his asking me to draft

an amendment. I shall be quite satisfied if the honorable gentleman examines this position thoroughly and frames adequate regulations. Sometimes we see regulations that are published in the *Government Gazette*, and sometimes we do not. I shall look forward to examining closely any regulation that is issued in the hope that mothers' clubs will be given the recognition that I am sure every honorable member feels they deserve.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 16 (Vesting of property in Minister).

**Mr. BROSE** (Rodney).—The consideration of this clause gives me the opportunity to bring forward a matter that has been of concern to me for some time. Throughout the country, especially in areas where consolidated schools have been established, serviceable school buildings which are not required for immediate use by the Education Department are being allowed to remain vacant. Many people would be prepared to buy those buildings. I know of one individual who sent a cheque to the Department as payment for an unused school, but the cheque was returned to him. Over a number of years I have made submissions to the Department to the effect that it should dispose of these schools instead of allowing them to remain empty and to deteriorate. The windows of many of the buildings are broken and the tanks are riddled with bullet holes. Clause 16 provides—

All property acquired for the purposes of this Act shall be vested in the Minister and his successors, and the Minister may sell or otherwise dispose of any such property and may do and execute all necessary acts deeds and assurances for that purpose, and the proceeds of every such sale or disposition shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue.

Apparently the Education Department is not very interested in the disposal of what in my opinion is valuable property because the proceeds of any sales would be paid into Consolidated Revenue. I can cite many instances of vacant schools in my electorate, and I have no doubt the same position exists throughout Victoria. I understand from the Department that the land on which schools are built is vested in the Crown

and that the Education Department is permitted to occupy it so long as it is required for school purposes. The moment that a school building is disposed of, the land reverts to the Crown. I believe that if any unused school buildings are disposed of the nearest farmer to the location of the school should be given first option of purchasing the land on which the building was erected.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—That has been done.

Mr. BROSE.—I hope the Minister of Education will investigate this matter so as to ensure that useful buildings will not be allowed to go to waste.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—This has been my best experience in Parliament—a member has told us of a source from which money can be raised. It is true that the proceeds from the disposal of any school buildings will not be paid directly to the Department, as the land on which the buildings are erected is either Crown land reserved for education purposes or vested in the Minister in accordance with legislation. However, I am disappointed that the honorable member for Rodney has not provided me with a schedule of these valuable properties.

Mr. BROSE.—I have written to the Department.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (to Mr. Bloomfield).—Surely, you know how many schools there are and how many are empty.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—I will be glad to learn from the honorable member for Rodney or from any other honorable member the details of any vacant schools as they come to their notice from time to time. The practice in the Department, so far as I know, is for the Minister to authorize the closing of a school when the number of children attending decreases to such an extent that that action is warranted. Then directions are given through the Public Works Department for the sale of the building and for the leasing or sale of the land on which the building is erected. It is quite impossible for me, as was the case with my predecessors, to know what might have gone on in the past

in relation to the closing of schools. It may be that there are cases, which in the ordinary course of business would not come to the attention of the Minister.

Mr. BROSE.—I would not expect you to know of every case, but all of these matters must be handled by the Department.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Before a building can be sold, the matter must be brought to the attention of the Minister.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—That is so. If any properties in the country formerly occupied by the Education Department have been abandoned and nothing has been done about their disposal, upon receipt of advice from any honorable member I shall make immediate inquiries into the situation so that I may give some assistance to the Treasurer. I make this appeal to members generally, whatever constituency they represent.

Mr. MUTTON.—Three acres of land in my district have been unused since 1923.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Rafferty).—Order! The honorable member for Coburg is out of his place.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—I shall be very disappointed in the honorable member for Coburg if he does not write from his place or from some other place furnishing me with particulars of the location of the land to which he refers. It would be of great assistance to the Government if any other honorable members who are aware of vacant school buildings would also advise me of their location.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—I wish to refer to the Port Welshpool school, which is in my electorate. The old building there was Government owned but it was decided that a new building should be erected. That project was carried out and thereupon the local foreshore committee asked me to approach the Government to sell the old building so that it might be transferred to the foreshore.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—The local golf club also wanted it.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I backed the foreshore committee and the old school building was sold to that committee by the Education Department.

The only comment I make is that if the Department would take that action in one instance, it should be prepared to do the same anywhere else.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—The proposal immediately before the Committee is one of the most novel approaches to education that I have heard of. Every member of Parliament whom I have met has at one time or another asked a Minister to buy more land. The cry has been, "Reserve a site. It may not be wanted now, but we may require it 30 or 40 years hence." It is true, as the honorable member for Rodney has pointed out, that many schools have been closed in the country for various reasons and purposes. I have every sympathy with members representing country electorates who have found themselves in an unhappy position when it has been necessary for a school to be closed.

There are two phases in the procedure of closing a school. First, it is a temporary closing, but ultimately it is officially closed and, very often, it is shifted. I remember the present Minister of Water Supply inviting me as Minister of Education to Warracknabeal, and saying, "If only we could get the stone church school we could make something out of that building." I could not understand why he and those associated with him should think of shifting a stone church. I found later that he meant the Stonechurch school, and ultimately it was moved to Warracknabeal. The honorable member for Brunswick West has assured me that he was educated at Richmond Plains and has told me what a great academy of learning that was. I can understand that, but I make the point that things such as I have indicated are happening somewhere almost every day—a school is being shifted and re-erected somewhere else. Then the situation arises in which the man who wants to buy the land on which a school was formerly erected will not offer what he claims is the value of an area that the Government wants to purchase from him for school purposes.

Only last week the honorable member for Grant asked me whether I knew of any school site that had been reserved in the West Sunshine area. Ultimately, I

found that a site had been reserved in 1926 for a possible school which in those times must have appeared to have been very remote as a prospect. The Department now thinks it is time a school was erected in that neighbourhood. There may be cases in which the Department is holding land that would cost a fortune to buy to-day.

**Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer).—I wish to correct a statement of the Leader of the Opposition to the effect that in the country vendors of land expect more when they sell than when they buy. My experience in a country electorate has been that, in nearly every case in which it has been desired to establish a school, the land has been donated by a local resident.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I would only say to the Premier that, with all his great knowledge, he knows nothing about the position. The honorable gentleman sponsored a committee to go to America to promote Victoria. One of its members owned land at Robinvale. If the Premier cares to peruse the file on this matter—which can be produced for him by the Minister of Education—he will find that his statement of a moment ago was most inaccurate. The Department has been held up for ransom by people all over the country—by squatters, by big and small business people, and by ordinary persons. They are all entitled to the equitable value of their land, but some of them are bushrangers. They may want a school in a particular locality, but when it comes to obtaining the necessary land on which to build the school, these people give nothing away. I agree that very often, where a small school is required in some country area, people of the type I have in mind will go out of their way—

**Mr. BOLTE**.—I said, in my area.

**Mr. SHEPHERD**.—When I was Minister of Education, a big squatting company with offices in Queen-street and a landowner—the Federal member for Wannon—tried to induce me to transfer a school from its existing location to a certain place elsewhere. I think the name of the settlement where this school was located was Nareen, in western Victoria.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD.—It is not the only case.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The idea behind this proposed shifting of the Nareen school was that the people whose children attended it should themselves be transferred to another site. This would have meant, for the children, an extra travelling distance of 6 miles by bicycle or pony, but the effect would have been to have the school situated nearer to that gentleman's property. The selfish motive was that he wanted work-hands on his property. That was the proposition that was put up to the Department. I received a deputation from the parents of the children attending the school at Nareen, and I "bowled over" the proposed change. I hope that position still obtains. I say to the Premier, "Do not think you can mislead me into thinking there are not people in the country with selfish motives."

Mr. BOLTE.—I am suggesting that the honorable member for Rodney was referring to particular areas.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I am on his side also. If certain pieces of land are not wanted for future school purposes the Department should get rid of them. If the Premier reviews the plan concerning the Robinvale business, he will get a shock. The honorable gentleman knows the land and knows who owns it. When steps were taken to purchase the area for school purposes the price quoted was £35,000. That is what Australian Consolidated Industries asked me for a school site of about 13 acres. The manager of this concern said to me, "If you are going to take that land, take the lot." The offer was for 20 acres, with the price for the additional area at the same figure per acre. People of that kind do not give land away for school purposes. They want the top price; but when they want the land back, it is at bedrock that they want to deal. I accept in good understanding and in the best spirit the reprimand implied by the Premier.

Mr. J. D. MacDONALD (Burwood).—Just prior to becoming a member of this House I was asked to a consolidated school then in course of

construction to give advice concerning certain problems that had arisen. I was horrified to find one new section and about eight or ten funny little buildings of all sizes clustered together. I asked an inspector why the Department had sought to go to the expense of providing the little buildings in an effort to make a decent consolidated school. His answer is covered by clause 16, and it was to the effect that if those properties had been sold the money would have gone into Consolidated Revenue and there would have been so much less for expenditure upon education.

In many instances, where small schools have been located, it will be found that the buildings are required and can be put to good purpose in the interests of the community by organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and the like. There must be numbers of cases in which there are small buildings of little value that would cost £100 to remove and £600 to repair. Money for repair purposes can be obtained out of the education vote, but in no other way can it be made available. I saw for myself what a tremendous job it would have been to rebuild the consolidated school of which I have spoken, and I realized that even when the job was completed it would not represent value for the money spent on it.

While there are several difficulties associated with clause 13, many school buildings in the country that are no longer being used for education purposes could be put to good public purposes. If possible, they should be sold to a particular community interest, but perhaps the Education Department should retain the title to the land. Undoubtedly, where a new school is to be erected it is economic to build it of new material.

Mr. MUTTON (Coburg).—On the 1st September, 1908, a school was built in my district, and in 1923 a new school was constructed about a quarter of a mile away from it. On the old site there are 3½ to 4 acres of what is now very valuable land. In 1926, it was turned into a children's playground but eventually it became dilapidated. In

1928, an area of approximately 6 acres was purchased for a reserve, and those 4 acres to which I have referred abut upon that reserve. It would be in the best interests of the Education Department if it negotiated with the City of Broadmeadows, which has been looking after and utilizing the 4-acre area. Since 1908, this land has been under the care of the municipality of Broadmeadows. I trust that the Department will hand it over to the city. The most remarkable feature is that this land is in an area of Fawkner which was acquired by the Housing Commission and on which it was intended to erect 1,000 houses, but nothing has yet been done in that regard. During my 28 years as a councillor in Broadmeadows, I tried many times to have this section handed over to the municipality. The clause presents me with a golden opportunity to impress upon the Government the desirability of making a gracious gift of the land to the city.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Why did not your Government do it?

Mr. MUTTON.—I could get nothing out of the Government in which the honorable member for Gippsland South was a Minister.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Rafferty).**—Order! I ask the honorable member for Coburg to discuss clause 16.

Mr. MUTTON.—I am pointing out that previous Governments have not done anything in relation to this area. As I have stated, it is land associated with an area taken over by the Housing Commission. If my suggestion were adopted, residents in this district would benefit greatly. This land abuts the Charles Mutton Reserve, and I played an important part in having it reserved, because when I entered the council in 1925 I sought its reservation as a playground. The Government now has an opportunity to provide this open space for the benefit of local residents.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—In reply to the honorable member for Burwood, I do not want it thought that when the Department closes a school it will transfer the building to another site irrespective of

economic considerations, when it might be cheaper to erect a new building. In such cases, the Education Department obtains the best advice available from the Public Works Department as to whether a building should be sold for removal or removed to another site, or whether it should be let. It is disregarding the facts to say that to prevent a payment to Consolidated Revenue by selling such a building it is transferred to another site. It has never entered the mind of anyone in the Education Department that the Department will be better off if a building is transferred to a new site when that is not the wise thing to do. We have always adopted the most economical course.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 17 (Disposal of property).

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL** (Brunswick West).—Public-spirited people give land to the Department for the erection of a school, particularly in country districts. I recall my own family donating an area of 2 acres at Wedderburn Junction. After a time, settlement drifted towards the railway station and the school was removed nearer to the station. The affront to my father was that he was requested to buy back the land he had donated. If public-spirited people give land to the Department for the erection of a school which is afterwards removed to another area, it should be provided that the land shall be re-vested in the name of the previous owner. In that way, people will be encouraged to donate land to the Department. My father was hurt over the matter. After giving the Department 2 acres of land, he was presented with a bill to repurchase the area.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 18 to 23.

Clause 24 (Observance of loyal ceremony).

**Mr. TANNER** (Ripponlea).—I direct attention to the wording of sub-clause (2)—

The flag to be used at any such ceremony and referred to in the declaration shall be the Union Flag the Australian Blue Ensign or the Australian Red Ensign.

The Australian Blue Ensign is the Australian national flag, and the Australian Red Ensign is the proper flag for

merchant ships registered in Australia. I ask the Minister to consider the deletion of the words "or the Australian Red Ensign."

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—As this matter has only just been brought to my attention, I trust that the honorable member for Ripponlea will be satisfied if I assure him that I shall look into the matter before the Bill becomes law and, if necessary, I shall discuss an amendment with him.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 25 to 27.

Clause 28 (Power as to existing technical schools).

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I direct attention to paragraph (e) of sub-clause (3) which appears to me to be a new provision. Is there any special reason for its insertion, because it was not mentioned in the explanatory speech of the Minister? It provides that upon the publication of an order by the Governor in Council—

notwithstanding anything in any Act, the Public Service Board or the Teachers Tribunal may, pursuant to any agreement made between the Governor in Council and the said governing body in that behalf, appoint any person employed on the staff of such institution or school who is then an officer within the meaning of paragraph (c) of the interpretation of "officer" in section three of the Superannuation Act 1928 to an office in the public service or in the teaching service (as the case requires) with an emolument corresponding with or higher than that which he received in such institution or school and with such classification as the Public Service Board or (as the case may be) the Teachers Tribunal on the recommendation of the appropriate committee of classifiers deems proper.

Does it mean that in certain technical schools, subject to agreement, it is possible to employ a teacher in a higher classification on the recommendation of the Teachers Tribunal or, on the administrative side, on the recommendation of the Public Service Board? In these schools most of the staff appear to be employed by the school council and are paid by the Department directly or indirectly. Is paragraph (e) an over-riding provision to cover a difficult situation?

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—This clause appears to be substantially a reprint, with some alterations to bring it up to date without altering the sense, of section 79 of Act No. 3671, as amended by section 3 of Act No. 4850. I am unable to assure the Leader of the Opposition that that is so, but I suggest that the clause be agreed to, and I shall do everything possible to answer his queries, either by providing a full explanation or by arranging for any reconsideration that may be necessary.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 29 to 59.

Clause 60 (Employment during school hours of children of school age).

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—Paragraph (a) of the proviso to sub-clause (1) of this clause provides that the Minister may, in his discretion, specially exempt any child from the provisions relating to employment on the grounds of the illness or poverty of the child's parents. I contend that it should be the aim of the Government to keep all children at school and, in the case of poverty of the child's parents, to correct that position. It would be wrong to keep a child away from school because of the poverty of his or her parents. As a Parliament, we have endeavoured to remove from the Local Government Acts all references to poverty in connexion with the non-payment or arrears of rates. At one time, it was possible for a person, on the grounds of poverty, to claim an exemption from the payment of rates. In such circumstances, the persons concerned were absolutely at bedrock. It would be wise to endeavour to improve the wording of this clause, which appears to have been taken from Act No. 3671.

Paragraph (b) of the proviso to sub-clause (1) refers to exemption of children of or over the age of twelve years who have been recommended by the school medical officer for special treatment by a child psychiatric clinic approved by the Minister. This appears to be a reflection on our attitude towards the mentally sick or to a child who is possibly uneducable. However, if a

child is so lacking in mental capacity that he is not capable of being educated, is it right that he should be expected to work? I ask the Minister to consider these matters further. The Education Department might think it desirable to have this clause redrafted so as to retain a certain amount of elasticity of movement but, at the same time, to take away the stigma that could be placed upon the parent of a child.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I do not regard the word "poverty" as containing any slur; poverty might be an honourable state. In fact, there are certain orders avowed to poverty, as well as to chastity. There is nothing reprehensible or dishonourable in the connotation of the word and, however much we might mince matters, the effect or result would not be very much different. There are occasions when widows in small businesses require assistance. I encountered a case recently of a widow conducting a small shop who, because another member of the family was ill, desired permission for her daughter to assist her. The girl was not doing particularly well at school and, in any case, she had only about six weeks to go before reaching the age of fourteen. No doubt the Leader of the Opposition has encountered similar cases. However, without undertaking to amend the clause, I assure the honorable member that I shall consider his suggestions.

The clause was agreed to.

Clause 61 (Education of children under disabilities).

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley).—This clause deals with the education of children who are suffering certain disabilities. During the discussion on clause 2, the Minister referred to matters raised by me during the second-reading debate, but he related his remarks solely to children suffering the disability of deafness. However, paragraph (b) of sub-clause (3) of this clause refers to any child who is blind or deaf, or has such defective sight or hearing, or is so mentally or physically defective, as to be unable profitably to take part in the instruction given in

school. The clause then sets out the various actions that the parent could take. For example, the child could be sent to a special school or institution and, in such cases, the Government has indicated that it would be prepared to meet the fees applicable. During the second-reading debate, I suggested that maintenance of these children should also be borne by the State. They are at a disadvantage because they are directed to attend a school which will be a long way from their homes. Of course, such schools are not established in small country centres. The parents will have to pay part, if not all, of the cost of maintaining these children. If the Government is prepared to pay for the fees incurred to enable these children to attend special schools, it should be prepared to meet the cost of maintaining them and the travelling expenses involved in getting them to such schools. Thereby, handicapped children would be given a chance in life.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I appreciate and support the point of view put forward by the honorable member for Murray Valley. In my opinion, this clause embodies two separate features. It is quite definite that sub-clause (3) refers to cases in which a child, having attained the age of four years and six months, is not attending school. If such a child has defective hearing, it is necessary for the parent to report that fact to the Education Department. When that is done, certain situations will develop, and the Minister can give directions. Paragraph (b) applies to a child who is attending school and is found to be blind, deaf, has defective sight or hearing, or is so mentally or physically defective as to be unable profitably to take part in the instruction at the school he is attending, and states an entirely different proposition from that contained in paragraph (a). The important feature contained in paragraph (b) is that a legally qualified practitioner, who is the medical officer in any school, certifies as to the condition of the child, and it is then the duty of the parent to provide for the efficient and regular instruction of the child, who shall be deemed to be

of school age. That will bring the child under the control of the Education Department and the provisions of this legislation. Members of the Opposition were of the opinion that it might be wise to embody, in paragraph (a), some of the features contained in paragraph (b), so that the defects mentioned will be reportable to the Education Department, which could then act accordingly. I should imagine that the Department is not desirous of that action being taken at present. I realize that it is necessary to treat at an early age some children with defective hearing. Although there are two separate paragraphs in sub-clause (3), they are more or less governed by all the sub-clauses of the clause, which are wide in their implication. A close examination is necessary to establish which sub-clause applies to a particular provision. I realize that some of the provisions are being re-enacted from the existing legislation, but sub-clause (3) appears to contain new provisions. Sub-clause (1) relates to a child with defective hearing, and the other sub-clauses refer to children who are at school and have bad eyesight, no eyesight, defective hearing, or are physically and mentally defective. Such children come within the over-all provisions of the clause, which throws all the responsibility on the parents, and that could be costly, as the honorable member for Murray Valley pointed out.

Sub-clause (4) provides—

Where any such parent is unable to provide for such instruction he shall—

- (a) give notice of such inability to the Minister;
- (b) send the child to such special school or to such institution for the education of blind or short-sighted or deaf or partly deaf children or mentally or physically defective children as the Minister by general or special order directs; and
- (c) contribute towards the maintenance of the child at such special school or institution such sum (if any) as is agreed upon between the parent and the Minister; but no contribution shall be required towards the cost of the education of such child at such special school or institution.

The honorable member for Murray Valley stated that special schools will not be established at the doorsteps of

country residents. Probably the closest special school to Sea Lake would be Glendonald at Kew. A child from Sea Lake attending that school would have to be kept at a hostel and maintained by someone. If the parents are to be responsible for the full cost of maintenance, that could be a burden which the Government should alleviate. This Parliament amended the labour and industry legislation so that an apprentice living in a country district, in which there were no technical training facilities, could spend a certain period at a technical school. During his time at that school, his wages are paid by his employer, and the Department contributes towards his maintenance. A similar provision could apply in the case of a child who was forced to attend a special school. I think the Act should be amended accordingly.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 62 to 64.

Clause 65 (Council of Adult Education).

**Mr. SUGGETT** (Moorabbin).—I should like to comment briefly on the work being done by the Council of Adult Education under the directorship of Mr. Colin Badger, M.A. In recent years, increasing emphasis has been laid on the value of adult education. Some years ago, one imagined that education finished when one left school. In this modern age, the value of education from the adult point of view is becoming more and more important. Approximately three years ago, a building, situated at 19 Russell-street, Melbourne, was purchased from the trustees of the Australian Church. It was intended that this building would be used for adult education. At present, it is condemned as being unfit for use, and I ask the Government to do all in its power to find the money necessary to restore that building so that it may be used for the purposes of adult education. There is a great need for such a centre to assist in the promotion of cultural activities in this city.

Many of the larger manufacturers in England are providing fully equipped schools as adjuncts to their factories. It is a condition of employment of teenagers that they attend such schools at

*Mr. Shepherd.*

least one day a week. That is an excellent scheme which could profitably be adopted by many firms in Australia. At these schools, employees can study all branches of education, the arts, musical appreciation, languages, and so on. In Australia, many firms, such as banks, are conducting schools and conferences for young executives. A greater emphasis is being placed on educating people after they have left school, and any action taken by the Government in that regard will be of great assistance. The Adult Education Association of Victoria, a voluntary adjunct of the Council of Adult Education, is doing an excellent job in advising the council where educational facilities are most needed. It provides an extra curricula service outside the financial scope and activities of the council.

I emphasize again the need for putting the building at 19 Russell-street, Melbourne, into a fit condition for use by the Council of Adult Education in the cause of the advancement of the cultural life of this city and this State.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 66 to 80.

Clause 81 was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

Clause 82, providing, *inter alia*—

Subject to this Act the Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—

- (2) the medical and dental inspection of children attending State schools;

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I move—

That the words "and dental inspection" be omitted with the view of inserting the words "inspection and dental treatment." I think the meaning is clear. As members are aware, dental treatment as well as dental inspection is provided for children in the schools, and acceptance of the amendment will bring the legislation into conformity with a service that is now in fact provided and is proposed to be continued.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—The Opposition supports the amendment. If the paragraph as drafted were implemented, it would not be possible for dental treatment

to be given. It would merely be possible for the teeth of children to be inspected and for a recommendation to be made to someone else that treatment be carried out. I am concerned at the slow progress being made by the Department of Health in establishing the proposed clinic at the corner of the Geelong and Ballarat roads, Footscray, to serve the western suburbs. The property was bought about six years ago, but sufficient money has not been provided to enable the clinic to function. The site is a strategic one, being on a bus route from Moonee Ponds to Williamstown. It was purchased because it is accessible to all school children living in any of the surrounding suburbs, and they could readily travel as required to the clinic. People residing in the western suburbs desire this facility.

Victorians are not as enlightened as are the citizens of New Zealand upon this matter. At every major school in the Dominion, a dental clinic is operated by the Health Department, and all children receive dental treatment at the site. Those who attend a school which has not such a clinic receive their treatment at the nearest one. Another innovation is that, after the dental staff take their annual holidays, they give treatment to children of pre-school age. In New Zealand, there is in vogue a system under which all children receive free dental treatment until they attain the age of 18 years. I should like to see a similar scheme introduced into Victoria ultimately.

In the meantime, I emphasize that the State owns a property purchased for the express purpose of the erection of a clinic so that dental inspection and treatment can be carried out in conformity with regulations made under clause 82. Over the years I have made approaches in this regard to successive Governments. Both the Department of Health and the Education Department desire this clinic to be established, and I trust that in due course this and other clinics to render dental treatment will be established.

The amendment was agreed to.

**Mr. MOSS** (Murray Valley).—Paragraphs (g) and (h) of clause 82 provide that the Governor in Council may make regulations for or with respect to—

(g) the conveyance of pupils to State schools and classes and the arrangement or approval of transport services for that purpose, and the conditions under which pupils attending other schools may be conveyed by any such transport service;

(h) the granting of allowances in respect of the travelling of pupils to schools and classes;

The Minister of Education referred to the question of the liberalization of the provisions concerning free transport of children to schools. During the second-reading debate, I suggested that the limit might be reduced to 1 mile and submitted strong arguments in support of my contention. Replying, the Minister stated, "As a matter of long-term policy, that may be desirable." I submit it is highly desirable that some progress in the direction indicated should be made. It may be possible for the Government to accept a proposal whereby the 3-mile limit could be reduced to 2 miles.

In many districts in Victoria, primary school children must walk 3 miles to school. This is a serious problem for the younger ones, and in some cases it is having an effect on their health. I seriously put it to the Minister that action should be taken as the first step in a plan, particularly in consolidated areas where there are intensive farming populations. I refer in particular to Katunga and Strathmerton, where soldier settlers live on blocks of 100 acres—for country districts, this represents a heavy population. It is most desirable to reduce the limit as suggested. From other aspects, in the more sparsely populated areas implementation of the suggestion would have a beneficial effect. I urge upon the Minister the necessity of further consideration being given to this matter with the view of assisting primary school children.

Concerning the granting of allowances in respect of the travelling of pupils to schools and classes, I understand that an allowance of 1s. per day is paid in

respect of primary scholars who have to travel more than 3 miles. Secondary school pupils are catered for in another way. The payment of 1s. daily has operated for many years—some say for 50 years, but I cannot verify that. I know it has been in force for 35 years, because that was the position when I attended school. The time is appropriate for a revision of this allowance.

In many instances, children travel 5 and 6 miles from their homes to school, and others have to journey many miles farther than that. Moreover, some parents pay substantial sums of money—some can afford it, others cannot—in order to run their own bus services. The Minister knows of the bus service conducted by parents at Jil Jil. Six parents in that district pay a total of £1,200 per annum, or £200 each, to have their children conveyed to school. The Minister is aware of the facts and is unable to provide an adequate service or to establish a school that would effectively help the situation.

In cases like that, and many others, there is a strong argument for substantial increases to be made in the allowance. In my opinion, the amount should be on the basis of the distance travelled, instead of there being a flat rate of 1s. per day. A scholar who must travel 15 miles from his home to school and 15 miles back is entitled to a higher payment than one who travels only 4 miles to school and 4 miles home. The present system, which has operated for many years, should be revised. We have been told that there are no avenues by which additional finance for education can be obtained. If representations are made to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for certain works, Mr. East will state that the funds of the Commission have been reduced so that more money can be made available for education, hospitals and other purposes. It may be that the Departments are putting out a line of propaganda, but we have to be realistic, and if more money is needed the onus is on the Treasurer to find it to bring these things up to date. If it was fair for 1s. to be paid

for pupils' travelling allowance 40 or 50 years ago, the amount is due for revision now, and a more appropriate system of assisting scholars should be worked out.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—In reply to the honorable member for Murray Valley, I merely wish to say that both the matters he raised are receiving consideration. The simple answer he put forward was that it is the Treasurer's duty to find more money, but the present Treasurer does not find it any easier than did his predecessors to produce money out of a hat. I realize the force and strength of the honorable member's statements. At the second-reading stage, I indicated that I regarded it as one of the greatest tragedies of our time that people are being virtually driven off the land because they cannot get their children to school. If the Government cannot improve the situation, it will not be for want of trying. I assure the honorable member that the matter is at the moment under consideration.

The clause, as amended, was adopted, as were clause 83 and the schedules.

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

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 29) on the motion of Sir Thomas Maltby (Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. HOLLAND** (Flemington).—This is a Bill to amend the Local Government Act, and for other purposes. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Public Works said—

Usually, the presentation of a Bill containing 25 or 30 clauses is designed to enunciate a policy or principle, but in the case of most local government amending Bills, such as this, each clause stands alone and apart, usually bearing no relation to those preceding or following it. Therefore, in my introductory speech I have no principle to espouse, and will proceed to explain the individual provisions. It seems to me that because of the construction and nature of the Bill the main discussion should take place in the Committee stage. At that time each clause will be separately discussed without destroying the principle or the structure of the measure itself.

That is a fair appreciation of the Bill, and the Opposition proposes to deal with it in that manner. The Bill deletes certain sections of the Local Government Act, amends others and adds additional provisions. The Opposition will suggest certain alterations, will oppose some clauses and provisions, and will seek amendments in certain directions. I shall proceed to indicate our ideas so that the Minister of Public Works will have some idea of them before the Bill is discussed in Committee.

Clause 2 relates to the method of marking ballot-papers. The Opposition supports the principle enunciated, but considers that the clause should go further. As a party, we believe the procedure should be similar to that applicable to State and Federal elections, and we shall submit amendments along those lines. Clause 3 amends certain provisions of the principal Act relating to the making of by-laws. Sub-clause (1) of that clause deals with noxious weeds. The Opposition agrees with the principle involved, but will seek some clarification of the provision and, perhaps, suggest a slight amendment. A new power for local government is included in sub-clause (2), namely, the making of regulations to prevent objectionable noises at unreasonable times. This is desirable, but we consider the provision is not as clear as it could be. We shall seek clarification of its terms and perhaps some amendment. Sub-clause (3) deals with the power of councils to increase fees for street parking. The Opposition will oppose this clause which, it is considered, is not justified. A new provision to enable a by-law to be made prohibiting or regulating the leaving of caravans on streets or roads and on private property is contained in sub-clause (4). The Opposition agrees with the principle involved, but considers that the power relating to private property is not wide enough. Accordingly, we shall seek an amendment designed to make the power similar to that relating to roads. Sub-clause (5) is unacceptable to the Opposition in its present form. It proposes the making of by-laws conferring power on council officers and members of the Police Force to search vehicles in and near any muni-

principal abattoirs or land used in connexion therewith. There may be some arguments in favour of this power to prevent stealing from abattoirs, but the proposal is far too wide. The Opposition will seek deletion of the clause or considerable amendment to it. Sub-clauses (6) and (7) contain machinery amendments to which we have no objection. Sub-clause (8) amends the Fifteenth Schedule of the principal Act which concerns the power of councils to obtain certain damages to a limit of £10. The Opposition agrees with the amendment, which was sought by the honorable member for Williamstown. I do not question the necessity to raise the minimum as is done in sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (b), but consider that a minimum should be fixed in respect of sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (b). Paragraph (c) relates to the power of councils to control spear fishing. Obviously some such power is necessary, but it is doubtful whether the municipalities, rather than the Governor in Council, should have power to make the necessary regulations.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—The Governor in Council would have to approve of any regulations made.

Mr. HOLLAND.—There is a difference of opinion as to whether the Governor in Council should make all the regulations rather than that different sets of regulations should be submitted for his approval. The Opposition does not disagree with the intention of the sub-clause. Obviously, the power for councils to make by-laws for the managing of land purchased for parking stations, as provided in sub-clause (9), is necessary. Clause 4 amends section 198 of the principal Act, which relates to the making of by-laws or regulations as to roads of limited access. The Opposition agrees with the provision in principle. The power of councils to remit or defer payment of rates in necessitous cases is dealt with in clause 5 by substituting a new section 295 of the principal Act. The Opposition supports the clause, but considers it should be extended to cover both the City of Melbourne and the City of Geelong. I understand they are not covered at present.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—If that is so, I shall introduce an appropriate amendment.

Mr. HOLLAND.—By adding a new sub-section to section 325 of the principal Act, clause 6 vests power in the Governor in Council to extend the time for the taking of polls as to rating on unimproved values. The Opposition agrees with the principle of the clause, around which much argument has devolved in the past. The only point at issue is that the matter could be postponed for a number of years. It should not be possible for postponement in any instance to be for a longer period than one year.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Do you mean for one extension?

Mr. HOLLAND.—Yes. The legislation is designed to protect the rights of all concerned. The Opposition does not object to the proposal in clause 8 to increase from 2s. 6d. to 5s. the fee for a rate certificate, but wonders whether the new rate will cover the cost to councils. Clause 9 deals with borrowing, and amends section 430 of the principal Act. I agree with the intention to simplify the use of money borrowed by councils, but question whether the clause does not wipe out too many of the present safeguards, which are a check on councils. We intend to ask the Minister of Public Works to re-insert portion of the old provision relating to what is done in the first place at a council meeting and subsequently ratified by a majority of the council at a following meeting.

Clause 10 amends section 568 of the principal Act, which deals with sub-divisions and private street construction. The Opposition agrees in principle with the amendment contained in paragraph (a). The proposed new paragraph (g) of sub-section (6) of section 568, in paragraph (b) of clause 10, appears to need a slight amendment. As far as I am able to ascertain, this provision does not meet the position desired by the Minister, and, in Committee, the Opposition will suggest a way in which that may be done. The proposed new sub-section of section 568, in paragraph (d) of clause 10, is designed to protect

the buyer of land, but again the Opposition expresses a doubt whether it will have the desired effect. That also will be dealt with more fully at the Committee stage. The principles expressed in clauses 11 to 14 are not objected to, but in clause 15 in regard to the proposed substitution in section 586 of the principal Act of the words "is desirable" for "is urgently required," the Opposition is of opinion that a better choice of words would meet the position. As the amendment in clause 17 does not apply to the City of Melbourne, it is probable that an amendment will be submitted to remedy this position. The amendments in the remaining clauses are agreed to in principle, and need only slight alterations as far as the Opposition is concerned.

The Bill proposes certain machinery amendments which will make local government easier from the administration side. There is a very obvious need for a further consolidation of the Local Government Act. The last consolidation was made in 1946, and since then there has been a series of amendments so that it requires the skill and knowledge of the law of someone as competent as the Attorney-General to piece together legislation which should be clearly and easily understood. A perusal of the Local Government Act indicates the need for streamlining and clarification of the Act itself. It was initiated many years ago and contains many archaic provisions which to my mind are not necessary. As we are living in what is familiarly known as the "Sputnik era," legislation such as this should be brought into line with modern thinking. The Opposition considers that this is an urgent necessity as far as the Local Government Act is concerned. Although this Bill deals with the administrative side of local government, it does nothing to alleviate the real problems that beset local governing bodies. Most of these problems are due to lack of finance from which the Government also suffers. Every one advocates the need to preserve local government. In a recent speech, the Minister of Public

Works spoke of the many responsibilities which are being thrown upon local governing bodies.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Without the means of carrying out the new duties.

Mr. HOLLAND.—That is correct. That brings to mind the changing role of local government. In the past, local government was looked upon as a medium for making roads, collecting garbage, cleaning streets and other odd jobs. The ratepayers were not asked to contribute any great amount of money, and, although the local governing body was not heard of very much, it was considered to be doing a good job. To-day, local government is more or less a social service medium for Governments—the Federal Government in particular. It is expected to provide all of the modern needs demanded by a civilized community, such as health services, kindergartens, parks, recreation areas, libraries, youth centres, and citizens' clubs. In the past, Governments have allocated a certain amount towards the provision of these facilities, but in the main the local governing body has to find the money largely by the collecting of rates. The demand for additional facilities is obviously increasing, particularly in the outer suburbs. In my own electorate, the local council is much better off than those in outer areas where municipalities are faced with what is a practically hopeless task. Councils' duties are also increasing in regard to the various problems created by traffic, particularly in the inner areas. Much of what I am saying has been said before, but needs to be reiterated in order to bring to the Government's notice the position which faces local councils to-day. In the inner areas particularly, road surfaces cannot stand up to the traffic which they carry, with the result that councils need to find large sums of money to remake roads and also to provide necessary facilities such as pedestrian crossings and traffic lights. As municipal councils have only one source—the ratepayers—from which to obtain money, they are unable to keep pace with the demands made upon them. Not only are councils faced with all these problems; they suffer all sorts of

disabilities. First of all, they are expected to provide roads to cope with traffic, and yet they receive, in effect, nothing from the petrol tax, which is supposed to finance roadmaking generally. They have to provide money for social service facilities, but at the same time they are met with demands by the Government for rate exemptions on land used for charitable and educational purposes and by other worthy bodies. Thus the sources of their revenue are limited further.

It could be said that I have been speaking from a political angle, but this matter goes beyond politics. I wish to quote from the presidential report as submitted to the 1956 meeting of the Australian Council of Local Government Associations—an Australia-wide organization of local government associations. The report deals with the subjects I have mentioned. In other parts of Australia local governing bodies also suffer from the same difficulty—lack of finance. In his address to the Australian Council of Local Government Associations, the chairman said, *inter alia*—

When I took office in November, 1955, the Australian council had accepted as its primary objective the provision of adequate funds for the ever growing tasks of local government.

This objective finds expression mainly in three directions—

- (a) Firstly, the release to local government of sufficient money to carry on the day-to-day or continuing activities of local government.
- (b) Secondly, the provision of loan money in greater quantity for new projects of an essential character, and
- (c) Thirdly, because the maintenance and construction of roads absorb such a great proportion of local government funds, the amplification of the roads grants which now flow from the Commonwealth through the States to local government.

He went on to point out that the opportunities of increasing the revenue from ordinary local government sources were very small indeed, and then later on he continued—

Should local government fall down on its job, there would be an immediate and positive reflection in the people's health, comfort, and general welfare. Local government must continue. But, as we have

said, time and time again, local government cannot "go on" unless it is given the wherewithal to carry out its task.

In the *Australian Municipal Journal* of October, 1957, the executive committee in its report on financial problems, points out the necessity for an increase in the proportion of the petrol tax that is allotted to municipal councils and also refers to the legal question of whether the petrol tax as such could be upset. The important parts of the report are mostly concerned with municipal finance. It states, *inter alia*—

There has been no outstanding change in the overall position of municipal finance. While some concessions have been granted by Government action, the committee is constantly concerned with the increasing gap between municipal revenues and responsibilities. Despite governmental reassurances of their appreciation of the plight of local authorities there has been little tangible evidence of practical measures to place municipal finance on a sound basis by the injection of funds from the common pool of taxation. The committee will continue to press both the State and Federal governments for a more realistic appreciation of the difficulties facing councils in this current period of rapid development, which has severely overstrained the resources of local authorities.

At page 175 of the journal an article entitled "Review of Rating Exemptions Wanted" states, *inter alia*—

It is estimated Victorian municipalities are losing over £100,000 a year as a result of exemption from rating of properties defined as being used for educational charitable and religious purposes. An increasing number of religious and educational bodies are seeking or have sought exemption from rating in the light of recent decisions in law which have given a wider meaning to the term "charitable purposes" (as used in section 249 of the Local Government Act.)

Nobody denies that all these educational, charitable, and religious organizations are not worthy of rate exemptions, but we all must accept the point of view that it is a community—a Government—responsibility and not a municipal one. The points of view to which I have referred are expressions of a very responsible body, which embraces all lines of political thought. A number of people give only lip service to the benefits of local government and the desirability—the absolute necessity—of keeping it in operation. Unless Governments are prepared to accept the fact that the system cannot continue under

the present set-up without financial assistance, some change will be inevitable. What is urgently needed is the impartial examination of the problems of local government by a committee which could make recommendations to the Government, particularly relating to the most important problem of all—finance.

To-day's press carried the announcement that the Camberwell council had budgeted for a deficit, something which I thought was contrary to the Local Government Act, simply because of the furore that was created when the council raised the rate and because some local citizens stated that it would be impossible to pay the increased sums. Camberwell is, I think, the municipality with the second highest revenue in the State, so members can realize the problems facing municipalities generally. I understand approaches have been made to the Minister of Public Works previously and that it was indicated, if not promised, that appropriate action would be taken. I suggest that if it is desired to keep municipal government operating along the lines on which most of us want to see it function, some financial reform is urgently necessary.

If we believe that local government is the third arm of democracy as we know it—I do not say this as an indictment of the present Minister, as I appreciate his problems—its importance should be recognized by granting its oversight to a full-time Minister. Sufficient problems are faced in local government administration to warrant the appointment of a full-time Minister in order to keep pace with developments.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—Local government and town planning.

Mr. HOLLAND.—If that is the view of the Minister, I am quite happy to agree. I believe that, as Minister of Public Works, the honorable gentleman has far too many activities to administer without being responsible for local government affairs. He has to handle such matters as the administration of the Public Works Department, the Melbourne Harbor Trust, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, town

planning, and a variety of other things. It seems to me that he administers all the important domestic problems in the State and he is doing a fair job. That is nothing more than a just appreciation of what I have learned of his activities since I have been a member of this House.

Everybody is prepared to acknowledge that municipal councils are doing a good job, and steps are taken to help them provided they do not ask for more money. Once a request is made for further finance that is a different kettle of fish. I am very familiar with the problems confronting the City of Melbourne. We face a major problem in trying to raise the necessary finance to carry out the improvements we know are urgently required. We are aware of what is wanted and would attempt to remedy any defects if we could only obtain sufficient money. Municipalities in the outer metropolitan districts face a different set of problems. They have to cope with the elementary tasks of constructing roads and drains, and providing kindergartens, and so on. They, too, find it difficult to arrange finance. I have been interested in local government for some time and I am a member of a council that is not predominantly of my political persuasion. However, its members are attempting to do a voluntary job in accordance with their particular philosophy, and in the main they undertake their task without thought of politics. I am conscious of the frustrations that are met with. First, the problems should be reviewed impartially by someone who is prepared to face up to the decisions that must be arrived at, and, secondly, those problems should be handled by a Minister who has the time, capacity and energy to consider them.

On the motion of Mr. STIRLING (Swan Hill), the debate was adjourned until next day.

#### FRUIT AND VEGETABLES (INSPECTION) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr. FRASER (Honorary Minister), was read a first time.

## ADJOURNMENT.

KEELE (MELVIC) PROPRIETARY LIMITED:  
NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—  
I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn  
until to-morrow at half-past Three o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—  
I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

**Mr. MANSON** (Hawthorn).—I wish to direct the attention of the Chief Secretary to a recent advertisement in the local press by a firm of hair and scalp consultants trading under the name of Keele (Melvic) Proprietary Limited, at 114 Elizabeth-street, Melbourne, and with branches located at Sydney, Newcastle, Brisbane, Adelaide, Parramatta, Perth, Hobart and Auckland. I am particularly interested in the reference to Auckland, because in my possession is an extract from the *Herald* of 23rd October, this year, which contains a report from Auckland to the effect that a magistrate had awarded £123 to a woman who said she developed dermatitis in her scalp after taking a "Keele" treatment to restore her hair. The woman, Mrs. Mary Gladding, told the court she answered a Keele advertisement and was told by an employee that if she undertook treatment by that firm, she could be cured for £50 cash or £75 on time payment. The woman told the court that she received a liquid—which was subsequently found to be sulphated castor oil, distilled water and perfume—a shampoo and a mixture. She later suffered from dermatitis. During the court hearing, an employee of the company, Thomas Howard Baker, said he was a bake-house worker by trade, and he knew nothing about scalp ailments. He had just two diagnoses: If a patient's hair was dry, he told him he had seborrhea sicca; if it was oily, the diagnosis was holeosis. The magistrate, in a reserved judgment, found negligence proved against Keele (New Zealand) Limited. He said that the Keele employee who treated Mrs. Gladding had asserted that one of his

qualifications was his ability to memorize and repeat without fault a three-part "talk to clients."

I desire to ask the Chief Secretary whether the Keele organization found guilty of negligence in Auckland is the same firm as is advertising in Melbourne newspapers and, if so, will he take appropriate action?

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—My attention has already been drawn to the matter referred to by the honorable member for Hawthorn, and the Law Department and the Department of Health are making inquiries concerning the firm in question. As soon as those inquiries are complete, I shall inform the honorable member of the recommendations made.

The motion was agreed to.

*The House adjourned at 11.16 p.m.*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, November 20, 1957.*

The **SPEAKER** (the **Hon. W. J. F. McDonald**) took the chair at 4.7 p.m., and read the prayer.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

## EDUCATION BILL.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I desire to make a personal explanation in relation to a matter which was raised last night during the debate on the Education Bill. The Leader of the Opposition and the honorable member for Hawthorn both referred to the work of the Council of Public Education, particularly to the activities of the council in relation to research. At the time—and honorable members will concede that a long and rather involved Bill was being discussed—I became a little confused in my mind, and in my reply dealt with the work of the Australian Council of Educational Research.

**Mr. SHEPHERD**.—That was when you mentioned Mr. Dunn?

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD.**—That is so. I wish to apologize to the House for the inadvertence and explain the error that I made. I concede that what the honorable member for Hawthorn said in relation to the work of the council was substantially correct. I take this opportunity to add that it was mentioned also that there were two vacancies on the council, one for a representative of musical interests and another. The first-mentioned vacancy is occasioned by the absence from Australia of an Ormond Professor of Music, to whom the post is usually offered. The other vacancy has arisen through the retirement of a departmental representative and difficulty is being encountered at present in finding an appropriate replacement.

#### EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

##### REPORT ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING.

**Sir GEORGE KNOX** (Scoresby) asked the Minister of Education—

Whether he will arrange for the report on technical education and apprenticeship training made by Mr. O. E. Nilsson, Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, and which relates to his investigations overseas, to be printed, so that copies may be made available for study by technical school councils and other organizations deeply concerned in the advancement of technical education?

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

The printing of Mr. Nilsson's report, in whole, in part, or in abridged form, is at present the subject of discussion between Mr. Nilsson, the Director, and myself. The form and extent of the report are such that several practical questions arise requiring careful consideration. I will advise the honorable member when a decision has been arrived at.

#### CUSTOMS HOUSE, MELBOURNE.

##### PRESERVATION: GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL.

**Mr. WILCOX** (Camberwell) asked the Premier—

Whether the Government has placed before the Commonwealth Government a proposal to enable the Customs House, in Flinders-street, Melbourne to be preserved; if so, whether the proposal has been accepted; if not, when such a proposal will be placed before the Commonwealth Government?

**Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer).—In reply to the honorable member, I would say that, on the 1st November last, I wrote to the Commonwealth Minister for Customs and Excise conveying certain proposals aimed at preserving the old Customs House in Flinders-street, Melbourne. I also requested the Minister to set aside time for an interview with the Honorable A. J. Fraser, M.C., M.L.A., Assistant Minister of State Development, so that negotiations could be advanced a stage further.

I have just received a reply from the Minister for Customs and Excise, stating that he has referred the matter to the Minister for the Interior, Mr. Fairhall, who is responsible for the negotiation of transfers of property. Mr. Fairhall has indicated by telephone that he will be in Melbourne next week and will contact myself and the Assistant Minister of State Development in the matter.

#### MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST.

##### YARRA RIVER ENTRANCE DOCKS: RAILWAY FACILITIES.

**Mr. TODD** (Port Melbourne) asked the Minister of Public Works—

1. What has been the expenditure to date upon the construction of the new docks at the entrance to the river Yarra; and what is the estimated completed cost?

2. What was—(a) the date of commencement of the project; (b) the extent of the work completed; (c) the date of cessation of operations; and (d) the reason for such cessation of operations?

3. Whether he can give any indication as to when work on the project will be resumed?

4. Whether dredging operations carried out in connexion with the project have been nullified to any degree by the cessation of work?

5. What is the estimated cost of draining and reclaiming areas of land adjacent to the site of the new docks?

6. Whether the sea bathing facilities now available to the public will be reduced by any reclamation works between Princes Pier and the proposed new docks; if so, to what extent?

7. When it is anticipated that railway facilities will be required for the operation of any completed portion of the new docks?

8. What is the estimated cost of the proposed railway to serve the docks and industries established at Fisherman's Bend and when is it estimated that construction of this railway will be commenced?

9. What was the date of preparation of plans to construct a railway from the new docks along the beach front, thence via Barak-road to the Port Melbourne spur line?

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works).—The answers supplied by the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners are—

1. The expenditure to date upon the construction of the new docks at the entrance to the river Yarra is £1,591,000. The first stage of construction will provide five berths for large overseas liners and is estimated to cost £5,000,000 to complete. The completed River Entrance Docks will provide a total of 30 berths for large overseas vessels and each of these berths at the present level of costs would involve expenditure of £1,000,000.

2. (a) The project was commenced in September, 1950.

(b) Dredging of the western dock for a sufficient length for the construction of the first section of five berths and of the swinging basin at the entrance to this dock has been completed. This work involved 4,000,000 cubic yards of silt dredging. Reclamation banks have also been constructed to impound areas in the vicinity of the docks for later reclamation.

(c) and (d) There has not been a cessation of operations but a suspension on account of insufficiency of loan funds authorized. Silt dredging, which was carried out by contract, was completed in October, 1952. Reclamation embankments were completed at about the same time.

3. Work on the provision of large berths required urgently for the proper accommodation of large overseas liners now under construction cannot be resumed until the present restriction of loan funds granted to the Trust is modified. Work will be commenced next year on the construction of a berth for the new Bass Strait ferry in the northern end of the dredged section.

4. The average siltation in the dock basin is about 3 inches per annum and in the swinging basin about 6 inches per annum.

5. The cost of draining and reclaiming areas of land adjacent to the site of the dock is included in the figures given for over-all construction of berthage.

6. Construction of the River Entrance Docks will not interfere with the 1,000 lineal feet of bathing beach to the west of Princes pier.

7. The railway facilities will be required for the operation of the new docks within two years of funds becoming available for construction of the first two of the proposed initial five berths.

8. It is not possible at this stage to give an authoritative answer to this question. On the basis of information available, it appears that the proposed railway to serve industries at Fisherman's Bend would cost

many millions of pounds and that there is no likelihood of construction beginning in the immediate future.

9. 30th September, 1949.

## HOUSING COMMISSION.

### ADMINISTRATION.

**Mr. LOVEGROVE** (Carlton).—I wish to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "the inefficient and unsympathetic administration of the Housing Commission with particular reference to—

- (a) the failure of the Commission to implement satisfactory and effective slum reclamation;
- (b) the failure of the Commission to provide adequate rental housing for families in the low income group;
- (c) the failure of the Commission to provide emergency accommodation for deserving families who have been evicted from their homes; and
- (d) the failure of the Commission to provide the fencing of and sewerage facilities to Housing Commission homes."

Approval of the proposed discussion was indicated by the required number of members rising in their places, as specified in the Standing Order.

**Mr. LOVEGROVE** (Carlton).—The reason for the Opposition's motion is basically the drastic shortage of houses for rental, for which the Government must accept the predominant responsibility. The matters I propose to discuss concern the failure of the Housing Commission to implement a satisfactory and effective programme of slum reclamation. I shall refer to two projects in my own constituency. Before doing so, I refer honorable members to the report of the Housing Investigation and Slum Abolition Board, made in 1937, which analysed slum pockets, congested areas, blighted areas, decadent areas, and mixed areas, and defined a slum area in these terms—

A slum "area" is one in which insanitary housing conditions predominate. A slum "dwelling" is one which, judged by present standards of living and amenity, is not fit for human habitation, and which is not capable of being so. No difficulty has

been experienced in classifying the type of dwelling, wherever situated, which is in an advanced stage of decay and dilapidation and lacks proper allotment area, ventilation, drainage, light, bathing and laundry facilities, and a proper water service. Some difficulty however has been experienced in classifying some structurally sound dwellings capable of being repaired and altered to provide the ordinary decencies and amenities of life. Where that type of house is situated in an insanitary, congested or slum area or faces a narrow street or "place," it has been classified as being of a slum type calling for demolition.

Next, I refer the House to the report of the Royal Commission on housing that was submitted to Parliament last year. At page 84, two of the main approaches to the problem are defined, namely, wholesale reclamation, and piecemeal reclamation house by house. The situation that exists in my electorate admits of only three explanations. The first is that it represents Government policy, and the second is that it is the result of maladministration. On that score I charge the Housing Commission with incompetence, muddling, technical inefficiency, and disregard of human values and the rights of small home owners. Taken together, those charges constitute maladministration of a type capable of defeating the objects of slum reclamation, and they expose the Commission to the most damaging charges of corruption in connexion with the unscrupulous traffic in old properties in the inner suburbs. The third explanation is corruption, which is the most undesirable one to contemplate or to hear publicly levelled at the Commission or the Government, as is being done at present in my constituency.

On the 17th July this year, I wrote to the Housing Commission concerning certain reports I had received from people in the area known as the Reeves-street project, Carlton. I received a reply from the Commission on the 24th July informing me that it had resolved to have an area in Carlton embracing the project I have mentioned declared a reclamation area, and giving other information. On the 25th July, I again communicated with the Commission asking a further series of questions, and on the 5th August I received a reply confirming the first answer I had received. The *Age* newspaper, on the

30th July, published a request by the Melbourne City Council for assurances from the Government that it would deal firmly and humanely with the people in this district. In the first week in August, the Minister of Housing, two of the Housing Commissioners, and a standards officer, visited Reeves-street at my request and inspected the properties.

Over the week-end the Victorian press published most eulogistic references to the manner in which Italian migrants brought to this country and not provided with accommodation had secured their own housing and spent thousands of pounds on improving it. They were stated to be diligent, hard-working citizens who were properly commended by the Minister on that occasion. Yet, now, because of the need to reclaim the area in question—a need not disputed by the Opposition—they are confronted with what amounts to an uprooting of their lives. Recently in this House I questioned the issue of repair orders on certain properties which the owners had already been informed would be pulled down. The other week the Minister of Housing assured the House, quite properly, that the repair orders would be withdrawn, and that has been done. The Minister made it clear also that such circumstances would not again be permitted to arise. The honorable gentleman was most sympathetic in his treatment of the Reeves-street project, and I trust he will take a similar interest in that at Canning-street. I invite the Minister to examine a photograph of portion of the Reeves-street project and to compare a building which is to be pulled down—the premises of an Italian business man—with some of the buildings which the Commission is prepared to allow to remain standing in Canning-street, and which are to be auctioned.

On the 13th August, as a result of orders served relating to the Canning-street project, I wrote to the Housing Commission and received the following reply—

I have to advise that these properties form part of an area now under consideration by the Commission as a Reclamation

Area. However, no action has yet been taken by the Commission and at this stage I regret that I am unable to supply any definite information.

It is likely that the matter will be formally considered by the Commission in the near future and relevant particulars will then be available. A plan of the area is enclosed for your information.

I have here that plan, of which I understand the Minister has a copy. I had occasion on the 19th August to write to the Commission again about the Canning-street project. A demolition order had been issued in respect of premises owned by an Italian named Slaverio. The premises were occupied by a war widow. I wrote to the Housing Commission to ascertain what action was contemplated. I received a reply, dated 28th August, in the following terms:—

I refer to your representations re 47 Palmerston-street which has been covered by a demolition order. This property is within an area at present under consideration by the Commission as a reclamation area. This matter will be formally considered by the Commission in the near future and further information will then be available.

After the demolition order had been placed on the property, the war widow was ordered to vacate the premises. However, after she had done so, the owner's solicitor obtained from the Commission permission to repair the property. On hearing of this, I telephoned the Commission and spoke to Mr. Ashman, one of the Commissioners, who, on the 12th November, informed me that the Housing Commission had no knowledge of any repair order having been issued and that the Commission after inspecting the house had placed a closing order on it. A notice to this effect was posted on one of the windows of the house.

Recently, the Minister of Housing gave certain undertakings in regard to the Reeves-street, Carlton, reclamation project, but what happened later? After the closing order had been placed on this property, which is in the reclamation area, the owner's solicitors again approached the Commission. Last Monday morning I was informed by them that Mr. Cavan, an officer of the Commission, had stated that the

property could be repaired and occupied, but not too much should be done to it and, when the area was reclaimed, the question of compensation would be discussed. Surely, that is one instance of a complete reversal by the Housing Commission of the undertakings given in connexion with the Reeves-street project.

The next letter I received about the Canning-street project concerned an Italian woman named Petonie, who came to me for advice. She had purchased a house in September, 1956, for which she had paid £750 cash. In March of this year, her solicitors, after writing to the Commission, were informed that the Commission had no immediate intentions concerning the property. On 7th October, a demolition order was placed on it. Again, the Commission has completely failed to carry out the recommendation of the Royal Commission to the effect that 12 months' notice should be given in such circumstances.

On 12th October, three notices were placed on the properties situated at 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 Station-street, announcing that they would be sold by auction on 7th December. Three of them are slums of the worst description; another was used as an office, but it is being sold as a house; another is a factory of about 1,000 square feet, having provision for offices and three toilets, which has not been used for months. I telephoned the Housing Commission and spoke to Mr. Cavan, stating that I understood that this area was under consideration as a slum reclamation area. It has not been declared as such, but the local people have been told that it is to be reclaimed. Mr. Cavan replied, "That was true, but it has now been decided to excise from this area Nos. 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 Station-street, and 27, 31 and 33 Palmerston-street." When I asked why this was proposed, he said, "Because an office, a small factory and a big factory cut across a section of the proposed reclamation area."

I adopt the view that in the case of the large factory the proper course of action was taken, but, in relation to the other two premises, it is obvious that the Commission has been guilty of gross negligence and maladministration.

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Furthermore, it appears as though somebody has succeeded in corrupting some officer of the Housing Commission. I brought the matter to the notice of this House on 13th and 14th October. For the benefit of the Minister of Housing, and the Government, I desire to direct attention to a comparison between the houses which the Commission intends to demolish and those which it is prepared to allow to remain and be sold at auction. In connexion with the property at 11 Station-place, a repair order—Form No. H.I. 7—was issued, revealing the following discrepancies:—

Group "A".—Slates out of position.

Group "B".—Gully trap built over. Bricks to water closet require pointing. Outlet ventilation inadequate. Sub-floor ventilation inadequate. Roof iron corroded, loose and out of shape. Floor uneven and at ground level. Water pressure inadequate. No copper installed.

That building must be demolished. On the other hand, the building to which I shall now refer should not only be permitted to stand, according to the Housing Commission, but it is to be sold by auction on 7th December at a profit. Originally, it was purchased for £950, but it is to be sold for a deposit of £400, with weekly payments of £4 at an interest rate of 6½ per cent., the balance to be paid over 5 years. The condition of this property, which the Commission regards as a desirable contribution to the housing needs of the community and for which an H.I. 6 order has been issued, is as follows:—

Group "A".—Water closet cistern not in workable condition. Water closet seat split. Slates slipping and out of position. No troughs installed.

Group "B".—Stormwater drains defective. Paving fractured and uneven. Water closet structure is dilapidated. Caps and barges defective and missing. Outlet ventilation inadequate. Sub-floor ventilation inadequate. Roof iron corroded, loose and out of shape. Spouting defective and missing. Down pipes defective. Ridging corroded. Window frames, sashes and sills defective. Window glass fractured. Sash cords broken. Door panels split. Door locks defective. Floors sunken, drummy and at ground level. Sub-floor timbers defective. Skirting boards defective. Fireplace and hearth defective. Pointing round door jambs defective. Front door unopenable. Tongued and grooved external sheeting to bathroom decayed, holed and defective. Front verandah floor rough and

uneven. No sink installed. Bathroom laundry unlined and unceiled. No window, door defective. No food storage facilities.

That is 23 Station-street.

Mr. SCOTT.—Has that house been condemned?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—No; the order that has been issued is not a demolition order, but an "unfit for habitation order." I am not challenging the Minister's integrity in this matter. He has informed me that he knows all the facts but, obviously, he does not.

Mr. PETTY.—You do not know the facts; you are not up to date.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—According to advice I received from the Housing Commission, Nos. 11, 13 and 15, Station-place are to be demolished, but Nos. 23, 25 and 27 Station-street are to be permitted to remain and are to be sold by public auction on 7th December, this year. I should like the Minister to explain what he means when he says I am not up to date, and also to state why 27 Palmerston-street, which has a demolition order on it—according to advice I have received from the Commission—is to remain, whereas 35 Palmerston-street, which is to be demolished, is in the following state of disrepair:—

Group "A".—Evidence of rising dampness.

Group "B".—No stormwater drains. Downpipe discharges into gully. Gully surround defective. Inadequate outlet and sub-floor ventilation. Door missing to back bedroom. Plaster defective. Passage floor defective.

Next door is No. 33 Palmerston-street, which is to remain. The state of disrepair of this house is as follows:—

Group "A".—Cistern defective.

Group "B".—Stormwater drains defective and incomplete. Yard paving uneven and defective. W.C. structure in a state of disrepair. E.V. pipe corroded. No apron to gully trap. Sub-floor ventilation inadequate. No outlet ventilation. Natural light obstructed at rear. Putty to sashes perished. Window glass and sash cords broken. Window frames decayed. Doors decayed. Locks defective and missing. Roof iron at rear corroded and loose. Ridging corroded. Downpipe defective and discharges into gully trap. Render to sills fractured. Floors springy and uneven. Sub-floor timbers defective. Verandah floor decayed. Paintwork perished. Fencing in a state of disrepair. Evidence of weather

and rising dampness. No sink or draining board. Bathroom structure in a state of disrepair, and inadequately lined. Brick floor to bathroom defective. Bath and surround defective. No laundry structure. Troughs in open and untrapped. Copper in open. Gas stove installed in enclosed sideways and has no canopy or flue.

One house in the area which has not been declared for demolition but merely as unfit for human habitation has all the faults of the house I have just mentioned and is occupied by eleven children and five adults. The children's ages range from seven-and-a-half months to nine years. They are as follows:—9, 8, 7, 5½, 4½, 3, 3, 2½, 1½, 7½ months, and 7 months. That house should come down. The owner has been given two years in which to effect repairs, despite the fact that the house is in a slum reclamation area.

I do not desire to labour the question. If such a policy can be justified by the Minister in accordance with the terms of the 1937 slum abolition report and the recommendations of the Royal Commission that inquired into housing last year, I shall be pleased to hear him. The Minister is familiar with the Reeves-street project. He knows that some buildings there are in incomparably better condition than those which are to be permitted to remain in this area. He realizes also that when his officers inform the owners of those buildings that they must be demolished, the owners will want to know why these other buildings should not come down too. The conclusion being drawn not only in the areas concerned but through the constituency as a whole is that this proposal is not some facet of Governmental policy but rather that there is corruption. I make no comment on that conclusion. I merely relate to the Minister the effects of a policy which, to my mind, is bringing both the Government and the Housing Commission into contempt. There is nothing pleasing in that situation.

The Minister will probably agree that I have sought no publicity of any description in regard to the slum abolition projects that are taking place or that are proposed in Carlton. I invite the honorable gentleman to

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justify the apparently incredible contrasts that cannot be resolved in terms of planning. Competent building opinion regards the treatment of the area mentioned as contrary to any common-sense conception of re-development or reclamation. A section of the public believes that certain people cannot escape from the reclamation but that others, because they allegedly have a factory, though a very small one, or because they have been using a house as an office, or because they purchased slum property with obviously no intention of ever using it for rental, are permitted to do so. The three houses I have referred to have been unoccupied for many months. They were purchased within the last two years, on the assumption that the owner would be permitted to build a factory there. When he found he could not do so, he took advantage of the excision of this area by the Housing Commission to sell at auction the most disgraceful sub-standard slum dwellings I have had the misfortune to see during my long experience. I invite the Government's attention to the matters I have raised, because I believe a reply is warranted. I trust the Minister will not give a political reply. I am interested in a common-sense explanation of what is occurring in my constituency. The root cause of incidents of the type mentioned, which are bringing the Public Service of this State into contempt, is the deplorable failure of the Government adequately to tackle the housing shortage, which is becoming worse every day.

**Mr. PETTY** (Minister of Housing).—I thank the honorable member for Carlton for bringing the matter of the Canning-street project to the Government's notice. By way of explanation, I point out that in this particular area approximately two-thirds of a block was taken over by the Housing Commission for slum reclamation purposes. The remainder, including the houses mentioned by the honorable member for Carlton, was excised from the Commission's proclamation because one big factory occupies approximately one-third of the area, two other buildings take up approximately one-sixth of it,

and there is a small factory and another building which has been converted from a house into an office. In between are the three houses that have been mentioned by the honorable member for Carlton. The only other properties in that section are three homes facing Palmerston-street and one, No. 27 Palmerston-street, to which the honorable member has referred. No. 27 Palmerston-street is not to be demolished because the house is considered by housing standards officers to be repairable. In fact, when the matter was brought to the notice of the Commission, this house was inspected again and specifications were laid down for the necessary repairs. The owner did not want to leave the area. He has submitted plans and specifications to the Commission and has guaranteed to spend £1,200 on the property. Frankly, I do not think it is worth it. However, he is the owner-occupier and the housing standards officers of the Commission contend that the repairs proposed will make it a habitable dwelling.

The other property mentioned by the honorable member for Carlton requires substantial repairs also. The Commission realized that a large amount of compensation would have to be paid, particularly in regard to the factory, if this area was acquired, and therefore excised that section from the proclamation. When the honorable member for Carlton brought this matter to my notice, I arranged with the Commissioners to obtain a full report on the subject. I personally investigated the details. To-day, accompanied by the Commissioners and housing standards officers, I visited Station-street and inspected the properties. I agree with the honorable member for Carlton that they should be condemned and demolished, and the senior housing standards officer and the Commissioners hold the same view. These premises should never have been excised from the proclamation, or at least demolition orders should have been placed on them.

Unfortunately, the reports in regard to these premises had been forwarded to the Law Department because the owner had lodged an appeal against the order. The order was returned to me to-day,

and on examination of it I discovered that three different officers of the Commission had inspected these houses. I interviewed the officers and I found that two of them visited the area at Carlton, each going into a different building. They could not get into the third. Some time later another officer inspected the third house. These officers have worked for the Commission for a number of years and are quite experienced in this work. They conferred in regard to the dwellings and decided that the middle house in the terrace of three was the only one that should be demolished. They contended that the other two were repairable. Rather than destroy two dwellings that could be made habitable—the Commissioners and I did not agree with their view—they decided that a repair order would be placed on them.

When we visited the area to-day the owner of the premises took us through them. Later, I inspected the reports and arranged for valuations of the properties to be obtained, and they were handed to me this afternoon. Since I have been sitting at the table, I have had handed to me a note to the effect that the Commission has purchased for demolition purposes the three houses under discussion and two other buildings belonging to the same owners.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—It is a good job this adjournment motion was not moved yesterday.

Mr. PETTY.—I thank the Leader of the Opposition for not doing so. When this matter was brought to my notice, I acted immediately and I have outlined to the House the explanation that was given to me. The Commissioners and I have analysed it thoroughly, and I can assure honorable members that the officers of the Commission acted in good faith. I am surprised that the honorable member for Carlton has referred to corruption. It is frequently said that employees of the Commission will do anything if a sum of money is paid over. Many similar complaints have been submitted in the past, but close examinations have revealed no evidence of corruption. I deplore the fact that the honorable member for Carlton has

seen fit to attack public servants who are not in a position to answer the charges.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I reiterated what was being said in the area.

Mr. PETTY.—I quite agree, but many statements made in electorates should not be repeated in this House unless they can be supported by evidence. It is not fair to smear hard-working members of the Public Service, because by smearing one others are affected. I propose now to refer to the other matters mentioned in the adjournment motion.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Did Mr. Davey visit the area with you to-day?

Mr. PETTY.—The honorable member for Carlton mentioned the failure of the Commission to implement a satisfactory and effective slum reclamation programme. I do not intend to give full details of what has been done in the two and a half years since the Bolte Government came into office. However, in the ten or fifteen years prior to June 1955 only three slum reclamation projects had been completed or were being carried out in the metropolitan area. Governments formed by all political parties during that period had spent £80,000 on the purchase of land for slum reclamation purposes. In the two and a half years since the Bolte Government has been in office, eighteen areas have been processed and are in course of being cleared and redeveloped. In that time, £320,000 has been spent—four times the amount expended in the previous ten to fifteen years. To-day there are 21 projects under process. I think those remarks have disposed of the accusation made by the honorable member for Carlton that this Government has failed to implement a satisfactory and effective slum reclamation programme.

The next charge made by the honorable member was that the Commission has failed to provide adequate rental houses for families in the low-income group. I remind all members that the method of allocation of Housing Commission homes is that applications are dealt with in order of the date of lodgment, except where an applicant has five or more children. The family income

is considered when the rent is determined. People in the low-income group are entitled to rent rebates and thus obtain houses at lower rentals than other tenants. Surely, that is providing houses for people in the low-income group. Honorable members who are conversant with the details of the rental rebate scheme know that tenants having an income of £8 a week pay a rent of approximately £1 7s. 6d a week.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is the scheme introduced by Mr. Chifley when he was Prime Minister.

Mr. PETTY.—That is so; it was included in the first Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement. This Government has continued that scheme under the new Agreement, whereas most other States have departed from it. A tenant with an income of £10 a week pays a weekly rent of £1 17s. 6d., and one with an income of £9 a week pays £1 12s. 6d. Therefore, it cannot be asserted that this Government has failed to provide houses for people in the low-income group. What better method could be adopted than ascertaining the family income and fixing the rent accordingly? That answers the charge that the Commission has failed to provide adequate rental housing for families in the low-income groups. The Commission has applied common-sense practical principles to a most difficult job.

Concerning the suggestion that the Commission has failed to provide emergency accommodation for persons evicted from their homes, I have discussed evictions in this House on many occasions and the answer is still the same as that given previously. People who are evicted are considered for rehousing, together with other applicants, at the date of their eviction. That is the only method the Housing Commission or any other authority could adopt. No Government could afford to maintain a supply of empty houses to be occupied by persons being evicted. Nor would a system of transit camps work. If such a camp were provided for, say, ten families, as soon as it was occupied, other accommodation would have to be built. What is wrong with the method of endeavouring to provide evicted persons with homes that they can retain?

It is alleged that the Commission has failed to provide fencing and sewerage facilities to Housing Commission homes. I am glad that these aspects were referred to in the motion submitted by the honorable member for Carlton, as I believe that every house should be provided with an adequate paling back fence and should be sewered as soon as practicable. The Commission houses that are not equipped with rear fences were built under contracts let before this Government came into office. One of my first actions as Minister of Housing was to suggest to the Commissioners that they should reconsider the policy of building houses without providing backyard privacy. I have been assured that no contracts have been let in the last two years in which the provision of suitable closed paling back fences has not been specified. I visited a country town a few weeks ago and saw a row of sixteen houses which had been erected without rear fences. One could stand at the end of the street and see people moving about in any one of the backyards. Although that is a deplorable state of affairs, the Commission cannot afford at present to erect fences on those properties. It is hoped that gradually this deficiency will be overcome, but the sum required to provide fences will be enormous. It is estimated that the cost of fencing the backyards of houses already erected will average £150 a block and, at the moment, the Commission has not the money available to carry out the work.

Recently, I referred to the fencing position at the Olympic Village. When that area was planned, the architects concerned and the Commission had no idea that the houses to be erected would be sold. Consequently, the necessary surveys required under the uniform building regulations were not carried out. It has been a terrific job for outside surveyors to rectify the omission and to subdivide the area so as to make the allotment of land to each house comply with the area specified by the City of Heidelberg under the uniform building regulations.

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald)**—Order! The time allotted to the Minister of Housing has expired.

On the motion of Mr. SCHINTLER (Footscray), an extension of five minutes was granted.

**Mr. PETTY (Minister of Housing).**—I thank honorable members for granting me an extension of time as I wish to explain a few other matters. Part of the Olympic Village area has been surveyed and contracts let for back fences. Contracts for the provision of front fences in the area are also being entered into, and the work will be carried out as quickly as possible. Moreover, the Commission intends to fence the yards provided for the big blocks of flats erected at the Village. So far as the installation of sewerage facilities is concerned, I direct the attention of honorable members to the fact that in the metropolitan area that work is the responsibility of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

**Mr. SCHINTLER.**—The Board has a waiting list of 60,000 homes for the installation of sewerage facilities.

**Mr. PETTY.**—I intended to mention that fact. Nevertheless, the Housing Commission endeavours to obtain the installation of sewerage facilities to each estate as quickly as possible. A few years ago, the Commission had a guarantee from the Board that as soon as houses were erected they would be connected to the sewerage system, but, unfortunately, through no fault of the Commission, hundreds of houses are at present unsewered. The main trouble is the lack of money available to the Board of Works for this work. Honorable members can rest assured that the Housing Commission is doing everything possible to assist the Board and other sewerage authorities so that Commission estates may be connected to sewerage systems.

It is felt that the best way in which to attack the slum reclamation problem is to embark upon a number of projects at the same time. It is not practicable to select large areas of 10 and 12 acres in the metropolis for slum reclamation purposes, as this work costs about £40,000 or £50,000 an acre. Finance is not available to the Commission

for projects of that size. Consequently, the Commission spreads the reclamation work throughout the metropolitan area, picking out the blackest spots it can find, but at the same time working to an over-all plan. The Commission has handled 21 projects in recent years; three have been completed and eighteen are under way. It takes about two years to remove persons from houses that are to be demolished, clear the land, and start the building work. I am sure that in the next two or three years honorable members will witness great developments in the field of slum reclamation. Although the Commission has eighteen projects in hand at the moment, it is still looking for further areas. Its officers are examining localities and individual houses daily and recommending action that should be taken. It is difficult to carry out slum reclamation without treading on somebody's toes, but the House can rest assured—and I speak not only for the Commissioners but also for the officers of the Commission engaged on the work—that it is realized that these projects constitute real social welfare work. All concerned are carrying out an important job very effectively. If at times complaints are received, similar to the one brought forward by the honorable member for Carlton, I am certain that the Housing Commission appreciates the information. Its officers thoroughly examine the position in the manner in which the Canning-street project was investigated.

**Mr. SCHINTLER** (Footscray).—This censure motion has served at least one useful purpose. It has extracted from the Minister of Housing an amazing and courageous admission. Despite the fact that certain senior officers of the Commission have, I presume, made recommendations, both the Minister and the Housing Commissioners admit that the honorable member for Carlton may be right concerning the particular matter he has raised. Therefore the submission of the motion is justified. The Opposition has been most concerned about the housing position in general, and I am sure members of the Government have been worried also about its deterioration. We realize that the

problem is tremendous. In spite of all the endeavours made by the Housing Commission and other authorities in this sphere of activity, the shocking position has now been reached when the Commission has on its books more than 17,000 applications from persons who desire accommodation. Much thought and planning must be applied to the problem.

Many years ago, a very worthy representative of the Labour party expounded the view—it is just as applicable to-day as it was then—that the only answer to the housing problem for the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia was the provision of large sums of money at cheap rates of interest. It was suggested that as a preliminary measure £100,000,000 should be made available for this purpose at 2 per cent. interest. Unfortunately, history has a strange way of repeating itself. It is regrettable that when loan money becomes dearer, there is a greater demand for it by people who wish to use it to make profits. Consequently, less money is available for essential services.

The Minister of Housing referred to his dislike of emergency housing—or perhaps of the use of that term—to meet the transitory problems of people evicted from their accommodation. Apparently, the honorable gentleman has altered his opinion from one which he expressed previously and which is recorded in the *Hansard* report of the debate on the Landlord and Tenant (Control) Bill in this House on 28th May. Earlier—on the 11th October, 1955—the former Leader of the Labour party, the late John Cain, moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing housing conditions in Melbourne. That motion was on similar lines to the one now being debated.

In the statement of the Minister to which I have referred, he expressed sympathy at the plight of the persons affected, and I think his sympathy was genuine—he is in the unhappy position of not being able to pull houses out of the air. However, this does not alter the fact that evictions are taking place

daily and that no provision is made for the housing of deserving cases. My party is concerned about this fact. The Minister stated—

The Government has in mind the urgency of providing emergency accommodation. On 7th November, the Commission commenced the building of a new estate as an emergency housing settlement, in which there will be more than 100 concrete houses. The foundations of 32 have already been made, 20 have the walls in position, and a beginning has been made on roofing. Early in the new year that area will be completed. It will be used as a holding camp and will be supervised by social workers.

The Minister admitted that a holding camp or a similar place to accommodate people who had been evicted was necessary. The Labour party claims that it is becoming more necessary every week. The then Leader of the Opposition interjected, "Then you are going to have a holding camp?" and the Minister replied—

We call it that. The Commission intends to move people quickly out of this area after they have had the benefit of the assistance of social service workers. This is not merely a promise; that settlement has been commenced.

I agree entirely with the sentiments expressed by the Minister at that time. The situation to-day is more serious and requires more humane thought than it did then.

Mr. PETTY.—People become so comfortable in emergency accommodation that it is difficult to get them out.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—I agree that there may be substance in that statement.

Mr. PETTY.—I said exactly that a little while ago.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—The Minister admitted in May of this year that there was a necessity for emergency housing in the form of a holding camp or transitory accommodation. We claim it is essential to-day.

Mr. PETTY.—It does not work out in practice.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—It must be made to work somehow. I shall quote an example that will probably horrify the Minister, as it horrified me. The honorable gentleman has knowledge of this case. Last Tuesday week a family,

consisting of a man, his wife and four children, was put on the street in Yarraville. The wife is in an advanced state of pregnancy, her fifth child being due before Christmas. I must admit that the man lodged an application for a Housing Commission dwelling only after he realized that he was definitely to be evicted, and that he should have acted earlier. The honorable member for Midlands and I took an active part in this matter and raised it with both the Minister and officers of the Housing Commission in an endeavour to have this family, which we considered to be deserving, placed in a home. However, it was not possible, and they were evicted. The result is another broken family. What a Christmas present for the mother! She will have another baby then, and no home for it. The Government has some responsibility to people who cannot help themselves. I shall read the Minister's reply to our representations—

Further to your personal representation on behalf of . . . perusal of Housing Commission files reveals that his application was lodged as recently as 29th August, 1957.

That is true; he lodged it only after I became interested in the case.

The Commission has very many prior applications from persons with young dependent children living under extremely distressing conditions, and, in fairness to all it must strictly adhere to its policy of dealing with claims in order of date of lodgment. Therefore, it will be some time before this case can be investigated.

However, he will receive a small degree of priority as a "four child" special . . .

I presume that if the family was large enough, it would get a house immediately. People with big families should be given the greatest possible preference. Members of the Opposition and, I believe, the majority of Government supporters, agree that one of the greatest social problems that must be faced to-day is that of broken homes. It is one of the main causes of juvenile delinquency in the community. The Minister concluded—

Whilst his difficulties are appreciated, it is regretted that no immediate assistance can be given.

The Government should make a fairly large part of its housing funds available for the establishment of bigger and

better transit camps. As the housing position improves over the years, this accommodation can be used as permanent housing. Unless action is taken along the lines indicated, I believe that many more cases such as the one I have referred to will require attention. Under the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act it is now easier for landlords to take court proceedings to have working people ejected on to the streets than it was formerly.

From time to time every honorable member has received complaints from constituents concerning discourteous treatment by officers or servants of the Housing Commission. Personally, I have been treated with the greatest consideration by Commission officers, and every facility to view files and so on has been extended to me. However, recently one of my constituents contacted me with the object of having her application for tenancy of a Commission dwelling expedited. I received courteous treatment by the Commission, but ultimately received a letter from it stating that there was no record of her ever having applied for a home, and enclosing an application form for the lady concerned to fill in. I forwarded the application form to my constituent advising her of the situation, and received the following reply from her, dated the 24th October this year—

I received such a surprise when I opened your letter and read it, for as you will see by the letter I have enclosed with this from the Housing Commission that we have had our interview with them and they have also been to inspect our premises. That was at the end of May and then we received the following week the letter I have enclosed.

We have been on the waiting list since March, 1953 and received our ballot card in September, 1953. I have also enclosed the letter that you received from the Housing Commission.

I would be ever so grateful if you would correspond with them again re tenancy of a house.

The enclosure was the usual letter from the Commission stating that the lady concerned had been accepted as a tenant and would be allotted a home in the Braybrook area as they became available. I followed up the final request contained in my constituent's letter and, in reply, received the following letter

*Mr. Schintler.*

from the secretary of the Housing Commission dated the 15th November, 1957:—

With reference to your personal representations on behalf of Mr. ———, I have to advise that his name is at present on the waiting list for a three bedroom house on the Maidstone estate.

It is regretted that at present no indication can be given as to when this applicant will be allotted a housing unit. For this Estate where major construction has ceased there is an extensive waiting list of approved applicants and vacancies are not numerous. However, Mr. ——— will be housed in his turn and will be advised by letter immediately a house is made available for him.

From the time this unfortunate woman received my earlier communication until the foregoing advice was received from the Commission, she died a thousand deaths, so to speak, thinking that her priority of more than three years had been lost. My point is that it would have been only normal courtesy for the Commission to admit that a mistake had been made and to express its regret that it had happened. I realize that the Commission has a tremendous volume of work to do, but the Opposition would be much happier if its employees were more humane, reasonable, and courteous in their approach to the housing problems of the people.

**Mr. MEAGHER** (Mentone). — The motion before the Chair is that the House should adjourn to consider the inefficient and unsympathetic administration of the Housing Commission with particular reference to certain matters, including the Commission's failure to implement satisfactory and effective slum reclamation. I wish to discuss the history of slum reclamation in Victoria and in particular the part played by members of the Opposition and those who think along similar lines. Some time ago the Richmond council which, unfortunately, is controlled by persons who, like members of the Opposition, endeavour to introduce party politics into a sphere to which it does not belong, carried a resolution requesting the Housing Commission to declare fourteen areas in Richmond for slum reclamation purposes. Now the Commission has received notice from the Richmond council that it has rescinded

its motion and has apparently grown so fond of its slums that it does not want them removed.

If Opposition members are genuine in their desire to get rid of slums and to house people who unfortunately are unable to house themselves, they would have no option but to support the efforts of this Government during the last two and a half years; they have made those of all other Administrations appear insignificant by comparison. Already, the Minister of Housing has directed attention to the fact that in the ten or fifteen years before the present Government assumed office £83,000 was spent on the acquisition of land for slum reclamation projects, and that since it has been in office a sum of £327,510 has been expended for this purpose. As against the three areas of land comprising ten acres, which were acquired by the previous Governments, the present régime has, in the process of slum abolition, acquired eighteen areas comprising a total of 40 acres. Actions speak louder than words.

As part of its policy, the Government has decided that the Housing Commission should concentrate its activities primarily on slum reclamation. It will be possible to house a greater number of people more quickly and more economically in this manner than by spreading into the surrounding countryside, which is the method favoured by the Opposition. When housing settlements are provided in outer suburban areas, roads must be provided at great cost and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and other governmental authorities are faced with the responsibility of supplying the new residences with water and other facilities. The existing housing shortage is due largely to the activities of Opposition members who, both during and since the war, have done everything possible to ensure that housing would become a problem in this State. I make that statement advisedly, because they had the advantage of the experiences of other countries, which had experimented in housing. Unfortunately, however, their ideological minds were so twisted and so wedded to their theories of socialistic doctrine—

*Honorable members interjecting.*

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).**—Order! I ask Opposition members to cease interjecting.

Mr. MEAGHER.—I appreciate the cries of the Opposition. The last time I stood on a dog's tail it screamed blue murder. No Government could effectively house all the people in this State. Over the years, as a result of the operation of the Landlord and Tenant Act, which was referred to by the honorable member for Footscray, the position in connexion with rental houses has changed considerably. Whereas 50 per cent. of the houses built in this State prior to the war were constructed for rental purposes, the figure had dropped to only 5 per cent. when this Government assumed office. This state of affairs was brought about because Opposition members made it impossible for anyone to build a house for rental purposes without finding himself in the Bankruptcy Court. In addition, during the period of shortages of material the Labour Government in office allotted first priority to the Housing Commission for the supply of building materials. Frequently, I noticed huge stacks of building supplies on some of the large areas of land which were acquired by the previous Administration, but which were not used for a long period. By tying up building materials in that way, other builders were forced out of business.

When there is a housing shortage, the only means by which the problem may be solved is by building houses, irrespective of who builds them. The Opposition demands that the Government should build houses for rental purposes with £100,000,000 provided by somebody at 2 per cent. and that such accommodation should be administered by the Government on a rental rebate system—it could be done in no other way. It is significant that with a given amount of money many more homes will be provided by private builders than by a Government instrumentality. For every £1,000,000 spent on housing, the Housing Commission could provide 300 houses; for the same amount spent through the Home Finance Trust or through the co-operative housing society movement, 400 houses could be built.

For the benefit of Opposition members, I propose to quote certain statistics which should prove of interest to them. In 1954, during the régime of a Labour party Government, 5,045 housing units were built, and in 1955, under the same Government, 5,372 housing units were provided. In those two years, the Housing Commission had available to it all the finance provided for housing under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, namely, £12,000,000 in 1954, and £9,450,000 in 1955. What is the position to-day? In 1957, with only £8,400,000 available to the Commission, through the efforts of this Government, 5,815 housing units have been constructed. In other words, 500 more houses have been provided when only £8,400,000 has been made available to the Commission than were built when the Commission had £9,450,000 under its control. What is the explanation of that? In addition to the funds supplied to the Commission, a total of £7,724,000 was made available through co-operative housing societies, the Home Finance Trust, and the Home Builders' Account. Those funds enabled 3,235 houses to be constructed. In other words, 3,235 houses were built for £7,724,000 as against 2,580 houses for £8,400,000 by the Commission. I do not intend that to be regarded as a criticism of the Commission. When homes are built through other organizations, there is a quicker turnover of the money, and the repayments may be made available to assist other home builders.

Mr. CLAREY.—What about those persons who have not sufficient money with which to build a home?

Mr. MEAGHER.—I am sorry for those people because they are in a hopeless position. They cannot obtain possession of a rental house because we are suffering the after effects of Labour administration.

Mr. CLAREY.—This Government's landlord and tenant legislation is "tossing them out" at the rate of over 200 a month.

Mr. MEAGHER.—The Government is suffering from the after effects of socialistic Administrations which put out of business the people who, prior to

the war, built 50 per cent. of the houses erected for renting purposes.

Mr. CLAREY.—They are not building them now.

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).**—Order! The honorable member for Melbourne will be silent.

Mr. MEAGHER.—Even the honorable member for Melbourne should be able to see that when houses for rent are reduced from 50 per cent. to 5 per cent. of the total number of houses built, there will inevitably be a shortage. I deplore the tendency of honorable members to accuse people such as officers of the Housing Commission, who are unable to defend themselves, on the strength of rumours. Rumours and the dissemination of rumours are the most vicious form of attack. I dissociate myself from anything of that kind. I believe the Housing Commission is doing the best job possible, in the circumstances. If the policy of this Government is carried out, the Housing Commission will be enabled to do the job for which it was originally formed—to clear the slums and to house people more quickly and economically than would otherwise be possible.

Mr. CRICK (Grant).—I support the motion for the adjournment of the House. I wish to refer to the position in which tenants in the Braybrook housing estate find themselves because of the inefficient administration of the Housing Commission and that of its agents. It is not unusual for tenants in this area to be notified by the local tenancy office that they are a number of weeks in arrears with their rent. Such advice comes as a surprise to tenants who have paid regularly, and some, not being satisfied with the notification given by the local tenancy office, have taken up the matter with the head office of the Commission. It is not uncommon for letters of the type I am about to read to be sent from the Housing Commission to tenants in the Braybrook housing estate. This one is dated 30th October, 1957—

Dear Sir,

Further to your visit of last night to this office, it is desired to inform you that your rent account, after crediting receipts A293213 and A293317, is paid up to and including 9th November, 1957.

That person had previously been advised that his rent was in arrears. Being an astute person who saved his receipts, he was able to check his position with the Housing Commission, and it was discovered that not only was he not in arrears but that he was, in fact, in credit.

Mr. SCOTT.—Did he make a payment after receiving the arrears notice and before approaching the Commission's head office?

Mr. CRICK.—No, he did not. Another case in the Braybrook area is that of a tenant who was notified by the district office on 20th September, 1955, that he was three weeks in arrears. He claimed he was not aware of that position, but he had not saved his receipts and was not in the same happy position as the tenant already mentioned. As he could not query the amount, he agreed to pay the arrears as claimed by the Commission. Six days later he visited the Housing Commission head office concerning an electric light account for £14 16s. which he had received. He claimed that the Housing Commission should meet part of that amount because power drawn through his meter had been used by employees of the Commission for the purpose of sanding the floors of adjoining residences. Apparently his representations to the Commission were not successful, because he received several warning letters. Subsequently, he had to meet funeral expenses associated with the death of his grandmother, and later he was further burdened with medical expenses in respect of the illness of his wife. On 8th May, this year, he was served with a notice to quit by a Housing Commission agent named Fenton. In addition to meeting the arrears of rent, he had to pay the cost of the serving of the notice to quit. On 17th September this year he was advised by the district office at Braybrook that he owed £7 8s., the equivalent of two weeks' rent. The following letter was sent from the district office to the Commission's head office:—

Tenant had notice to quit withdrawn on 15.5.57 but is again in arrears, so recommend further action by head office.

Mr. PETTY.—Did the honorable member say that the letter was written from the local office to the head office?

Mr. CRICK.—It was addressed by the district office to the head office.

Mr. PETTY.—How did you obtain a copy?

Mr. CRICK.—I have it. On 20th September a letter was sent from the Commission to Mr. Fenton asking him to serve a notice to quit and mentioning the sum of £14 16s. as owing to the 21st of that month. On 20th September—the day before the amount of £14 16s. was claimed to be owing to the Commission—the tenant's wife paid an amount of £11 12s. to the Commission, and a receipt was issued showing the rent paid to the week ending 21st September, 1957. On 24th September the tenant received a notice to quit, which was dated 22nd September—a Sunday. That notice to quit was issued under the name of "Fenton" who, I understand, is the process server employed by the Commission. On the 28th October, the tenant received a summons, dated 25th October, to appear before the Footscray Court of Petty Sessions on the 4th November in respect of an application for an eviction order. The worst feature of the case is that this particular tenant was asked to pay legal costs, which I assume to be the cost of serving the notice to quit, the fee for the preparation of the summons and the serving of the summons—the amounts totalling £7. That is grossly unfair, particularly when there is no direction to withdraw the summons when the anomalies are brought to the notice of the Commission. Apparently the Commission likes to be in the position of having eviction orders over the heads of tenants as a deterrent to future arrears. I believe that Opposition members are justified in bringing these matters to the notice of the Government.

Another case relates to a tenant whose rent was £39 in arrears, and who received a notice to quit. He paid the arrears in full within seven days and continued to pay his rent afterwards. Some time later, when he was not in arrears with his rent, he was served

with a summons to appear before the Footscray Court of Petty Sessions. The Commission was not prepared to withdraw the summons and an order was made against the tenant, again as a deterrent. He also was saddled with costs for the issuing and serving of the notice to quit and the summons.

I remind the Minister of Housing that in the Braybrook estate there are properties which have been fenced with only a barb-wire structure. When sewerage facilities were installed in these homes, the fences were taken down, and they have not been properly replaced. The residents of this area are entitled to more privacy than that provided by barb-wire fences. I ask the Minister to investigate this matter.

Mr. PETTY.—I agree with the honorable member.

Mr. CRICK.—Other properties in the estate which are close to the sewer mains have not yet had the service connected, and the municipality is being paid for the provision of a pan service.

Mr. PETTY.—The Board of Works is responsible for making sewerage connexions.

Mr. CRICK.—That is so, but the Commission is charging the tenants for sewerage facilities.

*The sitting was suspended at 5.55 p.m. until 7.19 p.m.*

Mr. MANSON (Hawthorn).—To me falls the honour of being the last Government speaker in this debate, and I am very conscious of that fact. In my opinion, it is the poorest adjournment motion which this House has had to debate for very many years. I am inclined to think it is largely in the nature of a sham fight, with possibly a little pre-election window-dressing. However, having only 15 minutes at my disposal I shall try to deal quickly with a few of the points raised by Opposition members. Let me deal first with the problem of the Canning-street project, which was mentioned by the honorable member for Carlton, who initiated the debate. I refer the honorable member to the report of the Royal Commission on Housing. At page 84 of that report, one of the recommendations is that the

Housing Commission should build new houses or repair and renovate existing homes in the areas allotted to it by the authorities. So far as Canning-street is concerned, I suggest that is exactly what we have done. There were three houses in the scheme and our housing estate officers inspected them and said, in effect, "We think these houses are repairable." Having examined the position properly Housing Commission officials agreed with that recommendation and consequently the houses have been repaired. If the honorable member for Carlton does not already know the result, I shall tell him that we were able to continue to house in that area three families, whereas had the policy of other Governments been adopted the buildings would have been demolished, and, as each house was erected on a small block, it would have been possible to build only one house as a replacement and to house only one family.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—Earlier in the debate, the Minister of Housing said that the houses in question had been purchased. I advise the honorable member for Hawthorn to stick to the report.

Mr. MANSON.—I am telling my story now. The first part of the adjournment motion refers to the failure of the Commission to implement satisfactory and effective slum reclamation. I challenge my friends of the Opposition to deny the facts I am about to present. I shall now refer to the slum reclamation project at Anderson-street, Richmond.

Mr. FENNESSY.—We have never heard of it.

Mr. MANSON.—Labour party members know all about it. Their knowledge of it proves that to-night's fight is a sham. They have been concerned in a plot not to allow the Government to continue the slum reclamation scheme at Anderson-street, Richmond. Along with their Federal fellow members they have taken steps to prevent the implementation of this scheme. A total of 74 homes are concerned in the project, 51 of which have already been acquired and 23 remain to be handled. Despite the fact that the Richmond council gave authority on the 28th February, 1956, for the Commission to proceed with this scheme, the

recently-elected council has changed the tune. The Federal and State members of Parliament concerned have aided and abetted the halting of this slum reclamation project.

Mr. SCULLY.—I hope you do not include me; I supported the scheme.

Mr. MANSON.—I am not the slightest bit interested in that, except to say that when Opposition members suggest in this House that the Government is falling down in its duties, they are speaking with their tongues in their cheeks and are forgetting to inform the public that they are not attempting to help the Government in slum reclamation work. Indeed, they are doing the very reverse and going out of their way to hinder its operations. Although Opposition members have said in this debate that the Government has done nothing in regard to slum reclamation, I hope they will agree that a good job has been done in the Dight-street, Collingwood area. The density of population there has been doubled and the result has been achieved sensibly by using the existing water and sewerage services, streets and other facilities.

Mr. FENNESSY.—With the co-operation of a Labour council.

Mr. MANSON.—That is admitted, and we are very happy to have had it. We wish we could have similar co-operation everywhere, but we do not get it. Because of wise planning and good work the Government has been able to settle 1,200 people in the Dight-street area where only 590 resided prior to the implementation of the scheme. In the face of these facts, how can Opposition speakers say that we have failed to implement a slum reclamation scheme?

The second point at issue is the failure of the Commission to provide adequate rental housing for families in the low income group. If Opposition members blame this Government in that regard, what have they to say about a Government of their own ilk in New South Wales? It has failed to do what has been accomplished in Victoria, namely, to allow rent rebates to families in the low-income group. We are accused of being business

princes—of being the big tycoons who grind the faces of the workers. That is the sort of "tripe" we hear every week from members of the Opposition. Yet we form the one Government in Australia, apart from that of Western Australia, which has granted rent rebates. We have taken the lead in all Australia to provide rental accommodation for families in the low-income group at the expense of the Government by granting rental rebates. Would Opposition members take that action if they were in our place and formed the Government? I doubt it very much. It is easy to be critical when one occupies an Opposition bench, although members of the present Opposition have made a pretty poor fist of their criticism to-day.

I am reminded that the Bolte Government is the first Administration that has made any effort to house elderly people. Again, that work has been accomplished only through the co-operation of many municipalities. A total of 212 flats and flatettes for elderly people has been constructed, and the accommodation is let at reasonable rents. Many municipalities are concerned with this scheme. When the Labour party formed the Government, its members did not propose schemes for housing elderly people, and if they now occupied the Treasury Bench they would still be scratching for their first idea. When our Government does something constructive, it is easy for members of the Labour party to sit on the side lines and snipe. That is all they have ever managed to do. I remind them that the two largest parties in this House—I do not ignore my Country party friends but refer particularly to the immediate Opposition and the Government—are committed to a policy of home ownership. I challenge my friends on the Opposition side of the House to deny that statement. They are quiet only when this matter is under discussion, because they are scared to give an answer. Under the Government's policy of home ownership it has used 20 per cent. of the funds made available under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement for co-operative housing societies.

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS.**—At the direction of the Commonwealth.

**Mr. MANSON.**—I have never heard so much nonsense as is now emanating from members on the Opposition benches. Let me inform them now, if they have not heard it before, that it was at our instigation that this scheme was agreed to by the Commonwealth and eventually accepted by the other States, including those in which there are Labour Governments.

**Mr. CLAREY.**—Why did you not try to get extra money for co-operative housing instead of reducing the allocation for the Housing Commission?

**Mr. MANSON.**—The “whispering baritone” rides again! The third item of criticism by the Opposition is “the failure of the Commission to provide emergency accommodation for deserving families who have been evicted from their homes.” The Minister of Housing has already pointed out that emergency accommodation was provided in Tyler street, Preston, and because it was arranged by a Liberal Government, it was so good that nobody wanted to leave it.

**Mr. RING.**—That is not correct. Your statement is far from the truth.

**Mr. MANSON.**—Later, I shall ask the honorable member for Preston how many people have vacated the emergency premises voluntarily, but that is beside the point at this juncture. The fact is that the accommodation was so good that nobody would leave of his own accord. That means, in effect, that what was intended to be temporary accommodation is now permanent.

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).**—Order! The honorable member's time has expired.

**Mr. TODD (Port Melbourne).**—The honorable member for Hawthorn almost took me back to the days when he was the star propagandist for the Liberal party. Some of the statements he made in his speech were in line with those he issued when in his previous occupation. He stated that this Government was the first to provide homes for elderly people; and even the Premier does not seem to know much about this subject.

I suggest that both of them go to Williamstown-road, Port Melbourne and see where the Housing Commission built the first four—unit flats for elderly people. The Commission's statistics contain a record of the number of one-bedroom units built in Port Melbourne.

**Mr. STANISTREET.**—By a Liberal Government.

**Mr. TODD.**—No; by the Housing Commission with State funds. A Commission publication contains the statement, “prior to the Commonwealth—State Housing Agreement,” and surely there must be at least one honest officer in the Commission. I suggest to the honorable member for Hawthorn that he interview some of the elderly people still living in these units. Fourteen of them, for occupation by elderly people, were built in Swallow-street, Port Melbourne. The Commission advised the Port Melbourne City Council that only residents from Port Melbourne would be housed in that estate. The council was happy about that situation, and undertook to do certain things. Recently, I asked the Minister why a certain couple in their early thirties had obtained admission to one of the Swallow-street flats. Admittedly, they were invalid pensioners. I asked why preference had not been given to Port Melbourne residents, and received the following reply, dated 30th November:—

Further to your enquiry regarding circumstances surrounding the letting of Flat 9 at Swallow-street, Port Melbourne, I now have to advise that before this unit was allocated the Commission contacted the Port Melbourne council and requested it to nominate a tenant. The council failed to make a recommendation, therefore the flat was allotted to the next approved applicant on the waiting list.

However, in the event of further vacancies occurring the Commission will again contact the Port Melbourne council and request a nominee.

I do not intend to lay any blame on the Minister of Housing in this matter. On a previous occasion, I made a similar complaint to the Minister and he gave an undertaking that these circumstances would not arise again. I am a member of the Port Melbourne City Council, which disclaims all knowledge of any communication on the subject from the Housing Commission, and it has advised

the Minister accordingly. A representative of the Commission supplied the Port Melbourne council with a list of people ineligible for the Swallow-street flats and the names of one or two persons who are waiting to gain admission to them. This is proof that somebody at the Housing Commission does not tell the truth, even to the Minister. If the honorable gentleman can deny that allegation, I shall be happy to hear that denial.

Mr. FRASER.—Had you raised it with the Minister previously?

Mr. TODD.—The letter from the Minister that I have quoted contains statements that are not true, and the Port Melbourne council is writing to the honorable gentleman giving a denial. The honorable member for Hawthorn claimed that this adjournment motion was a "very poor show." The matter needs to be judged according to the submissions of the honorable member for Carlton, who alleged that everything was not in order as regards the slum reclamation activities of the Housing Commission. The fact that the Minister and senior members of the Commission made certain decisions is an admission of the truth of the statements of the honorable member for Carlton.

Regarding the contentions of the honorable member for Mentone about the Housing Commission and private enterprise, I remind him that I have spent a lifetime in the timber industry and know what private enterprise does and how it "works" shortages. If the Housing Commission, with its Homes-glen plant, was in competition with private enterprise in the building of homes, we would learn which could produce the houses at the lowest cost; it would not be private enterprise. When doubt is cast on the integrity of an organization which has to deal with questions of this character, there are repercussions. In the City of Port Melbourne, two areas were designated for slum reclamation. They are included in the 18 areas that the honorable member for Mentone boasted about, but 90 per cent. of the plans are still in the drawing-board stage. The council was quite happy about those two particular areas being selected for slum reclamation purposes.

The Housing Commission gave its usual undertaking that no good houses would be demolished, but when the firm of Troedell and Cooper, which owns a vacant allotment in the area, objected strenuously to the slum reclamation project proceeding, the Commission's attitude changed. The town clerk of Port Melbourne received the following letter from the secretary of the Commission:—

*Re Proposed Reclamation Area—Dow-street, Port Melbourne.*

I refer to previous advice that the Commission has resolved to recommend that an area in Dow-street, Port Melbourne, be declared a Reclamation Area.

Resistance to this resolution is being met from Messrs. Troedell and Cooper who are the owners of a large section of the proposed area and desire to use their land for expansion purposes.

Dow-street is entirely different from Bay-street, where the firm has its premises. It appears that, when an industrial organization objects to a slum reclamation project, the situation is different from that which arises when the objector is an individual owning a small nondescript home. The letter proceeded—

In view of the fact that the general-industry zoning under the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Master Plan would (upon gazettal of the Plan) automatically override the Council's By Law by which the land is zoned residential, it is likely that a substantial claim for compensation, well in excess of its value for residential purposes could be substantiated.

The Board of Works has advised the Commission that the Board has no proposal to amend the planning scheme as far as this land is concerned. The Commission considers that it can only operate in an order clearly residential and therefore has no option but to withdraw from this area.

Should an agreement be reached between your Council and the Board permitting the use of the land for residential purposes, the reclamation of the area could be reconsidered.

The Commission has resolved to withdraw from the project. The local council is a Labour one with a declared policy that not one inch of residential land shall be forfeited, and its object is to have in the area a pool of labour to cater for the industries at Fisherman's Bend. I suggest that Messrs Troedell and Cooper probably want to use that

vacant land merely as a car park and that in this case the interests of a large number of people are to be disregarded at the whim of a single firm. It does not matter if a few more pounds compensation is payable in respect of the land. An engineering shop also concerned is a small one that consumes only £20 worth of power a month from the Port Melbourne electricity supply.

Many people have doubts concerning the Housing Commission. I shall read for the information of honorable members a letter received by the honorable member for Albert Park from a gentleman who complains about the attitude of Commission officers in respect of slum reclamation orders. The letter is as follows:—

Listening to Mr. "Dinny" Lovegrove on the attack he is making against the Housing Commission, causes me to refer to my own particular case. Due to subsidence of land in the Elwood area the house I tenant has developed cracks which had caused the Commission to order the owner to effect repairs. That was earlier this year. I was assured by a Mr. Taylour of the Housing Commission that they had the power to so order the landlord to repair the damage under its slum reclamation powers. I was also told that if the landlord refused to do the work the Commission itself would do the work and commandeer the rent for such time as the cost of repairs was written off.

The landlord's reaction was to take legal action to have my family removed in order to effect the repairs. I was assured by Mr. Taylour that if the action for eviction went to Court that I need have no fear for the Commission's experts would assure the Court that it was not necessary for the premises to be vacated so as to effect repairs.

However, strangely enough as the Court hearing was nearing, a remarkable change took place in the attitude of the Commission. Mr. Taylour told me the matter had been taken out of his hands and I was referred to a Mr. Bliss. This gentleman told me the premises would have to be vacated.

Now the whole matter has simply played into the hands of the landlord who has seized on the set up to have us evicted—a step he has been attempting for some years now. I can only suspect corruption of some serious nature has occurred for an inspection of the place would show even an amateur that vacation of the premises is not necessary.

Now all these facts were aired to the Minister. He told me in a letter that the experts of the Commission would not give

Mr. Todd.

the support previously promised me but that temporary vacation of the premises need not cause me to lose the tenancy. This is alright in theory but I have been a tenant for fourteen years and not once has the landlord effected one item of repair in that fourteen years. The situation has played into the landlord's hands and is obviously being used to further his plan to have my family evicted so as to be in a position to exploit the new Landlord and Tenant Act in regard to rental fixing—with a new tenant.

If you care to use these notes in the debate you may do so. The hearing of the eviction case has been adjourned for a fortnight. However, the case is on all fours with the stories of vacillation, indecision and allegations of corruptness to which Mr. Lovegrove refers.

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

|      |    |    |    |    |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 20 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 38 |

Majority against the  
motion .. .. 18

#### AYES.

|                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| Mr. Clarey     | Mr. Shepherd     |
| Mr. Connell    | Mr. Stoneham     |
| Mr. Crick      | Mr. Sutton       |
| Mr. Drakeford  | Mr. Todd         |
| Mr. Fennessy   | Mr. Towers       |
| Mr. Holland    | Mr. Turnbull     |
| Mr. Lovegrove  | (Brunswick West) |
| Mr. Macdonald  | Mr. Wilkes.      |
| (Geelong West) |                  |
| Mr. Mutton     | Tellers:         |
| Mr. Ring       | Mr. Floyd        |
| Mr. Ruthven    | Mr. Schintler.   |

#### NOES.

|                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mr. Balfour        | Mr. Meagher     |
| Mr. Barclay        | Mr. Mibus       |
| Mr. Bloomfield     | Mr. Moss        |
| Mr. Bolte          | Mr. Petty       |
| Mr. Brose          | Mr. Porter      |
| Mr. Christie       | Mr. Rafferty    |
| Mr. Cochrane       | Mr. Reid        |
| Mr. Dunstan        | Mr. Rossiter    |
| Mr. Fraser         | Mr. Rylah       |
| Mr. Gainey         | Mr. Stanistreet |
| Mr. Gibbs          | Mr. Suggett     |
| Mr. Holden         | Mr. Tanner      |
| Sir Herbert Hyland | Mr. Taylor      |
| Mr. Kane           | Mr. Turnbull    |
| Sir George Knox    | (Kara Kara)     |
| Sir Albert Lind    | Mr. Wilcox      |
| Mr. Loxton         | Mr. Wiltshire.  |
| Mr. MacDonald      |                 |
| (Burwood)          | Tellers:        |
| Sir Thomas Maltby  | Mr. Scott       |
| Mr. Manson         | Mr. White.      |

#### PAIRS.

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| Mr. Doube  | Mr. Snider |
| Mr. Scully | Mr. Cook.  |

**POLICE OFFENCES (UNLAWFUL  
USE OF BOATS) BILL.**

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend section 207 of the Police Offences Act 1957.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

**KING-STREET BRIDGE BILL.**

**Sir THOMAS MALTBY** (Minister of Public Works) moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to the construction of a bridge over the River Yarra at or near King-street, Melbourne, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

**STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION  
(BORROWING) BILL.**

**Mr. REID** (Minister of Electrical Undertakings).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill provides for an enlargement of the Commission's borrowing powers by £50,000,000 to £265,500,000 and for some minor amendments to the State Electricity Commission (Financial) Act 1937, No. 4512. The first of these amendments is to correct an anomaly relating to payment by the Commission of interest and contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund on loan moneys raised by the State prior to 1937. The other amendments relate to the form, registration, and issue of debenture certificates to conform to modern practice.

The State Electricity Commission (Financial) Act 1937 empowered the Commission, with the consent of the Governor in Council, to borrow money, and it prescribed a limit to the total borrowing. From time to time, this limit has been extended. The last occasion was in December, 1954, when Parliament passed legislation which increased the limit of the Commission's borrowing powers by £50,000,000 to £215,500,000. This increase was made to enable the Commission to finance its

construction programme over the succeeding two to three years. Net borrowings at the end of October last, after allowing for sinking funds, were just on £205,800,000, leaving £9,700,000 of the present borrowing authority still unused. With the further loan raisings necessary during the current financial year, the Commission's borrowing authority will be almost exhausted.

From time to time honorable members have taken the opportunities that have been extended to them to visit the Commission's undertakings at Yallourn, Morwell and Kiewa, and I am sure they have been impressed by the magnitude of these works and will have appreciated their vital importance to the economic life and welfare of our State.

The annual requirements of capital of the State Electricity Commission, even on the present restricted basis, is large. As mentioned in my statement to Parliament last year, the Commission's capital requirements have been estimated to total £300,000,000 for the nine years up to 1964-65. Members will recognize that these requirements, however, are neither excessive for the needs of this State, nor are they out of step with the requirements of electricity generation and supply authorities in other States, and indeed throughout the world. Overseas and Australian authorities recognize that a characteristic of electrical development in industrialized countries is that the demand doubles approximately every nine years and that a healthy economic development demands that this rate should fall only when the use of electricity has reached saturation point. It is noteworthy that not even in the highly industrialized United States of America is there any evidence that saturation point is in sight.

The significance of this doubling of the demand every nine years cannot be too greatly stressed, because it represents normally uncontrollable and ever-growing targets which are set for the electricity supply industry by the complex requirements of the nation throughout the various phases of national life. In Victoria, these requirements stem from the pressures of a growing population and the demands of primary and secondary industry and commerce, down

to the electrical requirements for labour-saving devices in the home and on the farm.

This particular measure is machinery in character and is necessary if the Commission is to proceed with its public and private loan-raising programmes within the limits prescribed each year by the Loan Council. In my statement to the House last year, I dealt very fully with the future development of the State's power system and its fuel production programme, the problem of obtaining the necessary finance and other related aspects. For that reason, I do not now propose to discuss this matter in detail, but will refer briefly to the major works upon which the money raised under this authority will be spent.

During the financial year ended 30th June last, the installed capacity of generators was increased by 175,500 kilowatts, bringing the total now to 1,136,599 kilowatts. Approved additions and extensions to the State generating system will add nearly 500,000 kilowatts during the next five years. Major additions due for completion during this period are:—

#### YALLOURN POWER STATION:

A further 50,000 kilowatt turbo-generator in the 'D' station is almost completed. However, the boiler plant at this station will be completed progressively from April, 1958, to early 1959, and in the meantime the generators will use steam available from the 'C' station. Orders have been placed for two 120,000 kilowatt turbo-generators and two 950,000-lb. per hour boilers to comprise the Yallourn 'E' power station, scheduled to come into operation in 1961-62.

#### MORWELL POWER AND FUEL PROJECT:

This project is now well advanced, and power will be available in approximately twelve months' time. In the development of the project, priority has been given to the erection of the power plants which will provide 42,000 kilowatts to the State supply system by 1959, increasing to 91,000 kilowatts by 1961. A further stage to yield 60,000 kilowatts by 1963 is now being planned. Briquette

*Mr. Reid.*

manufacture will begin about twelve months after the power station commences operation—that is, early 1960—and the annual rate of production will reach 1,564,000 tons by 1961.

#### KIEWA HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME:

The Nos. 3 and 4 developments with a combined generating capacity of 87,600 kilowatts are now complete. Work is proceeding on the No. 1 development which will provide a further 96,000 kilowatts during 1961-62. Included in the No. 1 development is a storage on the Bogong High Plains known as the Rocky Valley dam which, in addition to providing water to operate the No. 1 power station, will also enable the annual outputs of the Nos. 3 and 4 power stations to be increased by the regulation of river flows.

Along with these large additions to generating plant, major transmission lines and terminal stations are, of course, necessary to link power stations with load centres. There will also be a considerable extension of the distribution system to serve the metropolitan, urban and rural areas of the State. For these works alone, approximately £8,000,000 per annum is required. Although the "self-help" plan has been of great assistance for new extension work, it is still necessary to find large sums every year for the inevitable augmentation of existing transmission and distribution lines and substations throughout the State. All the large-scale works I have mentioned, which involve the Commission in considerable capital expenditure every year, must be maintained if this essential service to the community is to be provided. For the present financial year the Commission has planned a capital works programme of £23,600,000. It plans to finance this programme by public and private loans totalling £16,300,000, Treasury advances of £1,000,000, £2,000,000 from "self-help" and the balance from its own resources. This rate of expenditure is below that necessary for the proper electrical development of the State and cannot be held at a stationary level. The use of electricity is increasing at a compound rate and it follows that the amount of money invested in electrical development

should also increase year by year. On the present level of spending the now proposed increase in the borrowing authority of the Commission will be sufficient for from two to three years, and the Commission will have to approach Parliament before the end of that period for a further increase in its authority.

As mentioned earlier, my statement to the House last year covered the activities of the State Electricity Commission in considerable detail. Accordingly, I have confined this explanation to the major points more directly related to the increase in borrowing powers provided for in the Bill.

The minor amendments to the State Electricity Commission (Financial) Act 1937, which are provided for in this Bill, are of a machinery character. With the exception of the first one, which is merely to correct an anomaly, they are designed to simplify and bring into line with modern practice the routine work associated with the recording and issue of debentures arising from the flotation of public loans, which now average four each year. The proposed alterations, which have the endorsement of responsible officers of the Treasury and the Auditor-General, provide first for the payment by the Commission of interest and contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund in respect of loan moneys raised by the State for the Commission prior to the operation of the 1937 Act. These payments have, in fact, always been made by the Commission but there is no legal requirement that they should be. The 1937 Act superseded a similar provision in the State Electricity Commission Act 1928, but loans raised before the passing of the 1937 Act were not covered in the later Act. The amendment proposed in paragraph (e) of clause 2 corrects this omission by adding at the end of section 25 the words "or for the purpose of the Commission under any other Act."

The second provision is for the use of loose-leaf registers or card systems for the recording of debentures and inscribed stock, instead of bound "books" as at present. Proper checks

would be instituted to ensure the complete effectiveness of any new type of register. The third provision is for the use on debentures of facsimile reproductions of the common seal of the Commission and of the signatures of a Commissioner and the secretary or the acting secretary. Debentures would be printed on special watermarked paper approved by the Treasurer. I am assured that the close checks taken to ensure the correctness of the recording and issue of these documents will be adequate for the new practice. Such an amendment would be in keeping with the practice of the Commonwealth Government and several statutory corporations. I understand that many large public companies also adopt a similar practice in respect of share certificates and debenture issues.

Mr. BOLTE.—The present system is unwieldy.

Mr. REID.—That is correct. The system proposed is expeditious and up to date, and it saves much unnecessary routine work.

The fourth provision relates to the numbering of debentures in series in each denomination. The Act prescribes that debentures shall be numbered from one upwards, but with the large number of debentures now being issued it is necessary for each denomination of debentures to have its own numbering sequence. The fifth provision relates to the issue from stocks of spare debentures, new debentures to replace any which have been lost or accidentally burnt or otherwise destroyed or defaced by accident. At the present time, if a debenture has to be replaced, the new debenture must bear the same number and date as the one it replaces and consequently must be specially printed. Again, necessary precautions will be taken to safeguard the security of such issues.

I come now to the clauses of the Bill, which I shall briefly explain. Sub-clause (1) of clause 1 is a customary provision which permits the general sections of the State Electricity Commission Acts to operate in respect of matters dealt with in this Bill.

The date of operation to be fixed by proclamation of the Governor in Council is provided for in sub-clause (2). This is necessary because new procedure relating to the use of special water-marked paper and the signing of debentures cannot be put into operation before the Commission's next public loan is floated early in 1958.

The existing borrowing limit of the Commission is £215,500,000. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of clause 2 provide for this limit to be raised to £265,500,000, which amount should cover the Commission's requirements for a further two to three years for major extensions to the State generating system, work on the Morwell project and general expansion of the transmission and distribution systems, after making allowance for money which will be available year by year from the Commission's own resources and which, of course, is invested in the business.

The reference in paragraphs (c) and (d) to an amount of £264,418,000 relates to an alternative method whereby the State may borrow for the Commission, instead of the Commission borrowing direct, up to the total over-all limit. At the time the present borrowing Act was passed in 1937, the Commission had already borrowed £1,082,000 under an earlier borrowing Act passed in 1932. When the subsequent and now current 1937 Act was passed, a proviso was included in section 8 that no moneys raised by the State could be applied to the conversion of loans raised under the 1932 Act. To preserve intact the provisions of this 1937 Act, subsequent amendments increasing the Commission's borrowing powers have kept the amount the State may borrow on behalf of the Commission at a figure £1,082,000 below the Commission's borrowing authority, and, accordingly, the present Bill prescribes the sum of £264,418,000 for this purpose. Paragraph (e) provides for the payment by the Commission of interest and contributions to the National Debt Sinking Fund in respect of loan moneys raised by the State for the Commission prior to the operation of the 1937 Act. These payments have, in fact, always been made by the Commission but there is no legal requirement

that they should be. The 1937 Act superseded a similar provision in the State Electricity Commission Act 1928, but loans raised before the passing of the 1937 Act were not covered in the later Act. The addition at the end of section 25 of the words "or for the purposes of the Commission under any other Act" corrects this omission.

The words "book" and "books" are interpreted in paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1) of clause 3 to include loose leaf registers or card systems for recording of debentures and inscribed stock. This will facilitate the keeping of records and is in accord with modern practices.

Sub-paragraph (i) of paragraph (b) of sub-clause (1) provides for the repeal from the form of debenture prescribed in the schedule to the Act of the words "The Common Seal of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria was affixed hereto in the presence of." This is consequential to the revised procedure provided for in the new clause 2 of Part I. of the schedule to the Act as contained in sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of sub-clause (1). The proposed new clause of the schedule provides for—

- (a) use for debenture forms of special watermarked paper approved by the Treasurer; the debentures to bear the signatures of a Commissioner and the secretary or the acting secretary, and the common seal or a facsimile of the seal;
- (b) either the personal signatures of such persons or the endorsement of the signatures by engraving or any other process approved by the Treasurer;
- (c) the numbering of debentures in each denomination instead of the existing provision of consecutive numbering of all debentures issued.

Amendments (a) and (b) are to enable the Commission to dispense with the present time-consuming procedure of separately signing and sealing each debenture. Large numbers of debentures are now being issued and it is

necessary for each denomination to have its own numbering sequence; this is provided for in amendment (c).

Sub-paragraphs (iii) and (iv) of paragraph (b) of sub-clause (1) provide for the repeal of the words "number date" in clause 7 of Part I. of the schedule and the words "number date" in paragraph (b) of clause 8 of the same Part of that schedule. This will permit the issue, from stocks of spare debentures, new debentures to replace any which have been lost or accidentally burnt or otherwise destroyed or defaced by accident. At the present time if a debenture has to be replaced, the new debenture must bear the same number and date as the one it replaces and consequently must be specially printed. The provisions of sub-clause (2) permit the issue, from existing stocks of spare debentures, of debentures in lieu of inscribed stock issued under the loans raised before the commencement of this proposed legislation where holders desire to convert from stock to debentures. Otherwise, stocks now held for this specific purpose would be wasted and special printing of individual debentures in the new form would be necessary. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until Wednesday, November 27.

## RAILWAY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time. The purpose of this Bill is to authorize the expenditure of moneys from the Loan Fund to the extent of £10,500,000 on account of the Railway Department. It provides for the estimated expenditure for railway purposes between 22nd September, 1957 and 31st December, 1958. Clause 2 authorizes the issue out of loan moneys of a total amount not exceeding £10,500,000 to be applied to the carrying out of the works and purposes enumerated in the schedule. The actual expenditure will, of course, be governed by the availability of loan money for railway purposes. The loan

funds allotted to the Railway Department for the current financial year amount to £7,050,000, but this Bill covers the period from 22nd September, 1957, to 31st December, 1958, and the amount of £10,500,000 specified in clause 2 represents the total authority desired during that period.

The Bill provides that the Public Works Committee Acts shall apply to all works and purposes specified in item 1 of the schedule to the Bill, the estimated cost of which, as specified in the schedule, exceeds £10,000. Provision is made also that land acquired under the authority of the Bill shall vest in the Victorian Railways Commissioners for the purposes of the Railways Acts. Included in the sum applied for is an amount of £200,000 for the Railway Construction Branch.

Taking each item in the Bill separately, attention is drawn to item 1—Additions and Improvements to Way and Works. Each of the works specifically shown under sub-items 1 to 82 and certain works included in sub-items 153, 155, 159 and 160 are estimated to cost over £4,000. The estimated cost of each of the works provided for in the remaining sub-items does not exceed £4,000, and the aggregate amounts therefor are covered by lump sums.

Under sub-items 150 to 160 of item 1 of the schedule, funds are provided for—

Additions and improvements at various country and suburban stations, yards, and so on

Additions and improvements to the signalling and safeworking systems.

Additions and improvements to various lines, including the widening of banks and cuttings; alterations to curves; road diversions; the provision of heavier rails, sleepers and ballast, and so on, and of sidings for the purpose of obtaining access to sources of ballast

Additional and improved dwelling accommodation for employees.

Improved telephone and telegraph facilities.

Strengthening bridges; and generally for such minor additions and improvements as may be found necessary during the currency of the measure.

Major works for which provision is made in the Bill include virtual completion of regrading and duplication of the Gippsland line between Dandenong and Moe and installation of power signalling concurrently with the duplication works; further progress with the duplication work between Flinders-street and South Yarra—including the construction of a new station at Richmond to accommodate the additional tracks—to facilitate the handling of the steadily increasing passenger traffic on the Frankston and Dandenong lines; completion of the new goods terminal at Dynon to relieve the serious congestion that occurs in the Melbourne goods shed and yards; the duplication works between Heyington-East Malvern and Camberwell-Ashburton; and provision of train crossing facilities between East Malvern-Glen Waverley and Heidelberg-Eltham to permit of improved services being provided.

Other important works for which provision is made in the Bill include sidings to serve new docks at Melbourne and at Corio Quay, Geelong; rearrangement and extension of the station yards at Morwell, Moe, and Traralgon; new stations between Mitcham-Ringwood, Box Hill-Blackburn, Bentleigh-Moorabbin and Glenroy-Broadmeadows; installation of automatic signalling between Box Hill-Ringwood, Caulfield-Mordialloc and Oakleigh-Dandenong; improved crossing facilities on the Melbourne-Serviceton line; a plant at Dandenong for the preservation treatment of sleepers; preliminary work on the provision of extra track facilities between Flinders-street and East Camberwell; the Department's estimated contribution during the currency of the Act towards the cost of grade separation at level crossings; preliminary work on provision at Dynon of a new locomotive depot which will eventually replace the North Melbourne locomotive depot; and improved facilities at a number of stations to expedite the handling of traffic. Provision is made also for

additional staff amenities such as ablution facilities, lockers, meal rooms, sanitary conveniences, and so on, at various locations.

Item 2 provides for final payment for the purchase of electric locomotives for use on the Gippsland line, and the purchase of workshops equipment and machinery. Provision is made also for the estimated expenditure on the equipment of a further number of cars and vans with automatic couplings.

The amount provided under item 3 is required to cover the completion of the new spur line from Moe to Yallourn, which is already open for traffic; progress on the work of converting to broad gauge and electrifying the Upper Ferntree Gully-Belgrave line; surveys, plans, and so on; and preliminary expenditure on other lines which have been or may be authorized by Parliament for construction.

The allocation under item 5 is to enable the Commissioners to make further progress with the rehabilitation programme to overcome arrears of track and bridge renewals and replacement of worn-out and obsolete locomotives, cars and trucks, resulting from inability to make adequate provision for renewal and replacement works in past years. As was done last year, the Government is making loan funds available to the railways to enable the rehabilitation programme to be proceeded with, and the interest and sinking fund payments will be borne by the Treasury. This authority is given under clause 6 of the Bill. The amount provided is required to meet payments during the currency of the legislation for locomotives, new suburban trains, bogie vans and trucks ordered from overseas and local manufacturers, for the estimated expenditure on rolling stock to be constructed and rebuilt in railway workshops to the maximum extent that can be done with the available staff, and for various replacement works including relaying of tracks and reconstruction of bridges.

Further details of the works included in the Bill have been supplied to me, and I shall be pleased to furnish any additional information that may be desired

by honorable members in respect of the items. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. DRAKEFORD (Pascoe Vale), the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, November 26.

**GEELONG WATERWORKS AND  
SEWERAGE (BELLARINE  
OFFICERS) BILL.**

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The measure provides for the transfer of certain persons from the Public Service to the employment of the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust, which action is necessary following the transfer of the headworks of the Bellarine water supply system from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust on 1st July, 1955. Since the transfer of the headworks, three permanent officers and one temporary employee who were engaged by the Commission on maintenance and control of the headworks have been carrying out the same duties on behalf of the Trust as they previously did for the Commission. The four persons concerned have remained in the Public Service and their salaries have been paid by the Commission which has been recouped by the Trust from time to time. This arrangement was satisfactory for a limited period but not on a permanent basis.

The three permanent officers and the temporary employee could remain in the Public Service but this would involve their transfer to some other area or areas in the State and would involve the Trust in obtaining employees to replace them. The Trust desires to retain these men and they themselves are reluctant to be transferred elsewhere in the State or to lose their present rights to superannuation and long service leave which would be the case if they were to resign and be engaged afresh by the Trust.

To meet the position, the Bill provides that the four men concerned may elect to remain in the Public Service, and be employed elsewhere in the State, or transfer to the employment of the Trust, which is required to appoint them to positions with grades or classifications

and emoluments at least equal to those held by them in the Public Service immediately before their transfer. Each officer will have thirty days in which to notify the Public Service Board whether he elects to remain in the Public Service, and, if he fails to give such notice, he shall be transferred to the employment of the Trust.

Any one of the persons concerned who is transferred from the Public Service to the employment of the Trust, and who immediately before such transfer was a contributor to the State Superannuation Fund, shall continue to be an officer within the meaning of the Superannuation Acts and retain all his pension rights, making the same contributions as would apply if he had remained in the Public Service, unless he has, before the day of transfer, elected in writing to be treated as an officer who has been discharged from the Public Service, in which case there will be refunded to him the full amount of the contributions he has already paid to the Superannuation Fund.

The Bill provides also that any person transferred to the employment of the Trust shall have his long service leave rights safeguarded, since he will be treated as though, on the date of his transfer, he had retired from the Public Service on account of age. In the event of an officer desiring to continue as a contributor to the Superannuation Fund following his transfer to the Trust, provision is made for the contributions to be deducted by the Trust from his salary and paid in full to the State Superannuation Board.

The Bill, therefore, meets the wishes of the Trust in enabling it to continue to have the services of these four men, who have been engaged for many years on the work of maintaining and controlling the Bellarine headworks system, and at the same time completely safeguards their rights under the Public Service Acts and the Superannuation Acts. Unless this amending legislation is passed, the men concerned will have to accept transfer to some other part of the State or resign from the Public Service, thereby losing long service leave and superannuation benefits.

In the event of resignation, the actuarial equivalent only of their contributions to the Superannuation Fund would be refunded to them, and this actuarial equivalent would be less than their total contributions.

The Bill has been drafted on the lines suggested by the Public Service Board, after consultation with the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust. To assist the four men concerned in arriving at a decision whether to remain in the Public Service or accept transfer to employment with the Trust, the Commission will arrange for an officer to interview each of them and explain the position in detail.

On the motion of Mr. C. D. MACDONALD (Geelong West), the debate was adjourned until next day.

#### SWAN HILL RAILWAY LAND BILL.

**Mr. BLOOMFIELD** (Minister of Education).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The object of this brief Bill is to make available for educational purposes land at Swan Hill, now vested in the Victorian Railways Commissioners, as a site for the establishment of a technical school in this progressive country centre. For some years technical education has been carried out in conjunction with the local high school. Swan Hill was one of seven country towns selected just prior to the second world war for the establishment of multi-purpose schools where technical education could be provided in conjunction with existing secondary schools. In two of these places, Mildura and Shepparton, full technical schools have been established on separate sites, and the time is approaching when similar action must be taken at Swan Hill.

A comprehensive survey of the district revealed that the only site that could be economically provided to meet requirements for a school, which must cater for junior students, apprentices and adults for both day and evening training, is the area of land referred to in the Bill. This Crown land was made available to the Railway Commissioners in 1890, but is no longer required for railway purposes. It is being sold to the Education Department at a price

which the Lands Department advises represents present-day value. The proceeds will be paid into the State Loan Repayment Fund.

The land covered by the Bill is not in itself large enough, but, when supplemented by the acquisition of some five or six acres of adjacent land, will be sufficient to provide for the school buildings and adequate sporting and recreation facilities.

On the motion of Mr. SHEPHERD (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned until next day.

#### POLICE OFFENCES (UNLAWFUL USE OF BOATS) BILL.

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time. The object of this Bill is to make it an offence for a person to use a boat without the consent of the owner. The unauthorized use of boats has become very common. More boats are in use, not only in such places as Port Phillip Bay but also at inland watering places like Eildon, and with increased opportunities the practice of using other people's boats without their consent is likely to develop, unless provision is made for its control. Under the present law, it is not possible to take any effective action against a person using a boat without authority unless it can be established that he had a larcenous intent; that is to say, that he intended permanently to deprive the owner of the property in the boat. There are many cases in which this is not possible because the intention actually is merely to use the boat for joyriding. The only remedy available in such a case is a civil action, which might be of doubtful value to the owner of the boat, who may have suffered serious inconvenience and had his boat damaged.

In the case of land vehicles, the matter has been remedied by statute. Section 85 of the Crimes Act 1957 makes it an offence to take or use cattle without the consent of the owner, and section 81 of that Act provides for the offence of illegally using a motor car. Section 207 of the Police Offences Act 1957 deals with the illegal use of vehicles other

than motor cars. It is now proposed to amend the latter section by including boats in its provisions and thus bringing the law relating to the use of boats into line with that dealing with motor cars and other vehicles. The Bill is in accordance with a recommendation of the Statute Law Revision Committee, which has submitted an interesting report on the subject, copies of which are available in the Papers Room to all honorable members. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL (Brunswick West), the debate was adjourned until next day.

#### MOTOR CAR (REGISTRATION FEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary) for the second-reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—The Opposition supports this small Bill, which is of great importance to the owners of motor vehicles propelled by fuel oil, also known as dieselene, distillate and so on. In his Budget speech, the Federal Treasurer announced that the Federal Government proposed to impose a tax of 1s. a gallon on automotive diesel oil, which was expected to yield about £2,000,000 during the remainder of this financial year and £3,000,000 in a full year. When presenting this measure to the House, the Chief Secretary indicated that, based on the present formula for the distribution of petrol tax, it was anticipated that for this year the State would receive about £700,000 from the Federal Government as its share of the diesel fuel tax.

**Mr. RYLAH.**—That is based on the new formula, which is not the same as that applicable to the petrol tax.

**Mr. SHEPHERD.**—The registration fees payable in respect of vehicles propelled by diesel fuel are double those imposed on petrol powered vehicles. Therefore, to be consistent the State must now bring the registration fees on diesels into line with those relating to petrol driven vehicles. In his second-reading speech, the Chief Secretary stated that clause 2 of the Bill would

repeal sub-paragraph (ii) of paragraph (g) under the heading "B. Motor cars other than motor cycles" in the second schedule to the principal Act, No. 6038, which provides—

In the case of a motor car (other than a motor car owned by a municipality and marked so as to indicate such ownership or a motor tractor) propelled by an internal combustion engine ordinarily using fuel oil the fee shall be double the fee otherwise payable under the foregoing provisions under the heading B.

The balance of the sub-paragraph contains a technical definition and description of fuel oil. Most honorable members will be surprised to know that by removing that provision the State is remitting only £200,000. In other words, the registration fees payable for diesel vehicles up to the present time in this financial year total about £400,000. The receipts from motor registration fees and drivers' licence fees, as shown in the Auditor-General's Report, amount to £6,500,000 a year. Thus it will be seen that the proportion of diesel driven vehicles registered in Victoria is not large. I believe the use of diesel vehicles will expand, and that will not adversely affect the State. Although automotive engineers have developed the diesel engine to a remarkable extent, I believe the development of this type of motor is still more or less at a comparatively early stage. On present figures, the State will gain £500,000 this financial year as a result of reducing the registration fee on diesels to the rates applicable to petrol driven vehicles and receiving its proportion of the 1s. a gallon fuel oil tax from the Federal Government. I trust the Bill will have a favourable passage in this House and in another place.

**Sir HERBERT HYLAND** (Gippsland South).—Naturally, members of the Country party support this Bill, which amends the legislation relating to the licensing of motor cars and other vehicles. As a result of the imposition of a tax on diesel fuel, Victoria will receive approximately £700,000 during the current financial year and, for a full year, it is anticipated that the revenue derived by this means will amount to £1,000,000. Of course, as a

result of the passage of this Bill, motor registration fees on motor vehicles powered by diesel driven engines will be reduced by approximately £200,000 and this figure will be increased by 50 per cent. for the full year. I anticipate that the various Governments—both State and Commonwealth—will be faced with some problems before this matter is properly ironed out. The diesel tax is not a clear-cut issue as is the petrol tax. Certain exemptions from the payment of the tax must be granted but they are not enumerated in the Bill. The Federal Act will contain a list of some of the exemptions applicable, but details of other exemptions will not be known until decided upon by the States. It has been stated quite clearly in the Federal Parliament that it is a matter for the individual States because the registration fees vary.

I should like to see the distribution of diesel fuel tax put on such a basis that Victoria would receive a greater share of the revenue derived from this State. Unfortunately, under the existing system of petrol tax reimbursements from the Commonwealth this State is being robbed. Victorian motorists are paying £4,000,000 annully to finance road works in Queensland and Western Australia and, although the size of these States justifies, to some extent, the financial assistance that is accorded them, Victoria should not be called upon to meet that expenditure. Why should not the Commonwealth Government, out of the funds that it derives by means of petrol tax collections, pay to all the States what is their due? After all, the Federal Government has available for capital works every year hundreds of millions of pounds of tax money. If my suggestion were adopted, many municipalities in Victoria would be placed in a better financial position and our roads would be greatly improved. One council in my electorate imposes a rate of 4s. 5d. in the £1—an ordinary rate of 4s. and a special Country Roads Board rate of 5d. Another municipality levies a rate of 4s. 3d. in the £1, consisting of a normal rate of 4s., which is the maximum, plus 3d. in the £1 special Country

Roads Board rate. Because the Country Roads Board must be stringent with its financial allocations, it is necessary for local municipalities to find large sums of money. I hope that when the diesel fuel tax formula has been finalized by the Commonwealth Government, we, in Victoria, will obtain a better deal than we have received from petrol tax collections.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (CARRIAGE OF BEES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 14) on the motion of Mr. Reid (Minister of Labour and Industry) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. FLOYD** (Williamstown).—This is a small, simple Bill, but nevertheless, it is of great importance to beekeepers. Its purpose is to extend exemptions under section 99 of the Labour and Industry Act 1953. Sub-section (1) of that section provides that no person shall carry goods for hire or reward or in the course of trade—

(a) on Sunday at any time;

(b) on Saturday before half-past Seven o'clock in the morning or after One o'clock in the afternoon;

(c) on any other day of the week before half-past Seven o'clock in the morning or after half-past Six o'clock in the evening.

Necessary exemptions include the carriage of perishable goods, cordials and ice and the carrying of livestock on any day other than Sunday. The Solicitor-General has ruled that bees are livestock, and consequently their carriage is not restricted under paragraphs (b) and (c) of sub-section (1). The amendment to the principal Act in this Bill makes provision for the carrying of bees, beehives and apiarists' appliances at any time without restriction. As the Country party will no doubt be interested in this matter, I shall not elaborate further on that aspect. The proposed amendment is important to apiarists, because bees do not work to rules and regulations but go the way Nature intended. It is proper that the Act should be altered in this manner. A

*Sir Herbert Hyland.*

number of Opposition members who had been contacted by apiarists approached the Minister of Labour and Industry on this subject and were informed that an amendment would be introduced as soon as possible. I shall now be able to communicate with those apiarists informing them that the matter has been attended to. In this instance, the Government is to be commended for its speedy action. For many years the people carrying on this trade of beekeeping must have been breaking the law. If a law is bad and cannot be supervised, it is logical that it should be altered, as is proposed in this instance. The Opposition supports the Bill.

**Sir HERBERT HYLAND** (Gippsland South).—The Country party also supports this measure which amends section 99 of the principal Act. Under that provision, a carter, if not exempt, has to leave his vehicle on the road during the night hours and continue his journey the following day. This amending Bill removes the restrictions formerly placed on apiarists by subsection (1) of section 99 of the Labour and Industry Act 1953. There was some doubt whether bees were livestock or insects, but following discussions with the Minister of Transport they were declared to be livestock and therefore could be carried anywhere at any time, except on a Sunday. As a result of the amendment in this Bill, apiarists will be permitted to carry their bees and equipment without restriction, but will not be permitted to carry honey except under certain conditions laid down in the Transport Regulation Act. I trust that the Government will see fit at some future time to grant apiarists more latitude in this regard so that they will be able to carry on successfully.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, passed through Committee, and reported to the House without amendment.

**Mr. REID** (Minister of Labour and Industry).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a third time. I take this opportunity of expressing the appreciation of the Government for the co-operation extended by the Leader of

the Country party and by the Opposition in securing the speedy passage of this necessary measure.

The motion was agreed to, and the Bill was read a third time.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 29) on the motion of Sir Thomas Maltby (Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. STIRLING** (Swan Hill).—Over the years it has been necessary to introduce many Bills to amend the Local Government Act. When it was first enacted, the legislation relating to local government was adequate to cater for the conditions that then existed in Victoria. However, there have been many changes throughout this State since that time. Population has increased considerably, local governing bodies have undertaken added responsibilities, and methods of travel have been greatly improved in both metropolitan and country areas. These developments have necessitated many amendments to the Local Government Act so that municipalities might continue to function in a proper manner and carry out their duties efficiently.

Municipal councils and the Municipal Association of Victoria frequently request the Minister of Public Works and the Government to effect changes in the law. I am sure that serious consideration is always given to these proposals because of the efficient manner in which local governing bodies have carried out their duties in the past. Even though they have wide powers in regard to some functions, they have not attempted to overstep the mark. For that reason Parliament and the public generally have a great deal of faith in local government. This form of administration is much closer to the people than that of Federal and State Parliaments. That leads to more intimate discussion between councillors and the people they represent. I believe that to be a contributing factor to the excellent work that has been carried out by local governing bodies throughout Victoria.

Of course, the greatest difficulty facing municipalities to-day is the obtaining of sufficient finance to enable them to carry out the work for which they are responsible. I would be failing in my duty, as would other honorable members, if I did not express my appreciation of the work of municipalities in this State. Councillors carry out their duties in an honorary capacity and have always done their job well. For that reason, they are not likely to suggest, lightly, amendments to the local government legislation, and serious consideration should be given to all their submissions.

Probably the Bill could best be discussed in Committee, but at this stage I propose to comment briefly on a few of the clauses. Doubtless, during the Committee stage the Minister of Public Works will further explain what is intended by the amendments embodied in the Bill. Clause 2 relates to the method of marking ballot-papers at elections. Because of differing methods of marking ballot-papers used in connexion with Parliamentary and council elections, many electors are not quite clear on just what they should do. These differing methods have led to much confusion, and clause 2 aims at bringing the method used for the marking of ballot-papers at council elections into line with the procedure adopted for Parliamentary elections. I consider this change to be worth while because it will be easier for the people to understand the ballot-paper and there should be fewer informal votes in the future than there have been in the past. Moreover, those people who become nervous when they have to complete a ballot-paper will gain confidence when they realize that the method of marking the papers is standard for all types of elections.

Sub-clause (1) of clause 3 relates to by-laws in regard to noxious weeds in the Greater Melbourne area. In 1954 the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act was amended in order that the Greater Melbourne area would be exempted from its provisions. The responsibility for the control of noxious weeds in the metropolis was taken away from the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Branch of the Lands

Department and handed over to the municipalities. Honorable members know full well it is essential that noxious weeds be exterminated in the early stage of their development; otherwise, they cause a grave problem not only to the landholder who is not attempting to deal with the weeds but also to his neighbours and the council concerned. Their eradication might ultimately prove very costly. One of the provisions of the Bill seeks to grant authority for the eradication of noxious weeds in the metropolitan area.

Another provision seeks authority for an increase in parking fees from 1s. 6d. to 3s. I do not know whether this action is essential, but the increase seems to be rather steep. I speak only as a person who visits Melbourne on occasions, but whenever I drive a motor car to the city I have great difficulty in finding places in which to park it. Even those persons who do not regularly visit the metropolis are occasionally forced to come to the city for medical reasons or for other purposes, and if they park their vehicles in incorrect positions they often find that it costs them far more than the appropriate parking fees. Parking is a problem not only in the city but also in every country town of any size. Major constructive steps will have to be taken in the not far distant future to overcome this great difficulty.

So far as the parking of caravans on roads and private property is concerned, I point out that the use of these vehicles has become very popular, particularly during holiday periods. Frequently, travellers on holidays find it necessary to park their caravans on roads, and on most occasions they do not cause much trouble. I hope municipal councils will not use the power to be conferred on them in such a way as to impose a burden on the owners of caravans. Perhaps the Minister of Public Works will enlighten me on one aspect in regard to the parking of caravans on private property. I am wondering whether any of the provisions of the Health Act can be invoked in connexion with the use of caravans by persons who are building homes. These days many persons purchase blocks of land with the intention of building homes

and, in the early stages of their erection, live in caravans on the blocks. Problems must be faced so far as sanitary conditions are concerned, but of course similar troubles confront those people who dwell in humpies and shacks on private property. The conditions under which they live are often worse than those encountered by caravan dwellers. I hope the powers to be conferred will not prevent people from living in caravans whilst they are erecting homes.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—I do not think applications from persons in that position would be refused.

Mr. STIRLING.—The power to search persons in or near abattoirs will need to be used in moderation. I do not know why it has been considered necessary to include the words "or near" in this provision, but there may be some reason. Apparently it will be possible to stop cars travelling near abattoirs and search the occupants and the vehicles. It will be essential for those in authority to administer this power carefully.

I believe that traffic conditions on our highways in many parts of the State will render it imperative for the Country Roads Board to use the power to be granted to it to declare certain thoroughfares limited access roads. If it is used, it is obvious that added expenditure will be incurred and some authority will have to find the money. The Bill provides that if the Country Roads Board and the municipality concerned cannot reach agreement, the Board will have power, through the Government, to declare the thoroughfare concerned a limited access road. When that action is taken, it will be necessary to provide another road nearby, and I have not been able to ascertain from the Bill where that responsibility will lie. In some cases it might be necessary to provide all-weather roads on both sides of a declared thoroughfare.

If the whole responsibility is not placed on the Board, I trust that it will assist the municipal councils concerned to build roads by providing some of the money required. Owing to the limited finance at their disposal, many shire councils would face an extremely serious position if forced unexpectedly to foot

the bill for a new roadway. I mention in passing that many roads, both in country districts and in the metropolitan area, are not in good condition and their maintenance is expensive. If pressure is to be put on a council to incur additional expenditure in the manner indicated, it should be assisted financially.

An amendment to section 325 of the Local Government Act 1946 is contained in clause 6, the object being to extend the time for the taking of a poll on the question of the adoption of rating on the basis of unimproved capital values. On a number of occasions when a change in the method of valuation has been proposed, there has not been sufficient time to complete the necessary procedure. In fact, the Government had to introduce several measures to ratify action taken in accordance with the wishes of the ratepayers but not in conformity with the legislation. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Public Works indicated that a postponement could be made until a subsequent year, but I do not know whether it would be for one, two, or three years. I take it that an extension of time would be granted for twelve months, and, if that was not sufficient, as a result of unusual circumstances, a further period would be allowed.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—That is so, but it would happen only in rare instances, and would be subject to an order of the Governor in Council.

Mr. STIRLING.—Perhaps this matter can be dealt with thoroughly in Committee. It appears that the Government has accepted suggestions made by the Municipal Association of Victoria. Clause 20, which amends section 752 of the principal Act, relates to tolls at ferries. Under the existing legislation a council which operates a municipal ferry may legally charge for the conveyance of a motor car, but not for a person. I have been wondering whether charges have been made in respect of persons.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—The Williams-town City Council has been illegally charging for carrying persons for nearly a century.

Mr. STIRLING.—In that event, does the Bill contain any provision to ensure that it will not be necessary for money collected in this manner to be refunded?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).**—Order! The honorable member for Swan Hill will kindly address the Chair.

Mr. STIRLING.—Very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was not expressing criticism. Even if the Williamstown council has acted illegally in this manner, I do not think many people will complain. Doubtless, the Minister has endeavoured to provide a complete cover for the future. Introduction of the Bill has become necessary because of many changes that have occurred. Although further powers are to be conferred upon municipal councils, I have great faith in those who participate in local government, and am confident that they will continue to discharge their duties with the efficiency they have displayed in the past.

**Mr. FLOYD (Williamstown).**—Last Sunday, most municipal councillors who are also members of Parliament attended a church service in recognition of "Civic Week," which is held to awaken the community as a whole to the fact that councillors are entitled to greater acknowledgment than they have received in the past for the work they do. Attention is directed to the fact that local governing bodies endeavour, with the limited finance at their disposal, to render the best possible service for the ratepayers. The Minister of Public Works must be weary of hearing local government debated, and of receiving complaints from various organizations on the subject.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY.—They are all constructive suggestions.

Mr. FLOYD.—It is to the Minister's credit that he should receive such representations in that way. I stress the importance of local government to the community, but point out that the Local Government Act was designed to serve the horse and buggy days and that it still contains many anomalies and shortcomings. From time to time,

through the Municipal Association of Victoria, and in other ways, municipalities have brought various points to the notice of the Minister of Public Works, and amending legislation has been introduced and passed. Since I have been a member of this House, three such Bills have been enacted. Each of them contained about 25 clauses. Of course, a measure of greater magnitude would be difficult to handle. Local government is a live subject. New problems are continually arising. The Opposition does not agree with all the proposals contained in the Bill, and will suggest certain amendments at the appropriate stage, realizing that the Minister of Public Works usually takes a reasonable view of proposals advanced. It is important that the legislation dealing with this subject should not become lop-sided as between city and country interests. The Municipal Association does some very fine work, but sometimes country municipalities, which have greater representation on it than their metropolitan counterparts, make it difficult to have matters affecting city councils promptly dealt with by the Association. In due course the Association makes recommendations to the Minister with a view to having the legislation improved.

I wish to pay a tribute to council officers, particularly town clerks. They are skilled men, who administer municipal affairs to the best of their ability within the limits of the Act. On their own account they hold annual conferences at which some of the ingredients of Bills, such as this, originate. Town clerks are patient men of ability, but they are sometimes impeded in their administration by the Act being out of date in certain respects. Departmental officers also initiate amendments to the legislation, and the Minister himself takes a more than passing interest in this part of his portfolio. It is gratifying to realize that the legislation is gradually getting nearer to perfection. Certainly it is 75 sections in advance of the position when I was elected to Parliament.

The advent of the motor car age has brought many problems to municipalities. Parking is an important one, of which

we are all aware. Another is the damage to footpaths caused by motor vehicles. Some ratepayers, who are not civic minded, will move a heavy load over a footpath that is not designed to carry it. Although the cost of repair may be considerable, up till now, councils have been empowered to recover only £10 for the purpose. One ratepayer in my district caused damage to the extent of £90, but he paid the full amount when the position was explained to him. Many ratepayers are not aware that they must obtain permission and have constructed a proper crossing from the road into their driveway. One of the provisions contained in the Bill will enable a greater sum than £10 to be recovered for excessive damage. Another problem is the use of roadways for parking and maintenance of vehicles. In many inner suburbs there are no driveways and the back lanes are too narrow for large vehicles. Councils are continually complaining of truck drivers who not only park their vehicles more or less permanently in the street, but also wash and repair them there. If it is suggested that they should not do so, such men claim that their liberty is being infringed. By the same token, there should be no restriction on anyone who wishes to carry on a trade in the street because he has not sufficient space in his business premises!

Traffic lights were once a novelty, but the sensible use of them is desirable. It costs about £1,000 to install lights at an ordinary crossing. Traffic lines and roundabouts are also a charge against councils, although they are provided for the benefit of all motorists. The provision of bus shelters and terminals is another expensive item. Councils have endeavoured to obtain assistance from the Transport Regulation Board in this direction, but each year the Board's surplus revenue, if any, is paid into Consolidated Revenue. Members of the travelling public are constantly demanding the provision of more amenities. Local councils are expected to provide them, but because of the shortage of finance they are unable to do so. Although it may not be expedient at this stage for the Government to increase its financial assistance to municipalities, it should

agree to the principle that ratepayers should not be responsible for all these facilities. Eventually, the Government will have to "come to the party" and relieve the financial burden resting on municipalities. Recently the Minister of Public Works when addressing delegates of the Municipal Association of Victoria, said, "Spend your subsidies and do not have any balances through incompetence or through non-spending so that you can ask for more money." The municipalities should adopt the same policy by saying to the Government, "We want more money with which to do these things." It is the task of all honorable members in this institution who are interested in local government to advance arguments supporting the claim that municipalities are deserving of increased governmental financial assistance.

Years ago, when councils could be likened to a small coterie of well-meaning citizens, many of whom had retired, their responsibilities were considerably less than is the case to-day. With the progress of modern community life, the provision of more and more facilities is being demanded of councils, as the nearest governing authorities to the people. To-day the community seeks such facilities as kindergartens, crèches, health centres, elderly citizens' clubs, youth centres, libraries, comfort stations, and so on. The only way by which they may be provided is for councils to allocate more of the rate revenue for that purpose and to receive substantial subsidies from the Government. Amenities of the type enumerated are enjoyed not only by the local ratepayers, but also by the community as a whole. Therefore the State should pay higher subsidies.

The honorable member for Swan Hill emphasized that this was a Committee Bill, and although I agree with that contention, I believe I should take the opportunity of now placing on record the financial requirements of the municipalities. It should be appreciated that if the Government had to provide the amenities to which I have referred, it would entail a certain amount of departmental routine work, the provision of offices and staff to carry out the

work, and the expenditure of considerable finance. By undertaking the work, municipalities are relieving the Government of a good deal of responsibility that would otherwise fall upon it in connexion with the establishment of elderly citizens' clubs, and so forth.

I stress also the need for bringing up to date the Local Government Acts. It is pleasing to note that three of the provisions in the Bill emanated from the municipality with which I am associated. I have much pleasure in supporting them. Since the early 1860's, passengers using the Williamstown ferry service have been charged only 1d. per head for each trip.

Originally, the service was run by private enterprise, and advertisements in old newspapers indicate that intending passengers were required "to raise a smoke," whereupon the row boat would cross the river, pick them up, and convey them to the other side. In more recent years, the Williamstown City Council has conducted the service. Since its operation, there have been two punts in use, the present one having been built in 1931. The council has made several requests to the Public Works Department for authority to increase the charge, but approval has been withheld. It appears now that the practice of imposing a charge of 1d. per head was illegal, though all other charges, apart from those for humans, are legal. These practices have continued for many years and no one has taken any notice of them. Probably, many other provisions in the legislation are similarly out of date. Sooner or later, a Government will have to go through the Act from start to finish with a view to eliminating the redundant provisions and amending other sections to bring them into line with modern conditions and requirements.

The honorable member for Swan Hill referred to the use of caravans. The majority of metropolitan municipalities will welcome the provision in the Bill relating to caravans because, in the past, people visiting the city from Swan Hill, and elsewhere, have decided frequently to park at the side of a road rather than stay at a proper camping

*Mr. Floyd.*

ground. Under the proposed amendment, councils will be able to regulate that practice. The "dumping" of rubbish on the streets is a very unsocial act, but it is difficult to bring the culprits to justice. Sometimes, of course, it is possible to identify rubbish—an empty medicine bottle bearing the name of the owner may have been included in it—and by that means, the offender is discovered. No one could object to the tightening up of the law in this regard. The practice adopted by some councils of remitting the rates of pensioners and others in necessitous circumstances, which is semi-illegal but benevolent will be legalized. Many councils do not pester such persons to pay rates, on the understanding that when they pass on they will become a charge against the properties, so that the ratepayers are not penalized to the advantage of relatives who, perhaps, have not assisted the pensioners during their lifetime. Clause 16, which permits payment by instalments for footpaths and kerbing, is a wise provision because people who cannot afford to pay the full amount immediately will not be so prone to protest in the future when councils propose to undertake such work. I shall reserve my other comments until the Committee stage. The Opposition has foreshadowed some amendments, but most of them are of a minor character.

I should like the Government to consider the questions of polling on Saturdays and compulsory voting on their merits and not as being Labour party policy. Some members on the Government side of the House are councillors in municipalities where compulsory voting already obtains. I have in mind particularly the Moorabbin council, in which there is only one Labour councillor. That municipality recently introduced compulsory voting because it realized that many people will not accept their civic responsibilities and vote voluntarily, because of either carelessness or apathy. Compulsory polls do not force a person to vote for any particular candidate, but at least he is forced to vote for someone.

In regard to polling on Saturdays, the Opposition considers that voting should be uniform in Federal, State and municipal spheres. It is hoped that this Bill, when enacted, will encourage and help those who are attempting to administer the affairs of municipalities efficiently.

**Sir HERBERT HYLAND** (Gippsland South).—My colleague, the honorable member for Swan Hill, is handling this measure on behalf of the Country party. Incidentally, the reference to Act No. 5102, in the marginal note to clause 4 is inaccurate. The reference should be to Act No. 5203. No doubt that error will be corrected. Clause 4 provides for the making of by-laws or regulations as to roads of limited access. A provision such as this is difficult to understand. No doubt the Country Roads Board knows what is meant, but as the honorable member for Williamstown has pointed out, municipal councillors, who carry out their duties in an honorary capacity, should be assisted in every way. Instead of their attempting to construe what is meant by "roads of limited access" I ask the Minister to request the Country Roads Board to state specifically what measures can be taken under this clause. These details could then be supplied to municipal councils for their information. A similarly obscure provision was rejected by this House some years ago.

At Morwell, which was part of my electorate before the last redistribution of seats, several roads from a new housing estate joined the Princes Highway, one of them being the West Jeeralang road from the Gas and Fuel Corporation's works. In that instance, the Housing Commission and the Country Roads Board built a road of limited access on to the highway. Instead of there being six or eight streets joining a highway, there should be one road at the right spot to allow egress and ingress. What is to happen to existing roads is not stated in this clause. If some roads are to be abolished, the Country Roads Board should assist councils by granting subsidies towards the construction of other roads of limited

access. Apart from the matters I have raised, my party approves of this measure.

**Mr. TODD** (Port Melbourne).—As previous speakers have said, there have been many amendments to the Local Government Act. Perhaps it is time that the Act itself was consolidated, because if one peruses a copy of the legislation in council chambers one finds so many amendments pasted in, that it is difficult to ascertain just what the law is. It must be anticipated that this process of amendment will continue because of the activities of metropolitan and country sections of the Municipal Association. Municipalities are continually discovering some points that need rectifying or some new factors that should be incorporated into the Act. The Minister is to be commended for bringing down appropriate measures to clear up contentious points which arise from time to time in municipal affairs. It is pleasing to note that an attempt is being made at last to tackle the problem of objectionable noises, which cause a great deal of trouble to municipalities. The ordinary citizen believes that it is the duty of the local council to remedy such nuisances. Factories that are developing new processes frequently inflict noises on residents, who go to the local town hall and complain. An examination of the relevant by-laws usually reveals that the council has no power to take steps to abate the nuisance. The amendment proposed in sub-clause (2) of clause 3 of the Bill will enable councils to rectify such matters when complaints are made. In addition, complaints are lodged regarding the noises made by animals.

The parking of caravans and cars is also a vexatious problem. The Port Melbourne City Council had trouble with a gentleman who parked his caravan in front of his home, used it as a residence and rented his house to a man who was working in an adjacent motor factory. After a considerable time the council was able to obtain a conviction against this man under one of its by-laws. Doubtless, the provisions of sub-clause (4) of clause 3 will overcome such difficulties in the future. Parking

generally is also a grave problem in Port Melbourne. This area was developed at a time when motor cars were unheard of. Homes were built on narrow allotments which do not permit the construction of a side driveway to a garage at the rear of the premises. Therefore, the owner of a motor vehicle must park it in the street in front of his home.

Proposed new section 295, as contained in clause 5 of the Bill, will permit a council to remit or excuse in full or in part rates levied on pensioners. That provision will be welcomed by most councils. At present a municipality has no power to remit such rates in full but may, in necessitous circumstances, allow them to accumulate and to be a charge against the property when the pensioner dies. Rates are a form of taxation and are therefore a contentious item. Whenever a council requires more money and it is suggested that the rates be increased, there is always an individual ready to organize a reform campaign against the councillors who are merely facing up to the problems of local government. The addition of one employee to the pay-roll of a council involves expenditure of at least £1,000 on wages, superannuation, long service leave and workers' compensation. Moreover, councils have more responsibilities now than they had a few years ago. Whether we like it or not, the time will come when councils will be forced to take the unpleasant step of either pleading with the Government for more money or increasing rates. Even in the electorate represented by the Chief Secretary there appears to be some dissatisfaction amongst ratepayers because one section of the municipality has been revalued whereas others have not. I consider that the raising of valuations is a method of deluding ratepayers in regard to rate increases. If a ratepayer objects because his rates have been increased, he is invariably told that the amount is higher not because of an advance in the rate but because of the revaluation of his property.

The honorable member for Williamstown referred to the additional expenditure involved by councils in controlling

*Mr. Todd,*

traffic, providing pedestrian crossings and signs, and so on. Only in recent years have municipalities been responsible for that work. It is now necessary for each council to engage a large staff of painters to paint signs on roadways, whereas some few years ago probably only one painter was employed. However, that is only one cause of increased expenditure.

Unfortunately, ratepayers will have to become accustomed to the idea that taxation in the local government sphere will have to be intensified, or the Government will have to provide additional money to counter-balance the extra expenditure being incurred.

It is pleasing to note that an attempt is being made to clear up the small balances left over from moneys borrowed for specific purposes. The Port Melbourne City Council has at least a dozen such items, and when this measure becomes law it will be enabled to clear them from its books.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—That is happening in all councils.

Mr. TODD.—That is so. Most councils nowadays are having difficulty in borrowing money. If a municipality wishes to raise a loan to carry out capital works, it invariably finds that it can obtain only 50 per cent. or less of the money it requires. Apparently the money market is tightening up. The same principle applies to people who have to make repayments to councils for work that has been done for them. The Port Melbourne City Council has discovered that companies, which a few years ago would pay their share of road construction costs immediately they were requested, are now asking to be permitted to make progress payments. That is not an encouraging sign because it is far better to have traders meeting their commitments as they become due. One or two other items in the Bill will be criticized by members of the Opposition. We are a little perturbed about the proposal to give council officers certain powers in relation to the searching of motor cars in or near municipal abattoirs. Further comments will be made on that proposal when the Bill is

in Committee. I repeat that the amendments to the Local Government Act will continue to be brought forward and it would be appreciated by all persons interested in municipal affairs if the legislation could be consolidated in the near future.

**Mr. TOWERS** (Collingwood).—I join with the honorable member for Port Melbourne in his plea for a consolidation of the Local Government Acts. Many of the amending measures brought forward from time to time deal with innocuous changes of the law and this one is no exception. At the present time municipal affairs are practically in a state of chaos owing to the lack of finance. The decision of the Camberwell council this week was a very good illustration of that fact. That municipality increased its rates last year in order to meet its financial commitments, but owing to protests from ratepayers it has decided to budget for a deficit of approximately £17,000 for the ensuing year in order that it might be able to decrease the rates. One of the main troubles of municipalities, particularly those comprising the inner industrial suburbs, is that no recent steps have been taken to establish a Greater Melbourne Council.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member for Collingwood is somewhat wide of the Bill in discussing that subject.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—I was leading up to a discussion of the financial position of municipalities. Under present conditions, there is much duplication in municipal affairs, which has led to uneconomic activities. For instance, most of the councils own heavy equipment that is used for only two or three hours a week. Recently, the Collingwood City Council paid £8,000 for a bulldozer.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—The Council is going to use it, though.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—For approximately two or three hours a week.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—There is plenty of scope for it in Johnston-street.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—The position with regard to Johnston-street is becoming very acute. To-day, I received a letter from the Minister of Transport which states—

A matter has arisen which may concern a number of your constituents and in relation to which I think you should be fully informed. Accordingly, I attach hereto a copy of a letter which I have written to the Town Clerk of Collingwood, together with a copy of the latest comments on the subject by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. If you have any suggestions which would obviate the necessity to divert the bus they would be appreciated.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr. Christie).—Would the honorable member for Collingwood explain the relevancy of this correspondence? Does it deal with the Bill?

**Mr. TOWERS**.—Yes, Sir, I am coming to that aspect. I am attempting to point out that most of the municipalities in the metropolitan area will not be able to carry on activities much longer unless they obtain further financial support from this Government or from the Commonwealth Government.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—How is that relevant to the Bill?

**Mr. TOWERS**.—It has relevance in this way. The Bill seeks to grant municipal councils certain additional powers, but those councils will not be able to carry on if they do not obtain financial assistance. The question of plural voting also could be discussed, as I understand the Bill contains a provision dealing with the marking of ballot-papers. For instance, it has been explained that if five candidates are seeking election and a ratepayer indicates his preferences by placing numbers alongside the names of four of those candidates, that will be sufficient to constitute a valid vote. I am sure that this proposal is of great importance.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—That has nothing to do with plural voting.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—No, but it is concerned with ballot-papers and voting, and I consider I am entitled to discuss plural voting. If the Speaker rules against me, this is the end of it. If the Chief Secretary should be elevated to the exalted

position of Speaker, I shall obey his instructions, but not before. I was attempting to point out that plural voting—

**Mr. RYLAH** (Chief Secretary).—On a point of order, I have examined the Bill very closely, and I cannot find any reference in it to plural voting. I suggest that the honorable member is talking about something that is not contained in the measure.

**The SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Will the honorable member for Collingwood indicate to me the clause in the Bill which deals with plural voting?

**Mr. TOWERS** (Collingwood).—In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Public Works, stated, *inter alia*—

If there are, say, five candidates and the ballot-paper is marked 1, 2, 3, and 4, but not 5, that would be deemed to be a valid ballot-paper.

**The SPEAKER**.—I think the honorable member will agree with me that that clearly has nothing to do with plural voting.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—Very well, Mr. Speaker. Sub-clause (5) of clause 3 seeks to grant powers to municipal officers to search motor cars in or near municipal abattoirs. It would appear that the Minister of Public Works on his way home one night noticed men handing bags over the fence of a municipal abattoir, and he came to the conclusion that pilfering was taking place. We consider the proposal of the Government is obnoxious and will oppose it.

The Bill also seeks to make changes in the provisions covering the holding of polls in connexion with proposals for the adoption of rating based on net annual value or unimproved value. It is provided that if 10 per cent. of the ratepayers sign a petition of demand and lodge a deposit of £20, the municipality concerned must arrange for a poll to be taken. I consider that 10 per cent. of the ratepayers is not a sufficiently large proportion. In my opinion, all the ratepayers should have the opportunity to determine whether a poll shall be held on the question whether rating shall be on unimproved capital or net annual values. In Collingwood, for example,

the cost of making a survey of every assessment amounted to £2,000. Ten per cent. of the ratepayers in that municipality demanded a poll and lodged a deposit, but the voting was five to one against the proposal to introduce rating in accordance with unimproved land values. Prior to the poll, it was necessary for the council to issue provisional assessments so that the ratepayers would know the difference between the rate calculated on net annual values and the rate as it would be if based on unimproved land values. In my opinion, the legislation should be altered to provide that a bigger percentage of the ratepayers must signify their desire for a poll to be taken.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—Is that not a bit undemocratic?

**Mr. TOWERS**.—I do not know whether it is or not. At present, 10 per cent. of the ratepayers in any municipality, on lodging a deposit of £20, can put the municipality to the expense of £2,000 or £3,000. If the Chief Secretary considers that procedure is democratic, I have yet to learn the meaning of democracy.

**Mr. RYLAH**.—Members on the Government side of the House believe that people should have an opportunity to express their views.

**Mr. TOWERS**.—I consider that more than one-tenth of the ratepayers should be required to express their views before a poll of all of them is taken. Sub-clause (2) of clause 3 provides for an amendment of the principal Act to enable municipal councils to take action to prevent objectionable noises. Such a provision is long overdue. Recently, this Parliament passed the Clean Air Bill, which deals with smoke, dust, and similar conditions, and I trust that it will come into force in the near future. I hope also that effect will be given to that part of this Bill relating to unnecessary noise. Uniform lighting should be installed in the various suburbs, and this matter could well be the subject of a further amendment to the legislation.

The Local Government Act is of tremendous importance, and I consider a full-time Minister should therefore be appointed to attend to local government

affairs. A number of anomalies in the legislation badly need rectification, but the House should not be asked to make amendments in a patchwork manner. It would take several lawyers to interpret some of the amendments made in the last few years.

**Mr. LOVEGROVE** (Carlton).—I commend the Government upon including in this Bill an amendment to the existing legislation to empower councils to take action with the view of preventing objectionable noises at unnecessary times. Frequent complaints are made regarding factories of a particular description, the owners of which claim certain rights because they happened to be established before the districts were zoned into various categories. Factories have no right to be in certain localities, according to laws passed by this Parliament, because they constitute a nuisance generally. In the last five or ten years particularly, some of them have given rise to a great deal of distress and suffering in many parts of the inner suburbs.

In my own electorate, a minority of owners of a certain type of factory have displayed complete indifference to the feelings and the way of life of residents living nearby. Not far from my own home, a monumental mason purchased a saw for cutting granite, and, notwithstanding the laws contained in various Acts of Parliament, it is used without proper cover on Saturdays and Sundays, and after the ordinary working hours on week-days. In addition, he disposes of his industrial effluent into a public lane. When challenged on the matter, or appealed to, he snaps his fingers at the residents, because he knows that nothing can be done to prevent him from continuing his present practices.

In my view, the Bill is a most valuable one. Certain complaints are made arising from industrial conditions over which the Department of Labour and Industry seems to have inadequate control, possibly because of lack of staff. Two pensioners—a man and his wife—live in a certain house in my constituency, the husband being 80 years of age and an invalid. In each house on either side of his home, machines are operated

day and night. Apparently certain variations of the clothing trades award and other awards made recently by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission create unsatisfactory conditions in some suburbs. The system under which work is distributed to different parts of the city is creating a public nuisance and a real hardship to people who have the misfortune to live next door to houses which have been converted into home factories.

The attention of the council has been directed to the noise caused by the machines, but it has pointed out that there is a doubt whether it has power to deal with the situation. I congratulate the Minister of Public Works and commend the Government for the action that is now being taken. If councils do not avail themselves of this power, I hope the Government will consider introducing further legislation to put a stop to the committing of such nuisances. In some cases councils are democratically elected, but in others they are not. In some municipalities the persons who run the factories and create the nuisances also control the council because of absentee and plural voting and other systems of franchise. Of course, such persons do not live in the district. If they suffered from such nuisances they would ask Parliament for protection. I hope the Melbourne City Council will not hesitate to stop some of the industrial abuses that are occurring in this city.

Clause 21 amends the regulation-making power concerning the use of scaffolding. In his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned that legal doubts had arisen in this connexion. I point out that the regulations have never been satisfactorily administered by municipal councils. Many of them do not possess the financial resources to employ the requisite skilled personnel; others are so indifferent that they do not bother to do so. Some councils possessing large financial resources do not take proper safety precautions in the public interest, let alone of the workers concerned. I refer particularly

to the Melbourne City Council. Before I left my trade, which was internal work of the type that decorates this Chamber, I worked on most of the large jobs done in Melbourne, including theatres. There is a lack of safety precautions for the protection of persons passing beneath slings, swings, external scaffolding and other contrivances which are extended from the walls of buildings for painting, plastering, cement rendering, and so on. In Melbourne it is common to see a swing suspended 100 feet above the ground, with no protection provided to passers against falling objects. I have raised this matter with the Melbourne City Council at different times, but have never received a satisfactory reply. I realize that the average member of the public ignores such dangers, but anyone who has worked in one of the trades concerned will not walk under scaffolding unless proper precautions have been taken.

The building trades unions in this State and the Trades Hall Council have held the view for many years that the scaffolding regulations should be amended to provide for greater safety. They have advocated the transfer of their administration from municipal councils to the Department of Labour and Industry. Responsible trade union officials possessing the necessary technical efficiency should be appointed honorary inspectors of scaffolding to assist the inspectors of the Department. The unions hold the view also that more stringent penalties should be imposed on contractors or other persons found guilty of repeated breaches of the regulations. Of course, it can be argued, with justification, that the conduct of men on certain jobs contributes to the risk. During the last few months, honorable members have witnessed the erection of two buildings close to this institution. A few weeks ago a man fell from the building being constructed for Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand Limited, and was killed. It was the second fatality on that job. Of course, an investigation is held following such accidents, and in this

case the employer was eager to ensure that adequate safety precautions were provided. A safety committee has been appointed, with employees acting in an advisory capacity. The employer concerned has taken additional precautions, but in such jobs ladders are invariably improperly erected and the necessary safeguards are not provided once the building gets above about eight stories. The building I have mentioned will be higher than any ever erected in this State. Provision should be made for a proper hold for the men to grip on scaffolding. In some cases, the double lashing of ladders provides a large bump that men have to climb over. Attention should also be given to the planking used by riggers, and all measures taken should be adequately inspected. They should not be left to the whim of individual employers or the negligence of individual employees.

The amount of steel that can be taken up by the riggers on the Imperial Chemical Industries building depends almost entirely on the clemency of the weather, and in particular the wind that comes over the river. Anyone who has had experience of going up in the box or on the hook knows that, as soon as one gets above the Collins-street building level, the wind becomes strong and swings the box or hook out in a circle whose diameter is generally between 15 and 20 feet. Throughout the erection of a building, irrespective of the desires of contractors or building workers, safety precautions should be strictly enforced. It is common to see men "going up on the hook" on the Imperial Chemical Industries building, under conditions which normally would be safe but which, in Melbourne's weather conditions, could be decidedly unsafe. As honorable members know, the wind rate here is unpredictable and it would be quite possible on a perfectly calm day for a man, dressed in an open-neck, leather jacket to be caught in a sudden gust of wind, which would inflate his clothing giving it a balloon-like effect, causing him to be thrown to the ground. In other parts of the world, not only

do the authorities insist on the wearing of safety equipment such as helmets, but riggers engaged on the erection of steel-work must also wear safety belts. A complete review of the scaffolding regulations is required, and both employers and employees should be compelled to adopt certain safety precautions whenever possible. The psychology of these jobs is well known wherever men congregate. Whenever a man falls from a height, his workmates and all associated with the project "get the jitters." This is applicable not only to ordinary building projects, but also to theatres and other types of building construction work. Within 24 hours of an accident of this type, a psychology of unrest, fear and uncertainty prevails and, in turn, this frequently causes further accidents which normally would not occur.

Mr. FENNESSY.—A similar situation exists in the mining industry.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so; it applies to all industries where there are industrial hazards. This Government has been responsible for legislation which, although I did not agree with it, had beneficial effects upon what has rather loosely been described as the Golden Mile in Melbourne. The Minister of Public Works, who is more conversant with this subject than any other honorable member, knows that the average building height in Melbourne is only about 40 feet. The extent of construction is governed not only by water pressure, fire ratings, and the greatly exaggerated insistences of the fire underwriters, which have caused an unnecessary financial burden on the building industry of the State, but it is dependent also on the size of allotments and the extent to which the space-height ratio and the various light-angles can be equated by the architects, who determine the maximum height of a building. Although the average building height is deplorably low, there are only a few places within the Golden Mile where buildings could be constructed to the height of the new

Imperial Chemical Industries building, or the new Commonwealth block now under construction in Latrobe-street. However, when the effect of the Landlord and Tenant Act is fully felt on the investment market, undoubtedly other tall buildings will be erected in the city. After making due allowance for the traffic problems that a phenomenon of that description will create for any Government or council, it is inevitable, on an economic basis alone, having regard to land values to-day, that further buildings of this type will be constructed.

The Bill contains no proposals of the description that I have visualized, but I suggest that there is some responsibility upon the Minister of Public Works to give further consideration to the future of the building industry in Victoria, and more particularly in Melbourne. Consideration should be given to the desirability of introducing into the law concerning safety on buildings elements of compulsion that will reduce to a minimum accidents of the type that occurred recently on the Imperial Chemical Industries building, and which will be repeated on almost every other big building project in Melbourne unless the existing situation is altered. For those reasons, I hope the Government will give consideration at some future time to a complete excision from the Local Government Act of the scaffolding regulations and of the power for their supervision, as well as the inclusion of those regulations, with adequate provisions for supervision by officers of the Department of Labour and Industry, in the Labour and Industry Act.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed, *pro forma*.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Sir THOMAS MALTBY (Minister of Public Works).—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 10.58 p.m.*

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, November 21, 1957

The **SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald)** took the chair at 11.8 a.m., and read the prayer.

## FRASER NATIONAL PARK BILL.

**Mr. FRASER** (Honorary Minister) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to transfer certain land at Eildon from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to the Crown and to reserve that land and certain lands of the Crown as a site for a national park, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

GEELONG WATERWORKS AND  
SEWERAGE (BELLARINE  
OFFICERS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from the previous day) on the motion of Mr. Mibus (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. C. D. MACDONALD** (Geelong West).—The purpose of this small measure is to allow the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust to retain the services of four employees of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, who have worked for the Trust since it took over the headwaters of the Bellarine water supply system. Since the Trust desires to retain the services of these men, it is obvious that they have rendered valuable service in the past, and it is to their credit that the Trust wishes to ensure that they will retain all the benefits to which they were entitled in the Public Service. By the Bill, the grades or classifications and emoluments of these officers will be equal to those held by them in the Public Service immediately before their transfer.

The Opposition believes that the provisions of the Bill will be of benefit to both the Trust and the men concerned. The Trust is a good employer and its employees, with few charges, have

remained with it for many years. Doubtless, that has influenced these four men in their desire to remain in the services of the Trust. The Opposition has no objection to the Bill, which it commends to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed.

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of this Bill.

The House went into Committee to consider the message.

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That it is expedient that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of a Bill "to make provision with respect to the transfer of certain persons from the Public Service to the employment of the Geelong Water Works and Sewerage Trust."

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I should like the Minister of Water Supply to inform me in what way it is expected that money will have to be transferred from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of this Bill. Will the money be appropriated for superannuation payments, in lieu of long service leave, or in regard to the salaries of the officers concerned?

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—The appropriation will be necessary for the purposes of superannuation.

The motion was agreed to, and the resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

The Bill was committed and passed through its remaining stages.

POLICE OFFENCES (UNLAWFUL  
USE OF BOATS) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 20) on the motion of Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL** (Briswick West).—This is a simple Bill, which seeks to amend section 207 of the

Police Offences Act 1957. That provision deals with the offence of illegally taking or using a vehicle and prescribes a penalty. In his second-reading speech, the Chief Secretary stated, *inter alia*—

The unauthorized use of boats has become very common. More boats are in use, not only in such places as Port Phillip Bay but also at inland watering places like Eildon, and with increased opportunities the practice of using other people's boats without their consent is likely to develop unless provision is made for its control.

The subject-matter of the Bill was considered by the Statute Law Revision Committee, and paragraph 4 of its report states, *inter alia*—

The Committee considers it anomalous that special provision should be made by statute whereby the offences of illegally using motor cars, vehicles, and cattle have been created, but that no provision has been made for the case where a person uses a boat without the owner's consent.

It will be noted that although the committee refers only to "a boat," in the Bill the expression "any boat, ship or other vessel," is used. I have no doubt that there could be a technical issue whether a boat, a ship or a vessel was involved, and that the Bill has been so drafted to safeguard the position. I have no objection to that course.

This proposed amendment will bring the illegal use or taking of boats into line with similar action in relation to motor cars. When the Motor Car Act was amended recently, the offence of illegally using or taking a motor car was created a misdemeanour, and the penalties provided were a fine of not more than £100 for the first offence, imprisonment for a term of not more than twelve months, or both. For subsequent offences, the penalty provided was imprisonment for a term of not more than five years. A spirited debate ensued as to whether the Government had not acted a little strongly so far as the provision of penalties was concerned. For the purposes of comparison, I point out that the offence created under this Bill will involve a penalty for a first offence of a fine of not more than £20 or imprisonment for a term of not more than one year.

The Chief Secretary stated that the unauthorized use of boats has become common, and although I have no know-

ledge of the practice I do know that boats are just as valuable as motor cars. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that people imprudently leave boats, ships and vessels on lakes and other waterways without caretakers in charge, but I suppose owners should have their rights protected, even if they do adopt that practice. Juveniles, often without any knowledge or thought that they are committing a criminal offence, remove boats from their moorings; frequently children do so as a childish prank. I hope that those administering the law will not act harshly and imprison children for that type of action. The Opposition considers this measure will bring the legislation into line with that covering motor cars, and accordingly supports the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

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

#### WATER (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 6) on the motion of Mr. Mibus (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands).—This Bill contains thirteen diverse amendments to the Water Acts. The Opposition agrees, in the main, with the amendments, which are designed to bring about more efficient administration of the legislation. In his second-reading speech, the Minister of Water Supply described the amendment contained in clause 10 as the most important one in the Bill. That clause will amend the compensation therefor based on the market that in future when acquiring land for irrigation channels the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will pay compensation principles of the legislation so value of the property. The present provision was included in the original Act of 1925, when conditions were entirely different from those now obtaining. At that time no doubt it was a reasonable proposition that those who were to receive the benefit of irrigation in areas which consisted mainly of large holdings should receive compensation for land acquired for channels, based on municipal or rating valuations.

Having regard to the intense development that has ensued in irrigation areas and the high value of land, it is only reasonable that in future compensation should be payable on the market value of the land. The Minister mentioned that some hundreds of miles of channels would have to be provided following completion of the Eildon and Cairn Curran reservoirs, and that the Commission would still be obliged to construct bridges. The Bill provides for the maintenance of such bridges by the Commission.

Clause 2 deals with the subdivision of land having riparian rights. Of course, to-day very few properties possess such rights, which apply to land alienated from the Crown before 1881. The purpose of the amendment in clause 2 is to ensure that if a property in respect of which there is an entitlement to irrigate 3 acres of land is subdivided into a number of lots, each lot will not have a right to irrigate 3 acres. The proposal is reasonable. The amendment to section 46 of the principal Act contained in clause 3 is an administrative one which authorizes the use of loose-leaf or card systems for the Commission's accounting records. By the amendment in clause 4 to sub-section (2) of section 130 of the principal Act the maximum allowances payable to chairmen of waterworks trusts will be increased from £25 to £75. That proposal, too, is a reasonable one. There may be some discussion at the Committee stage on clause 5, which relates to membership of the Ballarat Water Commissioners. It is proposed to increase the number of commissioners from eight to nine and to provide for one representative to be elected jointly by the Sebastopol Borough Council and the Bungaree, Buninyong and Grenville Shire Councils, and for one representative to be elected by the Ballarat Shire Council. As at present three other members are to be appointed by the Governor in Council, one of whom will be chairman, and four are to represent the council of the City of Ballarat. The additional commissioner is to be elected by the Ballarat Shire Council. Before agreeing that the proposal is satisfactory I should like to hear the honorable members for

Mr. Stoneham.

Ballarat North and Ballarat South express their views. I do not know whether it is fair to give the Ballarat shire a representative of its own while the other shires are to have a joint representative. It might be more satisfactory to create a further position. However, that matter can be dealt with in Committee.

The amendment to section 188 of the principal Act in clause 6 will enable long term diversion licences to be issued in respect of storages and artificial channels. At present such licences are issued merely in respect of water in natural sources, namely, rivers, streams, lakes, swamps and so on. The amendment will confer more security on those concerned. The amendment in clause 7 provides for the maximum penalty for infringements of the Act to be increased from £5 to £50. Apparently the Government believes that under its mismanagement inflation will continue. Certainly, it is unusual to increase a penalty to ten times the existing amount. I assume that the amount of £5 was fixed in 1905—half a century ago—and in view of the importance attached to-day to certain infringements of the Act, Opposition members concede that a penalty of £50 is reasonable. Clause 8 will have the effect of replacing section 230 of the principal Act with a provision relating to the publication in the *Government Gazette* and local newspapers of notices with respect to requirements for protecting water supplies from contamination. In the past, the Commission has experienced difficulty in observing the requirements of the Act and, in the future, a generally descriptive notice shall be deemed to be sufficient. The amendment provides that a general or popular description of the water supply may be given instead of the very detailed one called for under the principal Act. It will be to the advantage of those administering the legislation if this amendment is made, and it will also be fair to the community in general.

Clause 9 provides for an increase in the rates in urban districts pending the actual supply of water. It merely brings the urban districts that are under the control of the Commission into line with waterworks districts throughout the

State. In 1951, a corresponding amendment was made in regard to the various waterworks trusts and it is only proper that the urban districts of the Commission should be treated likewise. As previously stated, clause 10 contains the most important provision in the Bill. It provides, *inter alia*, for the repeal of portion of section 256 of the principal Act, and thus the payment of compensation for land acquired for channels will in the future be based on market valuation instead of on municipal valuation.

The amendment contained in clause 11 will enable the Commission to make by-laws to provide for the protection of works against nuisance, such as the dumping of rubbish on a channel reserve. By clause 12, the owner of a property may be charged the actual cost of restoring a water service that has been disconnected for non-payment of rates, whereas under the present law the very modest sum of 10s. is imposed for reconnexion. This amendment merely brings the relevant provision up to date. Clauses 13 and 14 might be termed administrative provisions. With the exception of the proposal relating to the membership of the Ballarat Water Commissioners, on which I hope there will be some discussion and clarification, Opposition members support the Bill.

**Mr. BROSE (Rodney).**—I should like to congratulate the Government upon introducing this Bill, which was drafted—largely at my instigation—for the specific purpose of removing certain difficulties confronting irrigators in the Goulburn Valley who were applying new water to land already under irrigation. Examination of the Bill reveals that there is a distinct difference between water channels that are being made in the process of establishing an irrigation district, and channels which to-day must be put through highly developed irrigation land to facilitate further developments in those districts. In the Rodney electorate, where there are many irrigators, a very big channel—it is referred to as No. 6 channel—was cut through the various farms. Mr. East agrees that it would be unjust to compensate the owners of the land thus acquired on the basis of municipal

valuations. As honorable members appreciate, valuations differ as between municipalities and, because of the injustices being suffered by certain irrigators, the Commission, the Minister, and the Government, readily agreed to an alteration of section 256 of the Water Act 1928 so that in the future compensation will be paid on the basis of fair market values. This procedure will be applicable only to channels that must be provided for the purpose of supplying water to landholders farther on. With the completion of the Eildon project, additional water will be made available for irrigation purposes, and it is essential that the legislation be amended; otherwise, many more landholders will suffer injustices.

The honorable member for Midlands fully explained the other provisions in the Bill which deal with several small items. Relatively few holdings in Victoria to-day possess riparian rights although under legislation enacted in 1891 certain landholders whose properties are situated adjacent to water-courses or lakes are entitled to the use of such water for the irrigation of gardens not exceeding 3 acres in area. Some of these holdings have been subdivided into a number of small allotments and, to make it clear that each landholder shall not be entitled to irrigate 3 acres, the amendment has been included in the Bill.

As a former Minister of Water Supply, I agree with the proposal to increase the number of the Ballarat Water Commissioners. The Ballarat district has developed considerably and it is only reasonable that representation on the authority should be increased to cover districts now under the control of the commissioners. The honorable member for Midlands explained fully the provision in the Bill which empowers the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to issue long-term licences authorizing landholders to pump water from channels and reservoirs. Perhaps honorable members do not appreciate that there is a difference between the right to pump on a yearly basis and the right granted under a long-term licence of fifteen years' duration. The Commission considers that

a long-term licence carries almost all privileges, thereby affording security to a person who holds such a licence. However, a person who holds only the right to pump on a channel or reservoir may exercise that right for only one year. It is proposed that where the system of channels and drains affects landholders, they shall be given the privilege of taking out licences permitting them to obtain water from any stream or watercourse. The other small amendments to the principal Act that are contained in the Bill are self-explanatory, and I do not propose to discuss them. I support the Bill.

**Mr. WHITE** (Ballarat North).—This Bill of 14 clauses is important to many people in the State and it includes a proposal that is vital to the honorable member for Ballarat South and myself. I refer to the suggested reconstitution of the Ballarat Water Commissioners. At present, there are eight commissioners, of whom four are elected by the Ballarat City Council, three are appointed by the Governor in Council, and one is appointed at a general meeting of the five municipalities surrounding Ballarat, the Borough of Sebastopol, and the Shire of Ballarat, Bun-garee, Buninyong, and Grenville. When the Act was amended seven or eight years ago, those outer districts were even then expanding greatly; but to-day one has to see the tremendous development that has occurred in order to believe it.

I have had drafted an amendment, which will be submitted by the Minister, to clause 5, which deals with the Ballarat Water Commissioners. When the Minister made provision in the clause for one direct representative of the Shire of Ballarat, he must have had a reason for doing so. The proposed amendment will widen the representation still further to take in the other municipalities adjacent to the City of Ballarat and to the Shire of Ballarat. As the clause stands, the Commissioners will consist of nine persons—four representing the Ballarat City Council, three appointed by the Governor in Council, one representing three of the

municipalities, and one on behalf of two of the municipalities adjacent to the City of Ballarat.

That city cannot be expected to expand much further, and great development in the area is now taking place in the municipalities I have named. The proposed additional representation will make available considerable local knowledge and provide material help to the water commissioners, but the only way in which the services can be fully developed is by the provision of Government money for expenditure in the outer areas named. In the Shire of Ballarat there are now about 500 Housing Commission homes, all of which have been constructed since the amendment of the Act which gave the outer municipalities representation among the water commissioners. There is also a primary school attended by more than 300 children, but there is no chance of an extension of sewerage into that area unless finance can be provided.

I know that the Minister of Water Supply is making every effort to provide further amenities so necessary in the expanding areas. Great industries are being or have already been established there, including those conducted by Villiers Australia Proprietary Limited and the Timken Roller Bearing Company. Although this Bill is very important and will play a great part in giving residents of the area adjoining the City of Ballarat a voice on the water authority, the only way by which something really tangible can be brought about will be by the provision of finance. With the honorable member for Ballarat South, I intend to keep the Minister to his word. I commend the Bill and hope that the efforts of my colleague and myself will result in the vastly expanding areas around the City of Ballarat having a voice on the Ballarat Water Commissioners.

**Mr. SCOTT** (Ballarat South).—It is most refreshing for me to be able to debate this Bill, which has been promised for some time. Its introduction was expected about eighteen months ago, but owing to the illness of the Minister of Water Supply it was not then brought down. I thank the

Minister for having introduced the measure, which has been well traversed by the honorable members for Midlands, Rodney, and Ballarat North. My colleague and I are particularly interested, of course, in the clause relating to the additional representation, proposed for Ballarat's outer municipalities, on the Ballarat Water Commissioners. Clause 5 has been included because of our direct representations made to the Minister. An amendment has been foreshadowed—and it is one which the Minister himself intends to submit—to provide representation for the Shires of Ballarat, Bungaree, Buninyong, and Grenville, and the Borough of Sebastopol.

As the honorable member for Ballarat North has said, there is a limit to the further expansion that can take place in the City of Ballarat. However, as a result of a reclamation scheme that has been undertaken, hundreds of sites right in the city will become available for residential purposes. It is through the good graces of the Premier, the Minister of Water Supply, the Minister of Lands and the Ballarat City Council that this extension will come about. The Ballarat Water Commissioners will then have to play their part in providing water, while the sewerage authority will be required to make installations. Ballarat's outer municipalities have advanced in very recent years as greatly as any other part of Victoria.

The time will come when the whole matter of further expansion and provision of amenities must be reviewed again. Then we shall have to determine whether there is justification for extra representation on the Ballarat Water Commissioners. That body is possibly one of the most active of its kind in the State. It supplies water to the people of Ballarat and of certain other districts at rates that are probably the lowest in Victoria. That is due to good management. Its immediate past chairman was our former colleague, the late Hon. H. C. Ludbrook, M.L.C. Our aim is to supply the people of Ballarat with the best possible water supply at the cheapest rate.

I join my colleague, the honorable member for Ballarat North, in his representations that more money be made available to the Ballarat Water Commissioners. The honorable member and I work in close harmony to secure the requirements of the district. The provision of sewerage facilities in Ballarat North is part of the commissioners' plan, but at present loan moneys for this purpose cannot be obtained. The Ballarat Sewerage Authority could safely be allowed to borrow the money needed to carry out the necessary work. By this time next year I trust that the treatment works at Wendouree, for which plans are already drawn, will be in operation and that the whole of Sebastopol also will be sewered. Plans have also been prepared in connexion with a water supply for Buninyong, and I trust that the Minister will shortly be able to inform us that sufficient funds are available to enable the Ballarat Water Commissioners to install a pipe-line to that district.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clauses 1 to 4 were agreed to.

Clause 5—

(1) Section one hundred and sixty-nine of the principal Act as amended by any Act is hereby amended as follows:—

(a) In sub-section (1) for the word "eight" there shall be substituted the word "nine";

(b) In sub-section (2)—

(i) in paragraph (b) the word "Ballarat" shall be repealed;

(ii) after paragraph (b) there shall be inserted the following paragraph—

"(c) The council of the shire of Ballarat shall from time to time elect one of such commissioners who shall be so elected by a majority of the whole of the members of such council."

(iii) for the expression "(c) The" there shall be substituted the expression "(d) The";

(iv) for the expression "(d) The" there shall be substituted the expression "(e) The".

(c) In sub-section (3)—

- (i) in paragraph (a) after the word "Ballarat" there shall be inserted the words "or the council of the Shire of Ballarat";
- (ii) in paragraph (b) the word "Ballarat" shall be repealed.

(2) The Ballarat Water Commissioners shall be deemed to be the same body before and after the change of constitution effected by virtue of the amendments made by this section and no action matter or thing whatsoever shall be affected or abated thereby.

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That paragraphs (b) and (c) of sub-clause (1) be omitted with the view of inserting the following paragraph:—

"( ) For sub-sections (2) and (3) there shall be substituted the following sub-sections:—

(2) (a) The Council of the City of Ballarat shall from time to time elect four of such commissioners who shall be so elected by a majority of the whole of the members of such council.

(b) The councils of the Borough of Sebastopol and of the Shires of Buninyong and Grenville shall from time to time elect one of such commissioners who shall be so elected by a majority of votes of a representative from each of such councils.

(c) The councils of the shires of Ballarat and Bungaree shall from time to time elect one of such commissioners who shall be so elected by a representative from each of such councils.

(d) The Governor in Council shall appoint three of such commissioners one of whom he shall appoint to be the chairman.

(e) The Governor in Council may remove from office any of the commissioners whether elected or appointed.

(3) (a) Whenever the council of the city of Ballarat has elected any such commissioner, a return of such election sealed with the seal of the municipality shall be sent by post to the commissioners.

(b) Whenever the council of the borough of Sebastopol and the shires of Buninyong and Grenville have together elected such a commissioner, a return of such election sealed with the seal of the borough of Sebastopol shall be sent by post to the commissioners.

(c) Whenever the councils of the shires of Ballarat and Bungaree have together elected such a commissioner a return of such election sealed with the seal of the shire of Ballarat shall be sent by post to the commissioners.

(d) Any such return shall be evidence admissible on the production thereof of the election of the person therein named as a commissioner."

It has been the custom for one of the Ballarat Water Commissioners to be elected from each of the perimeter municipalities in rotation. As the Bill is drafted, each municipality would have that privilege once in six years. By bracketing the Shires of Ballarat and Bungaree, as proposed in this amendment, that period will be reduced to four years. The amendment can be justified also on the basis of population, and, as these two shires adjoin, it is reasonable that they be linked for representation purposes.

**Mr. STONEHAM** (Midlands).—The bracketing of the Shires of Ballarat and Bungaree will be an improvement on the present system. Acceptance of the amendment will result in greater justice to the Borough of Sebastopol and the Shires of Buninyong and Grenville, so the Opposition approves of it.

**Mr. WHITE** (Ballarat North).—As has been stated, the Shires of Ballarat and Bungaree are adjacent, as are the Shires of Buninyong and Grenville and the Borough of Sebastopol. In my opinion, the length of term for which commissioners are appointed is too short.

**Mr. MIBUS**.—Elected members serve for two years, and appointed members for three years.

**Mr. WHITE**.—That is so.

**The ACTING CHAIRMAN** (**Mr. Cochrane**).—It would be more appropriate if the honorable member were to discuss the term served by the commissioners when the other proposed amendment, copies of which have been circulated, is being debated.

**Mr. WHITE**.—I am dealing with the four commissioners elected by the Ballarat City Council and the commissioner who, it is proposed, shall be appointed by the Shires of Ballarat and Bungaree. The second amendment relates to the commissioner who has already been appointed and who will represent the Borough of Sebastopol and the Shires of Buninyong and Grenville. The term of office of the commissioners should be the subject of a complete investigation. A new councillor is elected every two years and it is some time before he becomes conversant with

the operations of the commissioners. I urge the Minister of Water Supply, when the constitution of this authority is reviewed—as no doubt it will have to be because of expansion in the Ballarat area—to consider an extension of the period of appointment of the commissioners.

**Mr. SCOTT** (Ballarat South).—I agree with the remarks of the honorable member for Ballarat North. I am a council representative on the Ballarat Water Commissioners and therefore I was hesitant to refer to this matter first. I thought if I did so I would be accused of looking after my own interests. I assure the Committee that that is not the case. I contend that a term of appointment of two years is not sufficient. An analogy can be drawn between the appointment of a water commissioner and the election of a member to Parliament. It takes a new member of Parliament at least two years to obtain a slight knowledge of the procedure of this House, and even after that time many things happen with which he is not fully conversant. After two years, one has merely started one's apprenticeship. I trust that at some time in the future the matter referred to by the honorable member for Ballarat North will be seriously considered by the Government.

Apparently Opposition and Country party members propose to support the amendment. In the City of Ballarat 45,000 people will be affected by it, in the Ballarat Shire 4,840, in the Bungaree Shire 450, in the Sebastopol Borough 390, in the Buninyong Shire 690 people and in the Grenville Shire 60 people. That means that a councillor from the City of Ballarat will represent 10,000 people. So, it cannot be alleged that the Minister and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission are unjustly treating the outer municipalities, because they will have a slightly better representation than the City of Ballarat. As development takes place, it will be necessary to provide for equal representation. I support the amendment.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I congratulate the honorable member for Ballarat South for his strict impartiality and apparent neutral-

ity in regard to this matter. I think he was wise not to press the point until it had been raised by another member. The figures quoted by the honorable member indicate that the City of Ballarat must expect for some time to have the majority of representatives among the commissioners and demonstrate that it is more apparent than ever that it is a mistake to take into consideration the actual number of people represented. I presume that the stage has been reached in the area within the jurisdiction of the authority when the different areas are partly represented only.

Even though a man appointed to the commissioners may have the ability to understand the workings of this organization, and to comprehend all its features, I consider that it is wrong to appoint him for only two years. The term is too short. Of course, the term of members of Parliament in some countries is far too short. I am sure that the Minister of Water Supply will agree that when he was first appointed a Minister of the Crown he went through a settling-in period of approximately two years; after that little time is left in which to get on with the job.

I consider that the period of appointment of members to all types of bodies should be investigated. If a municipality can find men willing to serve on these instrumentalities, there is no reason for giving the balance of power to persons appointed by the Governor in Council. The amendment proposes that nine instead of eight commissioners be appointed to the Ballarat Water Commissioners, six of whom shall be nominated by the various municipalities and three appointed by the Governor in Council. I do not know whether the commissioners retire by rotation.

**Mr. WHITE**.—They do.

**Mr. SHEPHERD**.—Such a system ensures that a nucleus of experienced men is retained, and that is important. In many organizations there is a tendency for too many members to retire at one time, and steps should be taken to overcome that situation. Another point is that a councillor could be defeated at a council election half way

through his term on the Ballarat Water Commissioners and another councillor appointed in his stead.

**Mr. SCOTT.**—A defeated councillor is allowed to complete his term of appointment as a commissioner.

**Mr. SHEPHERD.**—That may be an anomaly, because he is appointed as a representative of the people. If he is defeated, then he is not an elected representative. The Opposition does not intend to oppose this apparent desire to allow municipalities, smaller in numbers but not in area, to have the same representation as that given to larger municipalities. I was a member of the State Development Committee when it conducted an inquiry into the condition of the water supply at Geelong. It was always pleasing to me to know that the recommendations of that committee were carried out by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission with the support of whichever Government happened to be in office at the time. One of the main complaints in regard to the Geelong water supply was that the developing shires, such as Corio, were worried about not having sufficient representatives on the Geelong Waterworks and Sewerage Trust.

Opposition members support the amendment. If it will be of some advantage to the representatives of the municipalities involved, I think we should do so. One council has four representatives out of nine on the commissioners, and that representation might be consistent with valuations, population, and even area involved. I consider that we should do what the Leader of the Country party has often urged in this House, namely, reconstitute the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works. Many municipalities in the metropolitan area have shared representation on the Board at one time, and at present some are without representation. I remember a Bill slipping through Parliament in the dim past, in a somewhat smart fashion, and overnight the City of Fitzroy obtained two representatives instead of one on the Board of Works. Other municipalities with bigger populations and higher valuations could never understand why that was done.

In my opinion, it is ridiculous for a councillor to be one of the Ballarat Water Commissioners for only two years. If elected representatives are enthusiastic and look upon their representation as a job rather than a sinecure, they should be given the opportunity to obtain experience, whilst if they are experienced they should serve for sufficient time for their experience to be of value to the authority. The Opposition sees no objection to the amendment.

The amendment was agreed to.

**Mr. MIBUS** (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That after sub-clause (1) of clause 5 the following sub-clauses be inserted:—

( ) The commissioner elected by the Borough of Sebastopol and the Shires of Ballarat Bungaree Buninyong and Grenville and in office immediately prior to the coming into operation of this Act shall be deemed to have been elected by the Borough of Sebastopol and the Shires of Buninyong and Grenville and such commissioner shall continue in office as a commissioner for the remainder of the term for which he was so elected.

( ) The additional office of commissioner of the Ballarat Water Commissioners created by this Act shall be filled by the election of a commissioner by the Shires of Ballarat and Bungaree pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section one hundred and sixty nine of the principal Act as amended by this Act.

I believe this amendment is self-explanatory. Two months ago a councillor from the Borough of Sebastopol was elected as a commissioner and this amendment will enable him to continue to act for the remainder of the term involved. It was Sebastopol's turn to have representation. I believe the Government's proposal will meet the wishes of the various shires in the bracket concerned.

**Mr SCOTT** (Ballarat South).—I am pleased to support this amendment. Councillor Owen, from Sebastopol, has had previous experience and is now serving for a second time on the Ballarat Water Commissioners and the Ballarat Sewerage Authority, which represents five municipalities. He has served for approximately two months and is a valuable member. The previous representative was Councillor Davis, from Buninyong, and the experience he gained in his two-year term will be valuable

to him, as he has been elected chairman of the Buninyong Waterworks Trust. Each representative of the five municipalities, whether from Ballarat, Sepastopol, Buninyong, Grenville or Bungaree, has represented in an able manner the bodies which have elected him. The Ballarat Shire has already indicated the name of the councillor it intends to nominate—also a person who has had previous experience—and the commissioners will be pleased to have the benefit of his talent. I am sure that when this Bill is passed the Ballarat Water Commissioners and the Ballarat Sewerage Authority will be the richer for having greater representation from the outer municipalities.

**Mr. WHITE** (Ballarat North).—I gladly support the amendment. I am certain that there will not be any unfavourable comments regarding it from the municipalities that will have the right in the future to appoint representatives. When Councillor Owen's term expires, he might be reappointed. I believe it is desirable that extensions should be granted to enable commissioners to become fully conversant with the needs and activities of this authority.

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

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

#### STATE SAVINGS BANK (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 15) on the motion of Mr. Bolte (Premier and Treasurer) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL** (Brunswick West).—This is an important Bill, which will enable the State Savings Bank to enlarge its activities. I had assumed that great interest, not only within this House, but also outside, would be taken in this measure. Most of its contents are commendable, but I am disappointed that the Government did not see fit to introduce such legislation about twelve months ago. At that time the private banks were

reaching into the domain of the State Savings Bank of Victoria and the savings banks guaranteed by other Governments, and this Parliament amended the Stamps Act so as to exempt from stamp duty withdrawal forms used in the savings bank departments of the private banks. I should have thought that was the appropriate time to introduce this Bill. No doubt the proposals before the House have been recommended by the Commissioners of the State Savings Bank in order to assist them to meet the onslaught by private banks into an established field of public enterprise. Figures I shall presently quote indicate what has happened. As a public enterprise, the State Savings Bank has been a great success. I trust the advocates of private enterprise who were so noisy yesterday in their efforts to attack the Housing Commission, another public enterprise, will be quieter to-day. Yesterday they asserted that private enterprise was supplying houses to meet the needs of the people.

**Mr. PORTER**.—The Opposition attacked the Housing Commission yesterday and members on the Government side of the House defended that body. You are on the wrong side!

**The SPEAKER** (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).—Order! Discussion of the Housing Commission is irrelevant to the debate. The honorable member for Brunswick West will confine his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL**.—Generally speaking, I am disappointed that speeches made by Ministers do not give sufficient information on the background of Bills and that it is left to the Opposition to do a good deal of research into such matters. In the case of this Bill, the Premier went a little further than is usual in his second-reading speech. The honorable gentleman stated, *inter alia*—

The provisions contained in this Bill to amend the principal Act—the State Savings Bank Act 1928 No. 3777—are designed to improve and extend the functions of the bank, to clarify doubtful provisions and eliminate obsolete sections, and to

remove limitations imposed by the principal Act which unnecessarily restrict the powers of the commissioners and their ability to meet the challenge of rapidly changing circumstances and conditions.

The Bank devotes its resources solely to the welfare and development of Victoria; since it commenced operations in 1842 it has been a corner-stone in our financial structure, and its continued progress is a matter of first importance to every resident of the State.

The profits made by the bank in recent years have been approximately as follows: For the year 1956-57, £69,000; for 1955-56, £164,000; for 1954-55, £156,000; and, for 1953-54, £375,000. The advocates of private enterprise will remember that the Cain Government was in office in 1954.

Mr. PORTER.—What is the point of your remark? As you are aware, the Government does not run the State Savings Bank.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The profits made by the bank must reflect the prosperity of the State. I am merely pointing out that, under the administration of the Cain Government, apparently the State enjoyed greater prosperity than it did last year. Perhaps I may be permitted to be a little more metaphysical than the Premier in relation to the bank. I suggest that the bank could be described as having been born out of the pennies, poverties and frugal living of the masses of the people. The accumulated assets and funds of the bank could be said to have resulted from the thrift, enthusiasm and toil of the smaller man in our midst. The deposits held by the Commonwealth Savings Bank and all State savings banks throughout Australia total more than £1,000,000,000, and at present an approximately equivalent sum, on which no interest is paid, is held by private banks. I have no doubt that that amount represents the aggregate of current accounts. Probably it was because of the excess wealth lying on deposit without earning interest that the private banks stepped into the domain of Government savings banks. I have no doubt that the private bankers "kept an eye" not only on the assets but also on the deposits of the State savings banks and said, "Now is the time to step in and open a savings

bank branch." Of course, the Government in power did not object to the trading banks entering this domain. A study of the history of savings banks in this country reveals that it has always been the privilege of public enterprise, not private enterprise, to conduct such undertakings, and people throughout Victoria were amazed when the private banks were authorized to step into this field. The State Savings Bank of Victoria has proved itself to be of valuable assistance to the Government and various public authorities in undertaking certain works, including housing schemes. When authorized to commence savings departments, the private banks permitted depositors to transfer a portion of the money in their current accounts into savings accounts. The State Savings Bank will act conversely by authorizing depositors to withdraw money from their present savings accounts in order that they may open cheque or current accounts.

My research into this question enabled me to discover a copy of the report of the State Savings Bank for the year ended 30th June, 1858, which indicates that only comparatively small amounts were then lodged with the bank. At that time, the only branches of the State Savings Bank were at Melbourne, Geelong, Portland, Belfast, Castlemaine and Sandhurst. The report to which I referred contained a table entitled—

Statement of the gross amount of all money received and credited, including interest, by the Commissioners of Savings Banks in the Colony of Victoria, on account of the Trustees of the several Savings Banks in the Colony, during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1858.

This table reveals that the total amount deposited with the bank during the 1857-58 financial year was £122,456, and that, during the same year, £64,000 was paid to depositors. The last annual report of the State Savings Bank discloses that the deposits for the 1956-57 financial year amounted to £224,000,000, whilst withdrawals totalled £228,000,000, thereby indicating that the bank had made considerable progress over the years. The State Savings Bank's balance-sheet reveals that the total amount held by the bank,

including current accounts, stock bank accounts, and Victorian savings bank stock deposit accounts, was £266,000,000.

Mr. J. D. MACDONALD.—Of course, the bank is backed by the Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The State Savings Bank's deposits have increased because of that assurance and the certainty that there will be no further land boom disasters.

Mr. WILTSHIRE.—Or Mr. Lang!

Mr. SHEPHERD (to Mr. Wiltshire).—That was political.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Fifty per cent. of profits made by the Commonwealth Savings Bank in New South Wales are paid to the Rural Bank in that State. What happened in New South Wales some years ago was nothing more than a political stunt. The State Savings Bank of Victoria is at present controlled by six Commissioners, including the Director of Finance. It is mandatory for the bank to make certain rules in connexion with the business it conducts. For example, a person is limited to having only one account with the State Savings Bank, and interest is payable only on deposits up to £1,500 at a rate of 2½ per cent. per annum for the first £1,000, and a rate of 1½ per cent. per annum for the remainder. Cheque accounts are not available to individual depositors, but the bank is empowered to grant that facility to friendly societies, trustee companies, the Workers Compensation Board, and trade unions. On these accounts interest is paid.

Section 55 of the State Savings Bank Act 1928 which deals with the procedure to be adopted by the State Savings Bank when investing or holding funds, provides that of the total moneys in the possession of the Commissioners—

(a) A sum not exceeding twenty per centum of such moneys shall be deposited or kept in banks which are constituted bankers of the Government or in any bank approved by the Auditor-General or be retained in cash.

The purpose of that provision is to ensure that there shall always be available liquid funds not exceeding 20 per cent. of the money in the bank's possession. Honorable mem-

bers should note that there is no compulsion to retain the full 20 per cent.—it could very well be only 2 per cent.—but the practice over the years has been to have available in cash approximately 20 per cent. of the bank's total deposits. At present, from 17 per cent. to 18 per cent. is thus held in cash or on short deposit with trading banks. Section 55 makes provision also as to the manner in which the remainder of the bank's funds may be invested on mortgage and on various types of securities. However, by paragraph (h) of clause 4 of the Bill, that section is to be repealed and a new section substituted.

The Crédit Foncier branch of the State Savings Bank can be said to be one of the foundations of the social structure of the State. Its facilities have been used by innumerable people for the building of homes. That branch was established, I think, in 1923. Not only does it enable people to purchase homes for themselves but it also assists primary producers to buy farms. In 1923 the State Savings Bank was authorized to construct homes for people of low income and, prior to the trade depression, the bank would finance the building of a home on a deposit as low as £50. The Act declared those who were eligible for that privilege. If my recollection is correct, the amount of income specified was approximately £400 a year, and the bank could advance only sums up to £1,000 on wooden homes. However, that basis was revised so that the eligibility at present is an income of £750 a year and advances up to £1,800 may be made on wooden houses, as compared with £2,000 on brick houses. But those limitations, which are outmoded are to be removed by amendments contained in the Bill.

Mr. WILTSHIRE.—They were taken away long ago.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—I should appreciate it if the honorable member would cite the relevant amending legislation. There is a general limitation under the Crédit Foncier system for the lending of sums to £4,000. Since the depression little has been done regarding homes for people in the lower-income groups. The Crédit Foncier

scheme was initiated before that period, during which the State Savings Bank probably had difficulty in obtaining repayment instalments from borrowers. In later years the bank did not revert in large measure to that form of business because its function in that regard was assumed by the Housing Commission. At this stage, I wish to point out what the State Savings Bank has done in its schemes for housing and for the purchase of farms. I shall refer to the bank's methods, by way of mortgage, of assisting people in the building of their homes. The bank lends up to £4,000 on town houses, up to £8,000 on farms, and up to £10,000 in respect of churches. It advances up to 66½ per cent. of the bank's valuation on homes in the city, up to 50 per cent. on flats, up to 60 per cent. on farms, and up to 66½ per cent. on churches. The rates of interest charged by the bank are 5½ per cent. per annum on houses and farms, and 6 per cent. per annum on churches. If an advance is made on a home that is not occupied by the borrower personally, the rate of interest is 6½ per cent. per annum.

As to loans on mortgage by the bank, as distinct from advances by the Crédit Foncier branch, the bank will lend money on houses that are up to five years old. The mortgage term is a period of three years, and each year the mortgagor is required to repay 4 per cent. of the principal, plus interest. Up till the present, the bank has not failed to renew a mortgage, whether on a house or a farm. Of course, I am ignoring any cases of default by a borrower. If he has complied with the terms of his mortgage, the bank has not refused an extension.

Under Crédit Foncier conditions, loans are granted for a period of 21½ years on city houses and for twenty years on farms. Repayments are due quarterly in respect of houses, and half-yearly in the case of farms. On both houses and farms the rate of interest is 5½ per cent. per annum. Advances on houses in the city are limited to 75 per cent. of the bank's valuation and, in respect of farms, up to 66½ per cent. Although the Act authorizes the bank to lend, through

*Mr. Campbell Turnbull.*

its Crédit Foncier Department, amounts up to £4,000, the present practice is to lend only up to the sum of £2,750. Thus the bank is enabled to distribute the money available for lending over a greater number of individual transactions. However, many people in the lower-income ranges are probably unable to avail themselves of the facilities offering.

Mr. LOXTON.—Often they are forced into undertaking second mortgages.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is so, and we know how onerous a second mortgage can be. At times it is taken at extreme risk, with results such as were demonstrated during the depression years. Many widows—and other people who might be regarded as being in the same category—who had a little money were advised by their lawyers to invest in second mortgages, but the equity disappeared and the lender was then unable to recover.

*The sitting was suspended at 12.59 p.m. until 2.4 p.m.*

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Before the suspension of the sitting, the honorable member for Dandenong, by interjection, questioned what I said concerning the provision of dwellings for persons of small means. I then stated that to be eligible to participate in the Crédit Foncier scheme a person must possess £750 and that the amount which may be advanced in respect of a wooden house is £1,800 and in respect of a brick house, £2,000. Those provisions appear in Act No. 5312. I have checked the figures, because I do not wish to make inaccurate statements. The State Savings Bank Act 1928 was designed by persons who were most zealous in ensuring that the people's savings would be protected.

Having regard to the modern trend of our economy and to the unfair attitude adopted by the Commonwealth towards the States, particularly the State of Victoria, there should be closer relationship between the Treasury and the State Savings Bank. The bank should be enabled to give this State all possible financial assistance, and there must be close co-operation between it and the State of Victoria to resist the

domination of the Commonwealth Government in financial affairs. Therefore, I agree with the real object of this Bill which is designed to increase the business carried on by the State Savings Bank and also to resist the intrusion of private banks into the savings bank field. If the bank is given the right to operate current accounts the amount of total deposits will increase. Many small businessmen and perhaps persons of the lower-middle class or middle class may transfer their accounts from private banks to the State Savings Bank because it will be more convenient to be able to transact business with both departments in the one building. In the past, the operating of two accounts, one in a private bank and one in a savings bank, was beyond reach of the ordinary worker. The figures I mentioned previously indicate that in the ordinary worker's household the wife withdraws money from the State Savings Bank to pay for gas, electricity, and so forth. The small man who supports the State Savings Bank by saving his money against times of adversity should be enabled to operate on his account by cheque. The funds of the bank are the savings of the workers, and I consider more use should be made of those savings to provide adequate shelter for the workers.

Mr. BOLTE.—Savings of the people!

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—At the present time with the limited finance available it is almost impossible for the man in the lower-income bracket—if the Premier does not like the expression “worker”—to purchase a home. The millions of pounds in the State Savings Bank are the savings of individuals, and it is right that that money should be used to remedy the present chaotic state of the housing situation. The most urgent need of the people is the provision of homes.

Mr. BOLTE.—This Bill makes that provision.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is so. I have not yet condemned the Premier. A person in the lower-income group should be given a greater chance to procure a home, and a young man in the country who wishes to take up

farming as a career should be able to receive an advance from the State Savings Bank for that purpose. One must congratulate the commissioners of the bank for the excellent job they have done in the past. Some honorable members might consider that they have been too conservative in the management of the affairs of the bank. I point out, however, that the bank is guaranteed by the State of Victoria, and it is reasonable to assume in the circumstances that the commissioners have not taken risks at the expense of the people's money. The only criticism of the bank that I have to offer is that it appears to take a long time for a customer to withdraw or deposit money. Apparently too many checks are made.

Mr. BOLTE.—By using the new machines that are being installed, it will be possible to make a deposit in fifteen seconds and a withdrawal in 45 seconds.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is all to the good. I urge the princes of private enterprise to read the *Herald* of 31st October, in which there is a report relating to a private savings bank in the United Kingdom which had to close its doors and freeze its funds.

Mr. BOLTE.—What was the size of that bank?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—It was not a big one.

Mr. BOLTE.—Was it in Manchester?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—No, in Birmingham. Government supporters, who are champions of private enterprise, become edgy when I produce damning evidence against it. It is up to Parliament to enable the State Savings Bank to inculcate more imagination in the management of its affairs so that the challenge from private savings banks may be met. I do not think even Government back-bench members would object to public enterprise competing with the private banks, because those banks have entered the savings field and it is up to Parliament to assist the State Savings Bank to meet that competition. So that the bank may carry out its real objectives, the Bill contains many amendments, which probably could best be discussed in Committee.

Mr. BOLTE.—All the amendments are unrelated.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is so. The first main principle contained in the Bill is the redesigning of existing provisions which appear in section 55 of the principal Act. That section deals with the way in which money may be invested by the bank. I agree that in substance the proposals contained in the amendment are better than those in the existing section.

Mr. BOLTE.—The conditions in regard to investing money will be the same as those that apply to the Commonwealth Savings Bank.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The provision in the existing section 55 that a sum not exceeding 20 per cent of moneys held by the bank shall be deposited, kept in other banks or retained in cash will disappear when that section is replaced by the proposed new section, which is contained in paragraph (h) of clause 4 of the Bill. As the Premier said, the mode of investing or holding funds will be similar to the practice adopted by the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State savings bank in South Australia. I am prepared to trust the commissioners of the State Savings Bank of Victoria to keep sufficient money available. Doubtless, they will recall that a former Leader of the Liberal party lost the leadership of that party and was subsequently defeated at an election because he advocated that the pool of 20 per cent. should be spent. Depositors of the bank were not prepared to accept that philosophy.

The most important provision in the Bill is paragraph (g) of proposed new section 55, which will enable the bank to lend money upon security by way of first mortgage of land or upon security of any kind whatsoever. This provision will increase the activities of the bank and will enable it to perform its present functions more prudently. During the Committee stage I propose to move an amendment to that paragraph. It will follow a precedent established by the Premier in amending the Rural Finance Corporation Act. To encourage rural production, the honorable gentleman

brought down an amending measure to enable the Rural Finance Corporation to lend money for the purchase of farm machinery and other implements. My proposed amendment provides—

In addition to the powers referred to in the preceding sub-section the commissioners may at their discretion grant to any depositor approved by the commissioners financial assistance . . . . .

They are the words used in the Rural Finance Corporation (Amendment) Act of 1956, and I think the Premier is to be congratulated for his choice of language.

Mr. BOLTE.—The provision is very wide.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—My proposed amendment continues—

. . . . in such manner and upon such terms as may be determined by the Commissioners for the purchase of domestic appliances, household furniture and furnishings or other necessary domestic or household articles.

Mr. BOLTE.—Is it proposed that the money be advanced by way of overdraft?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—No. The honorable gentleman knows what I am talking about, and I ask him to consider my suggestion. Paragraph (c) of clause 4 proposes a new section in lieu of section 38 of the existing legislation. The proposed new section provides that the account of any depositor approved by the commissioners may be drawn on by cheque in such form and subject to such conditions as the commissioners may from time to time determine. That is an important and valuable provision and I trust that the depositors of the bank will avail themselves of its benefits. Moreover, I hope that many of the persons who transferred their accounts to the savings departments of private banks will again do business with the State Savings Bank. The Premier has not informed the House how the system will work. Probably he does not know the precise mechanics.

Mr. BOLTE.—That will be left to the commissioners to determine.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The bank is a statutory body and Parliament should be told whether a person will

have to open two separate accounts, have two bankbooks, use an ordinary cheque book or the ordinary pass book. I assume from a report in the *Herald*—its reports of Government intentions are usually fairly accurate—that depositors will be able to operate two types of accounts, an ordinary cheque book account and a savings bank account.

Mr. BOLTE.—I would not say that was right.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—Why does not the Premier inform the House what is intended in connexion with this Bill? We have not been told whether interest will be paid on money deposited in accounts on which cheques may be drawn. Section 38 of the existing legislation enables certain bodies such as trade unions, charitable organizations, friendly societies and the Workers Compensation Board to operate cheque accounts with the State Savings Bank, and the bank to pay interest on any money deposited in those accounts.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—And no stamp duty is payable on the cheques drawn on those accounts.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—That is so. What will happen regarding those accounts? Will the bank be able to continue to pay interest on money deposited? Some of the trading banks pay a small amount of interest on current accounts. The Premier should outline how the new section 38 will operate.

In 1956, action was taken to exempt from stamp duty withdrawal forms used in connexion with savings bank facilities provided by certain trading banks. The Premier has repeatedly stated that it is improper for the Commonwealth Government to levy pay-roll tax on the State and its instrumentalities, and I agree with that view. I believe it is wrong for the Crown to tax the Crown, and that is what happens when pay-roll tax is imposed on State Government Departments and instrumentalities. Despite his protests against Commonwealth action, the Premier has now advanced a proposition which I believe he should reconsider over the week-end.

Mr. BOLTE.—You are a long way from the Bill. Who pays stamp tax—the bank or the client? It is not a case of the Crown taxing the Crown when stamp duties are charged on cheques.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The Government will tax the clientele of the Crown, and I do not think it should. I suggest that clause 8 of the Bill should be omitted and that in its place an exemption on these lines should be adopted—

Cheques drawn by any depositor in pursuance with provisions of section 38 of the State Savings Bank Acts shall be exempt.

I can see little difference between a withdrawal form and a cheque, and I fail to understand why the Government desires to draw a distinction between them so far as this great institution is concerned. Why should not the State Savings Bank be placed a yard or two in front of the private banks? It has been behind them for years.

Mr. BOLTE.—Whose fault is it if that is the case?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The blame must be taken by the Liberal party which through the years has not amended the Act to allow the State Savings Bank to compete with the private banks.

Mr. BOLTE.—Why did not the Labour party do so when it held office?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—When the Labour party does attain office some charge is trumped up against it, as was the case with the last Labour Government, and it does not remain in power long enough to accomplish such things. The Premier is aware that it will be a matter of only twelve months after the passage of this measure before the State Savings Bank will function as a trading bank also. I predict that will happen as soon as the commissioners have had time to train staff in the handling of current accounts. That development must take place, and the Labour party will welcome it.

I now wish to refer to some of the matters mentioned in the annual report of the State Savings Bank. The first item of interest is that the assets of this people's bank—a

representative of public enterprise—amount to £321,000,000 and that depositors' balances total £266,000,000. When one examines the figures in relation to the deposits and withdrawals it becomes obvious that the trading banks are damaging the State Savings Bank. In 1956, the State Savings Bank showed an increase of £4,000,000 in deposits, but last year there was actually a falling off though an increase in figures was shown because of the fact that interest amounting to £6,500,000 was credited to depositors' accounts.

Paragraph 3 of the annual report of the bank sets out the way in which its funds were used in the previous year. The sum of £2,000,000 was advanced to home builders through the bank's Crédit Foncier Department, and the Home Finance Trust was loaned £400,000. If more houses are constructed the services provided by public utilities must be enlarged, and the bank in its advances has been fair to the public authorities concerned. It has lent to the State Electricity Commission the sum of £1,500,000, and made other loans to municipalities, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board, sewerage authorities, and co-operative housing societies.

Mr. BOLTE.—Last week it lent the sum of £1,000,000 to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—I am glad to hear that; it shows that the institution is using the money of Victorians for public purposes. I shall refer to the bank's balance-sheet for the year ended 30th June of this year. Government supporters who are interjecting apparently have an inherent hatred of public enterprise; I think that is the only explanation that can be offered for their behaviour. The balance-sheet discloses that at the end of last financial year the bank's assets included Commonwealth Government inscribed stock and Treasury bills worth £107,954,719, most of which was invested during the war. One of the loans has almost reached maturity, the sum involved being approximately £4,000,000. Most

of the others will mature between now and the year 1962, and a good deal of the investments will have to be renewed.

I emphasize, however, that the money has been saved by the people of Victoria, and, in view of the harsh attitude of the Commonwealth Treasurer, a greater proportion of it than hitherto will probably be used to advance the interests of this State. The Commonwealth is doing very well as regards taxation, and I consider that the Victorian Government should be permitted to use State Savings Bank deposits for housing purposes. As much of it as possible should be employed in this way. The balance-sheet reveals also that the bank has advanced to municipal and other public authorities the sum of £75,226,043. I trust that there will not be any condemnation of this institution, and that comments about the frailties of bureaucracy and similar nonsense will not be made by members supporting the Government.

I invite the Premier to examine the amendments that I have suggested. The honorable member for Mentone, who has interjected, pleaded the cause of private enterprise during a debate on housing in this Chamber yesterday, and I can understand his being disturbed at my efforts to permit the State Savings Bank to assist further in promoting the activities of the State. The Premier should supply members with more information regarding the manner in which it is proposed that cheque accounts shall operate. I regard this Bill as the most important measure that this Government has brought down. Its passage will enable the bank to fight its competitors, and thereby the Government and the people of Victoria will be assisted. I urge the Premier to give the greatest consideration to the submissions that have been made with the object of improving the legislation.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—The Country party is a firm supporter of the State Savings Bank and is "right behind" the Government regarding this Bill. We are not concerned with the political aspect or with what somebody did or did not do in the past. This is the people's bank, and has been since its establishment in 1842.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL. — The workers' bank, please!

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—It is the people's bank, and the citizens of Victoria look upon it as such. Probably, the majority of members remember when, in their youth, they saved a few shillings and deposited them with the bank; it was realized that the money was in safe keeping. It would be regrettable if any move that would have the effect of restricting the bank's operations or retarding its development were made; in fact, Parliament should do everything possible to "push it along." I feel that in the past, the commissioners and managers of the bank have not gone out of their way to promote its development. A person in business on his own account takes prompt action to improve conditions when he meets competition; he does not merely sit back and let the opposition take away his business, but makes a fight. Similar action should have been taken by the State bank to get more business.

The huge barrack-like buildings erected by the bank in the past almost have the effect of frightening the average working man away. The Premier referred to the fact that in Geelong and other places attractive buildings have been erected, but the headquarters of the bank in Elizabeth-street, Melbourne, presents a formidable aspect. Competitors of the State Savings Bank have made their buildings look inviting to their customers.

Mr. FLOYD.—The buildings owned by the State Savings Bank are not shanties.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I wish to do all I can to assist this institution. With a friend, I made considerable researches into this subject. I agree that the Bill is one of the most important measures to be brought in by the Government this session. The legislation relating to the State Savings Bank has been consolidated from time to time, and certain sections have been transferred from one Act to another.

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—For how long did the Country party form the Government?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I am not making a political speech, because I believe that consideration of the bank should be above politics. I could easily ask the honorable member for Brunswick West for how long and how often the Labour party had been in office since 1896, but I do not intend to do that.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Labour was in power for four days on one occasion.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—I know that. I realize that the last Labour Government was in office for two and a half years. However, let us try to discuss the State Savings Bank on a plane above party politics. We should do all in our power to assist it to compete successfully with the private savings banks. I do not agree that the best brains in the banking world are confined to the private banks. If officers of the State Savings Bank were permitted to "get out of the rut" in which they may be found, the bank would improve its standing in the community. In his second-reading speech, the Premier summed up the position extremely well in the following terms:—

The bank devotes its resources solely to the welfare and development of Victoria; since it commenced operations in 1842 it has been a corner-stone in our financial structure, and its continued progress is a matter of first importance to every resident of the State. In view of recent developments in the operations of the various trading banks, which have set up savings bank departments, and the opportunities now available to depositors for investment in other directions, the continued growth of the bank under its present charter is hampered, and it becomes necessary to empower the commissioners to provide wider facilities which will support the present business of the bank in competition with other banks.

I think all honorable members agree with the views expressed by the Premier. In recent weeks, consolidating Bills relating to education and other enactments have been passed by this House but, unfortunately, this Bill is not a consolidation in any shape or form. Consequently, a good deal of the "dead wood" contained in earlier legislation relating to the State Savings Bank has been retained. The last consolidating measure governing the State Savings Bank was passed in 1928.

I propose now to quote extracts from the official report of the debate on the Commonwealth of Australia Bill at the Australasian Federal Convention, held at Parliament House, Sydney, from 2nd to 24th September, 1897. At page 1035 of this report, which was presented to both Houses of the Victorian Parliament, there appeared the following minutes:—

The reference to banking was in clause 52. This clause as submitted to the convention read—

“The Parliament shall, subject to the provisions of this constitution, have full power and authority to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to all or any of the matters following, that is to say:—

15. Banking, the incorporation of banks and the issue of paper money.”

Pages 1074 and 1075 of the report contained these references—

Amendment (suggested by the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, and Legislative Council of Tasmania): After “banking” insert “excluding State banking not extending beyond the limits of the State concerned.”

Amendment (suggested by the Legislative Assembly of Victoria and the Legislative Council of South Australia): After “banking” insert “excluding State banks.”

Following upon comments by the chairman (Right Hon. C. C. Kingston, Premier of South Australia) and the Hon. J. H. Carruthers (New South Wales) the chairman said—

I will put the question in this form: that the following words be inserted after the word “banking,” “excluding State banking.” If that is carried the remaining words may be inserted.

After less than ten minutes debate, mostly on the question of definition of “State bank,” the amendment was agreed to. A further amendment for the insertion of the words “not extending beyond the limits of the State concerned” was put and agreed to apparently without further debate. According to the report the discussion commenced at 3 p.m. and was completed by 3.10 p.m. It is obvious from the report that the various State Parliaments desired to confine the activities of the State banks within the boundaries of the individual States. I should like the Premier to

*Sir Herbert Hyland.*

indicate, at an appropriate time, what is the position concerning agencies of the bank operating in the Riverina and in other States. Are they contravening the Federal Constitution in such a way that they would be liable to pay tax to the Commonwealth Government?

Mr. CAMPBELL TURNBULL.—The bank has sought legal advice on that question and it has been advised that there is no contravention of the Constitution.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—These matters should be clarified. I do not criticize the bank, the Government, or the Premier for introducing this measure, but I contend that the State Savings Bank should be placed on a proper footing. This could be done by the introduction of a consolidating and amending Bill, which could be submitted to the Statute Law Revision Committee for consideration. I agree with the contention that this is a Committee Bill and, during the Committee stage, I shall direct attention to certain clauses. It is proposed that no person shall be eligible to sit as a commissioner of the State Savings Bank if he is a director of a company one of whose “principal” objects is to lend money. Sub-section (2) of section 7 of the State Savings Bank Act 1928 provides—

No person shall be appointed to be and no person shall be eligible to sit or act as a commissioner if he is a director or member of the managing body or committee of any banking company one of whose objects is to lend money on the security of freehold or leasehold property in Victoria . . .

Paragraph (a) of clause 3 proposes to amend this sub-section by the insertion of the word “principal” before the word “objects.” However, the word “principal” is difficult to define. Various interpretations of its precise meaning could be advanced. I contend that these provisions should be clarified so that honorable members will know exactly what is intended.

Mr. BOLTE.—The whole point of that amendment is that the commissioners consider that a field from which the private trading banks may draw their directors is denied the State Savings Bank.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—If that is so, we have no objection to the proposal. However, in a number of Bills discussed during this sessional period, amendments that were not anticipated by the Government have been considered necessary. The Government is most fortunate that the sessional period has run very smoothly and it has been possible for the legislative programme to be proceeded with unhindered by adjournment motions day after day. All honorable members and all parties appear to have gone out of their way to assist the Government. At the Committee stage I shall propose certain amendments. In the meantime I shall offer some suggestions, which I hope the Government will consider. As I have mentioned, a certain amount of dead wood should be removed from the legislation. Sections 25, 28 and 31 of the principal Act are obsolete. Section 25 has been perpetuated through the 1915 and 1928 consolidations from section 14 of the 1896 Act. It is many years since an officer of the Public Service was transferred to the service of the bank under this section if ever it happened. So far as section 28 is concerned, it is doubtful whether any Commonwealth public servant has acted for the bank for many years. Section 31 comes from section 11 of the Savings Banks Act 1890. Surely, the opening and closing of branches must come within the ordinary duties of a bank Board.

The provisions I shall now cite all require amendment. Section 10 does not cover the possibility of the chairman ceasing to be a commissioner during his term of office as chairman. The provision contained in sub-section (3) of section 21 requires the general manager to report under his hand on each loan application. It is taken verbatim, in essentials, from sub-section (3) of section 13 of the 1896 Act No. 1481. I suggest that the words “as provided in this Act and not otherwise” should be deleted from sub-section (8) of section 54. The provisions contained in sub-section (9) of section 54 are covered under paragraph (a) or paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of pro-

posed new section 16. Likewise, sub-section (10) of section 54 is covered under paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of the same proposed new section. Sub-section (12) of section 54 and sub-section (5) of section 73 should be repealed because interest is taxable under Commonwealth law. The provisions contained in sub-section (2) of section 71 have been taken verbatim from sub-section (2) of section 32 of the 1896 Act. They are obsolete and could be covered under paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16. Many parts of sub-section (3) of section 72 have been taken from sub-section (4) of section 30 of the 1896 Act, and some of them are obsolete. The contents of paragraph (b) of sub-section (1) of section 73 are covered under paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16, as are the provisions of sub-section (4) of section 73. Sub-section (3) of section 74 is obsolete.

The Government or the Director of Statutory Consolidation, Mr. Normand, may have all these matters in hand, but I consider this legislation should be placed on a better basis to enable to commissioners of the State Savings Bank to perform their functions in the way we would wish them to. They cannot do so unless the legislation is up to date, and all members of the House should assist by directing attention to any anomalies or other matters that should be corrected. There are a number of sections in the Act which merit review. I do not propose to traverse all the activities of the State Savings Bank because the honorable member for Brunswick West has already dealt with many points in a manner that deserves commendation. I appreciate the fact that the Government has given the House ample time in which to consider the Bill carefully. Perhaps members of my party are disciples of private enterprise, too, but nevertheless we favour the operation of marketing Boards and the State Savings Bank. We trust that our suggestions will assist to build up the bank. The population of the State is increasing at a great rate and the bank

must be in a position to cope with the business that we hope it will obtain. The Government or the State Savings Bank Commissioners may not agree with all the points I raise, but I trust the Premier will submit them to the commissioners with the object of a consolidating and amending Bill being introduced during the next session of Parliament. There should be no delay even though that session might be short. In my opinion, this matter should have precedence over all legislation with the exception of that relating to Supply.

I shall now go through the sections which I consider merit review. In regard to section 26, I pose the question: Are not the commissioners empowered to pay salaries as one of the duties of carrying out the functions of the bank? I ask also whether the provisions relating to calculating and crediting of interest contained in section 36 could not be covered by paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16 as being "necessary and expedient." My question in relation to section 42 is: Could not the provisions relating to the opening and operation of accounts of friendly societies and charitable societies be covered by general order under paragraph (a) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16? Nearly 50 years ago the commissioners of the State Savings Bank were held to be bankers, *vide Commissioners of the State Savings Bank of Victoria v. Permewan Wright & Co.*, as recorded at page 457 of 19 *Commonwealth Law Reports*. There is a reference to this matter in the footnote to page 2 of the 1928 Act. The procedure outlined in section 49 could perhaps be covered by general order under paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16 as "necessary and expedient."

Perhaps also the procedure contained in section 52 could be covered under the same paragraph. In regard to section 58, why should it not be possible for an officer of the bank to borrow from the State Savings Bank Department? He has always been able to borrow from the Crédit Foncier Department. Paragraph (a) of sub-section (4) of section

75 is substantially the same as paragraph (b) of sub-section (4) of section 39 of the 1896 Act which provided—

two thirds of actual value (instead of three quarters); increase amount by one fourth of special increase (instead of one half); special increase not to be greater than £30 per acre (instead of £100 per acre).

Sub-section (7) of section 75 is taken verbatim from sub-section (7) of section 39 of the 1896 Act. Sub-sections (3), (4) and (5) of section 79 are identical with the similarly numbered sub-sections in section 48 of the 1896 Act. Are these specific directions in keeping with current practice? If any directions as to method of valuation are necessary, could they not be covered under paragraph (d) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 16? Sub-section (11) of section 79, which specifies that a valuer shall not value any property if he is interested in it should be amended, I suggest, to read "shall knowingly value." I suggest, too, that probably section 110 could be repealed, and, if so, sections 113 and 119 would require amending. I ask also whether paragraphs (b) and (c) of sub-section (1) and sub-section (2) of section 121 could be amended along the lines of the proposed new section 55.

With respect to section 123, sub-section (1) is almost identical with sub-section (1) of section 12 of the 1896 Act. It was apparently designed primarily to provide evidence that the bank was investing its funds according to the provisions of section 55, which is to be repealed by the Bill and which is almost identical with the provisions of the 1896 Act. Concerning paragraph (a) of section 123, the account serves no purpose and all necessary information appears in the profit and loss account and balance-sheet of the State Savings Bank Department. Paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) are covered by the balance-sheets of the State Savings Bank Department and the Crédit Foncier Department. As to the provisions of paragraph (e), the information referred to herein is useful to the bank's competitors, who should not be given any more than is necessary.

As to paragraphs (f) to (j), dealing with investments in stock, debentures, bonds, and so on, sufficient information

is given in the balance-sheet. Concerning paragraph (*k*) also, covering investments on fixed deposit with banks, sufficient information is given in the balance-sheet. Paragraph (1) deals with the mode in which balance of funds is invested. This covers cash at call plus accrued interest. It may have been important in 1896 but is adequately covered now in the balance-sheet. As we all know, the methods of banks and companies have been improved year by year and are being still further improved. More information is being given to shareholders and the public by all companies. For instance, on one side of a balance-sheet there is set out the exact figures for the previous financial year in comparison with those for the current year. That procedure could be adopted quite effectively by the State Savings Bank.

Commenting on paragraph (*m*), sufficient information is given in the Crédit Foncier Department balance-sheet and profit and loss account. As to paragraph (*n*), sufficient information is given in the balance-sheets of the two departments of the bank. A footnote to page 2 of the State Savings Bank Act states that no mortgage bonds have been issued since 1901 and that there is now no power to issue them. In consequence, there has been no alteration since 1901 in the figures given on the statement for mortgage bonds. Regarding the requirements set forth in paragraph (*o*), the present position is covered adequately in the balance-sheets. With respect to paragraph (*p*), sufficient information is given in the balance-sheets. Information given in the statement could be useful to the bank's competitors.

Commenting next on paragraph (*q*), as in the statement under paragraph (*n*), the first two items have been unchanged since 1901. The detailed information given in this statement may have been useful for a few years after 1896, but sufficient information under present conditions is given in the Crédit Foncier Department balance-sheet. As to the provisions of paragraphs (*r*) and (*s*), is the publication of these details really necessary? The matters embraced in paragraphs (*t*) and (*u*)

are adequately covered by the Crédit Foncier Department balance-sheet and profit and loss account.

I have put forward these suggestions in the friendliest possible way. In this House members may have different ideas on a variety of matters. We are all keen on housing; some of us make a special study of it. Others devote much thought and attention to the Country Roads Board and its activities; others again take an especial interest in banking and like activities owing to their business training and special knowledge. I do not profess to have any such training or knowledge, but I have watched the activities of the State Savings Bank since the private banks started to compete with it, and I have wondered when the commissioners would wake up and start to fight back. I know from personal experience that when a chain store is established in a new centre in competition with existing stores, the thing to do is not just to let the newcomer pick up all the business but to fight back immediately. I would not wait until it had obtained a strong foothold. It is that business training and experience that has made me wonder how long the bank commissioners would sit back before asking the Government to assist them. I believe in the State Savings Bank. I would do everything possible to assist in its development and would do nothing to hinder it in any direction. Anything helpful that the Country party can do, we shall be more than pleased to do, and on a non-party basis. There will be no recriminations regarding things that have been done or have been left undone by past Governments.

**Mr. SHEPHERD** (Leader of the Opposition).—I have been pleased to listen to the Leader of the Country party. In addition to his contribution, the speech of the honorable member for Brunswick West was well worth while. It was based on a great deal of study on his part. I am wondering what the Premier now thinks of his own Bill. It has been amazing to listen to what the Leader of the Country party was able to offer by way of criticism and suggestion. He has come forward with well-prepared

statements and recommendations regarding what should be done with an Act of Parliament that goes back as far as 1896. If we take them as factual, they indicate that in this State we have the most successful bank in the world operating under the most unsuccessful and out-of-date legislation in Australia.

It may be true that the Act needs consolidating, but it will not be for me, without knowledge of the bank and of banking law itself, to say that all the contentions of the Leader of the Country party are such as should be accepted and acted upon. It will not be for me to say what should be done to the existing legislation or just what may be the right thing to do.

The Government has brought down a Bill on the recommendations of somebody, I hope, and I trust that those recommendations are being acted upon. No doubt, they have come from the State Savings Bank Commissioners themselves. I hope that they are substantial and that the amendments proposed in the Bill cover the whole of the recommendations and are not merely a selection of many such as were indicated in the representations of the Leader of the Country party. The Premier has now informed me that such an understanding of the position would be incorrect. I am pleased to hear that. I did not know, and did not want to know, what might be the position; but the Government would not have brought the Bill down, I feel sure, without some recommendations from the source I have indicated.

It is possible that much that was said by the Leader of the Country party is true. The Act may contain redundant sections. It may be out of date in some directions, but we should look at this Bill in a broad way. I agree with much that has been said regarding the conservative attitude of the State Savings Bank in years gone by. Up to a year ago no savings bank administrator had ever thought the Commonwealth Government would make his position insecure by giving the right to private trading banks, in association with their general banking business, to compete with the savings banks. That comment holds good probably not only in this

*Mr. Shepherd.*

State but in every other State that has guaranteed a savings bank. All of them must have been caught unprepared for what could happen through Commonwealth action. We were aware that, because of lack of facilities in some small country centres, the trading banks might grasp the opportunity to use the savings bank provisions of the new legislation. We realized that they might step in and take advantage of conditions where the savings banks had no branches and private banks were open for business for perhaps only two hours a day in a week or for two days in a month. A change was necessary. The private trading banks and their savings bank departments have been relentless in their desire to capture this savings bank business and their efforts have met with a certain degree of success. Much of the money deposited in their savings bank sections was automatically transferred from other accounts in those banks, where it was lying idle and not earning interest; the moneys did not represent new deposits. The provision of facilities is an inducement to people to use a particular bank. We are under an obligation to protect people who have been loyal to the State Savings Bank over the last one hundred or more years. Some tradition has been built up, not only because the buildings are owned by the State but also because of the fact that the bank is guaranteed by the State. It is unimportant whether the bank carries on its business in an emporium or a tin shed—it is the integrity of the bank and the Government's backing of its activities that count.

It is fortunate that in the last 50 years Victoria has not been worried by bank failures, and there never has been any failure of the State Savings Bank. Sir Arthur Fadden, the Federal Treasurer, was displeased at the actions of some private banks in "touting" for new business for their savings bank sections. They were taken to task in the House of Representatives as long ago as the 10th April of last year. Mr. Whitlam, a member of the Commonwealth Parliament, asked Sir Arthur Fadden whether he had been informed that officers of the Bank of New South

Wales had been asking people to transfer their Commonwealth Savings Bank accounts to the savings bank section of the Bank of New South Wales. There were other questions asked, but, briefly, Sir Arthur Fadden replied to the effect that at first he had been unable to believe reports brought to his notice. However, they were so numerous that he took consolation in the belief that "these zealous officers of the bank were doing something which did not have the approval of the board or the management of that reputable and worth-while institution." That sounds very well. The Federal Treasurer initially strenuously opposed the legislation for the alteration of the Commonwealth Bank Acts now being dealt with in the Federal Parliament, but he now fully supports the policy of the Government in that regard. I agree with the Leader of the Country party that the State Savings Bank is at last showing some initiative in endeavouring to induce people to take more advantage of the facilities it offers.

Mr. BOLTE.—The bank has made a start to that end.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—Since pressure was brought to bear the State Savings Bank has opened new branches and is re-designing not only its buildings but also its methods. The bank officers are attempting to achieve something, but the drive must come from the commissioners. Some people rightly believe that whether a building is brick, stone, weatherboard or corrugated iron, their savings are secure so long as it carries the imprimatur of "Guaranteed by the Government of Victoria." Everyone should be interested in a matter such as this, and if the methods can be streamlined and all the ills or evils pointed out by the Leader of the Country party can be cured, then something worth while will be achieved.

This is not a consolidating Bill. Section 33 of the principal Act, which was referred to by the Leader of the Country party, has already been repealed. We should look forward to the day when a consolidating Bill, after being considered by the Statute Law

Revision Committee, will come before this House. It is obvious that some sections of the Act are redundant, out of date, or inconsistent with modern banking management and practice. The Act should be streamlined so that it will be brought up to date. The Premier will agree that even streamlined up-to-date legislation will not help the bank unless its activities are directed towards improving conditions of banking and attracting to the bank more customers with more money to deposit.

Mr. BOLTE.—All we can do is give them the scope.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—That is correct. This Bill contains some very important features, but I do not intend to analyse any one of them or condemn any particular section of this legislation. The remarks of the Premier, the Leader of the Country party and my colleague the honorable member for Brunswick West would indicate that this is a Committee Bill. The general principles of banking are beyond the scope of this House. I was interested to hear the Leader of the Country party read the draft of what is now section 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution. We all realize that when there was a disputation in this country regarding the nationalization of banks it was impossible for even the Judges of the High Court and the Judges who sat in appeal on the Privy Council to misinterpret that section, which they did not do. Had there been no challenge under section 92 there would have been no doubt as to which banks would have been nationalized and which would have been exempt. Those banks would have been the State Savings Bank of Victoria and similar banks, which confine their activities to the State in which they are incorporated. That matter is now history and may never arise again unless section 92 is amended to meet modern conditions.

It is realized now that there are some validating clauses in this Bill. The advice given to the Premier discloses that in some way or other the commissioners of the State Savings Bank have been acting outside their charter. It has been a matter of concern to me that if, when one goes interstate, say to

Western Australia, one wishes to draw on money in the State Savings Bank of Victoria it is necessary to deal with a private trading bank. If a person has money in the Commonwealth Bank, on going to New Zealand the depositor has to deal with the Bank of New South Wales. As I have said before, the service extended to me when in New Zealand was excellent, but the same service could be given by any bank if the necessary facilities were provided.

Although it may not be intended in this legislation to open branches in Balranald, Mathoura, Deniliquin and such places—or even in Western Australia—in the past a private trading bank acting as agent for the State Savings Bank of Victoria may have been acting incorrectly. In this Bill authority will be given to the bank to invest money in the Home Finance Trust of this State, which it has done in the past. That reminds me that when the Premier attended a conference in Canberra, he was charged by other Premiers with having raised money outside the usual provisions of the Loan Council. On that occasion mention was made of the Home Finance Trust. I do not wish my statements to be wrongly interpreted, but the Opposition did oppose the setting up of the Home Finance Trust on a matter of principle. We believe that as the State Savings Bank had the money and the power to use it for housing—which it has done to the extent of £80,000,000 or £81,000,000 through the *Crédit Foncier*—there was no need for the establishment of the Home Finance Trust. Under its present management, the trust is giving good service to deserving people and refusing it to others who are not so much in need of assistance, and who, Opposition members thought, might have been attracted by the conditions offered. The strict means test applied and the control exercised by Mr. Ebbels and other members of the trust indicate that it is working for the good of Victoria. It is proposed by this Bill that the State Savings Bank will have power to lend money to the Home Finance Trust.

Mr. BOLTE.—The Bill merely states how the bank may invest its money.

*Mr. Shepherd.*

Mr. SHEPHERD.—It appears to me that the commissioners of the bank made a recommendation. I point out that I do not oppose the principle. Opposition members would be hypocritical if they said it was wrong and did not seek clarification of the position.

Mr. BOLTE.—When it was decided to remove the provision in regard to the bank retaining 20 per cent. of its funds, it was necessary, in regard to liquidity, to state the investments that may be made, in order that the proposals might conform to the situation applying to the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State savings bank of South Australia.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I thank the Premier for his explanation. I propose to leave a discussion of the rights or wrongs of the clauses until the Committee stage. It appears to me that whilst this Bill will make the State Savings Bank more flexible, give a great deal of discretion to the commissioners and provide for unanimity among the commissioners on matters of policy, it still does not go far enough. The average man in the street is of the opinion that the State Savings Bank is a good place in which to deposit his money, but realizes that the pass-book system has advantages and disadvantages. The man who banks close to his work—he usually has not a great deal of money—often wants to withdraw money to pay electricity and other bills. On week days when he is at work, he can conveniently do so, but he is often confronted with difficulties on other days. If it were possible for him to withdraw his money at any branch of the bank, he would derive considerable benefit, but this involves many problems.

The policy of the Labour party has been and always will be to establish a trading bank division in conjunction with the savings section in order that the State Savings Bank might compete with the private banks. Similar facilities are available to the private banks. This should assist the State Savings Bank to expand. I realize that such a procedure would involve a great deal of reorganization of staff, conveniences and buildings because at present the bank deals with one type of banking business only.

The State Electricity Commission makes use of the bank as a collecting agency. I believe the bank receives approximately 8d. for each account that it collects. This Government instrumentality should not be cluttered up with too many ancillary duties, although, I agree that there is no reason why it should not assist other governmental organizations.

Probably the first step towards establishing a trading bank division would be to give the depositors the right to operate cheque accounts on which they could draw cheques to pay household bills and to use when travelling. In addition, they could transfer money from one account to the other and obtain the benefit of the interest rates paid. I bank with both the State Savings Bank and the Commonwealth Bank. In my dealings with the Commonwealth Bank I make use of the facility of being able to transfer money from one account to the other. I believe that the average person thinks that the only advantage of having an account with a private trading bank is that a depositor can draw cheques on his account. He is not interested in the intricacies of investment and the conduct of central banking. If a trading bank division is set up within the State Savings Bank, then its operations may be controlled by the Commonwealth banking legislation. That position would have to be examined as, probably, there would be other disabilities.

The Bill has much to commend it. Even if all the things mentioned by the Leader of the Country party are needed, I urge him, if he thinks there is anything in this Bill which is of advantage, to agree to it and then assist in correcting any defects that appear in the 1928 legislation in order that it might be streamlined and made as near perfect as possible. For the time being, I consider that any benefits given to depositors will assist in attracting more business to the bank. Modern methods and new buildings should be used in that regard. The fish pond in the new bank building at Geelong was responsible for encouraging the Premier to open that branch.

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Mr. BOLTE.—I did not know the fish pond was there until I arrived at Geelong.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—I accept the Premier's assurance. The Commonwealth Savings Bank has several attractive buildings. Many people go into the Commonwealth Bank in Martin-place in Sydney to admire the decorations, and doubtless they are encouraged to do business with the bank. The State Savings Bank should keep pace with these developments. If all the matters referred to by the Leader of the Country party are really in need of attention, then I suggest that before this legislation is consolidated it be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for consideration. I have a high regard for that committee, which has done much good work for this Parliament. If a great deal of work is involved in amending our banking laws, it would be better to tackle the matter in that way.

Mr. BOLTE.—I agree.

Mr. SHEPHERD.—The Opposition supports the Bill in principle. During the Committee stage, the honorable member for Brunswick West will submit the amendments that he foreshadowed. Opposition members generally have the interests of the bank at heart and believe that in order to meet the intense competition from without there must be increased competition from within. I am sure that in the future the bank will go on to greater things which will benefit the people of this State.

Mr. TAYLOR (Balwyn).—I feel that the State Savings Bank is in a unique position. It was incorporated 115 years ago, earlier than some of the private banks, and it is part of the history and tradition of Victoria. Its activities have encouraged thrift and safeguarded the people's savings through many different problems and crises that have developed over the years. In all, the bank has a wonderful record. Its Cr dit Foncier Department has advanced £103,591,000 to home builders on quite reasonable terms and conditions, and has always met its clients on a reasonable basis when problems have arisen. The bank has handled all its business in a capable manner and has been an important

adjunct to the development of the economy of Victoria. Consistent support has been given to municipal and other authorities, and in 1956-57 £9,022,000 was advanced for this purpose.

In the annual report of the bank for 1957 the assets listed include £76,000,000 lent to public authorities; £37,500,000 in *Crédit Foncier* debentures; £16,000,000 on land mortgages; nearly £42,000,000 in liquid investments; and £108,000,000 in Commonwealth stock. The private trading banks have now intruded into the savings bank field, but in spite of that fact the State Savings Bank of Victoria still holds £268,000,000 of the depositors' money. The savings banks operated by private banking institutions hold £34,000,000 and the Commonwealth Savings Bank £115,000,000. I believe this has led to healthy competition, and one effect has been that new life has been put into the activities of our State Savings Bank. That is important, and I feel that Parliament should support its efforts. The bank must be given freedom to meet the competition and to carry the fight into the competitors' camp. That is a reasonable proposition, and, in effect, that is all the Bill seeks to accomplish. Right from the outset of this competition, the bank has attempted to re-vitalize its activities, and I shall give one example. A few months ago I sponsored the opening of a Red Cross branch in my electorate. A fortnight before its inaugural meeting, I received a letter from the manager of the North Balwyn branch of the State Savings Bank pointing out the facilities his branch had to offer and asking me to direct the attention of the office-bearers of the Red Cross branch to those facts. I did that and he was rewarded for his initiative by obtaining the account of that branch of the Red Cross organization.

Mr. SHEPHERD. — The Red Cross branch was able to open a cheque account, was it not?

Mr. TAYLOR.—Yes. I do not propose to analyse deeply all the clauses of the Bill. I believe that it is wise and sound that provision should be made for seven Commissioners. As the Premier stated earlier, a majority decision will

be democratic and the change will simplify the bank's procedure. It is also quite sensible to remove restrictions on persons eligible to be appointed as Commissioners. It is only right and proper that the best available men should be selected. There is a basis of common sense behind the move to give the bank power to establish agencies outside Victoria. Customers of the bank who travel interstate on occasions, doubtless would like facilities provided so that they could handle their finances through the bank whilst away. Agencies should be established at least in the other capital cities.

Mr. BOLTE.—If clients are not offered such facilities that is often an inducement to them to change to a bank which does provide those conveniences.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I intended to make that point. The granting of cheque facilities can be considered together with the provision of interstate agencies as an added convenience to customers. It is reasonable that cheque facilities should be available to all clients at the discretion of the Commissioners. Many State Savings Bank depositors hold cheque accounts in trading banks, and since the introduction of savings bank sections in the private banks the State Savings Bank has lost clients. Therefore, the widening of the cheque account facilities is important. These matters deal purely with policy and not the mechanics of banking. I think the mechanics are not matters for Parliament, but purely for the administrators of the bank. I have complete faith in the Commissioners' ability to handle the mechanics of banking and any other minor problems that might confront the institution.

The proposed new section 55 will confer discretion on the Commissioners regarding investments and securities and will result in greater liquidity in the bank's activities. In that regard it will bring the State Savings Bank into line with the Savings Bank of South Australia and the Commonwealth Savings Bank. I notice that the State Savings Bank holds approximately £108,000,000 in Commonwealth inscribed stock. Considering it is the State Savings Bank of Victoria, at first glance

that seems to be far too great a sum to hold in Commonwealth securities, but it would appear on closer examination to be the result of investments during the war years when Commonwealth stock was the only type of security available for the investment of State Savings Bank funds.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—And also because of the threats of the Commonwealth Government since the war.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am not dealing with all the side issues at this stage, but am just attempting to place before the House a few facts affecting the Bill. The Premier did indicate to me that at one stage the Federal Treasurer tried to exert pressure on him to influence the State Savings Bank to reinvest into Commonwealth stock loans that were about to mature. The Premier was in the position to say "I cannot interfere with the bank. It is an autonomous body. What it does is its business." He left it at that, and I think that is the way it should be.

The State Savings Bank has recently brought in a few innovations. It extended trading hours at certain branches in the city from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and it was interesting to note that on the same day the Commonwealth Savings Bank announced its intention to provide similar facilities. The State Savings Bank also provides facilities at its branches and agencies for the payment of electricity and gas accounts. That is a good point, because it is convenient for citizens and attracts customers. The bank has agreed to accept at its branches applications for membership and contributions to medical and hospital benefits associations and certain friendly societies. It has already established a student-operated bank at Macleod. Another will be opened very shortly at Mildura, and others will be established at different centres in the near future. These banks are conducted by students of the commercial classes at the schools concerned as part of their training. If my memory serves me correctly, more than £2,000,000 has been deposited with the State Savings Bank by the student-operated and other school banks. The

bank is also extending its lending activities. That will enable it to provide more homes of higher value, which is commendable. In the general sense, the State Savings Bank is the biggest money lender in Victoria so far as housing is concerned. The bank, which lends basically as a service to the community, has made extremely low profits from its transactions. I am informed that they are as low as 1s. 2d. and 3s. 6d. per cent., which is hardly a business proposition. Nevertheless, the bank is providing valuable service to the community and to the State. I understand that the prospects for the 1957-58 financial year are very good. This Bill will help to restore the *status quo* and enable the Commissioners to bring new life to the State Savings Bank. I shall watch the developments in the banking sphere with great interest.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Carlton).—I desire to refer, with some satisfaction, as did the Leader of the Country party, to the unequivocal support of the State Savings Bank given by the Premier during his second-reading speech. The significance of the Premier's statement is that he hopes the bank will be enabled to compete with the private trading banks. That particular significance is underlined by an unsigned document, circulated among members of Parliament, entitled, "For careful consideration of Parliamentarians and bank officials." It contains an extract from the *Bulletin* of 28th August, 1957, and concludes with the following observation:—

Savings bank business should, properly, be an important sideline of the trading-banks or, as in England, the post office. To set up Government savings banks devoted to that type of business alone, to maintain costly bank premises and highly-paid staff (doing in the main elementary clerical work) and then shovelling the money so collected into Government and semi-government loans, is a most expensive way of doing things. It certainly does not call for separate banking establishments to handle it and nothing else.

That represents a point of view diametrically opposed to that expressed by the Premier, the honorable member for Balwyn, the Leader of the Country party, the Leader of the Labour party and the

honorable member for Brunswick West. Furthermore, it is poorly supported by the facts. In an economic survey undertaken by the Federal Treasurer early this year, it was pointed out that in the past three years the level of public works expenditure throughout Australia had risen by only £42,000,000, that costs also rose, but that there had been very little change in the volume of the work initiated. That position is due not to the policy of any of the State or Commonwealth banking institutions, but to the reluctance of the private trading banks, to which such eulogistic references were made in the *Bulletin* statement, to make available money to develop the country, and in particular Victoria.

The four main functions of money are its use as a measure of value, as a medium of exchange, as a means of saving, and as a means of credit. The idea of establishing a State savings bank originated in Great Britain 160 years ago. It emerged from the deplorable condition of the working classes in that country at that time and the fact that they had no easy method of practising thrift, of providing for sickness, infirmity or old age, or of providing for their day-to-day and week-to-week needs. The idea was brought from London to Australia. During discussions in New South Wales by those with experience of the emergence of the State savings bank system in Great Britain, two resolutions were passed by a meeting convened in Sydney, which seemed to indicate that the same conditions that gave rise to the savings bank system in Great Britain were responsible for the establishment of the system in Australia. The resolutions, which I shall quote for record purposes because they are of some interest, were in the following terms:—

That this meeting has long witnessed, with sorrow, the extravagance and improvidence which the poor settlers, mechanics, and labourers of this Colony have fallen into, by reason, first of their having no encouragement to save their earnings, and secondly of their having, from the peculiar circumstances of this Colony, no place of safe deposit for those earnings, whereby payments for produce, or labour, are generally made to them in property or barter, in which account both the labour

and the property are rated upon an artificially high scale, and the little money that passes is quickly dissipated in spirituous liquor and gambling; a system which mainly tends to keep them poor, vicious, and unmarried, and is therefore of the deepest injury to the Colony.

That it appears to this meeting that a great part of these evils would be remedied, and habits of economy, industry and matrimony generated, by one of those recent and laudable institutions of the Mother Country called a savings bank.

I make that point, not for the purpose of criticizing in any way the introduction of this Bill by the Government—with certain reservations, Opposition members support it—but to point out that the institutions which are competing with the State Savings Bank to-day and which are pleading so eloquently in the name of competition—presumably, as someone has said, to stimulate initiative on the part of the State Savings Bank—had no interest whatsoever in the deplorable conditions which gave birth to the State savings bank system in Britain and also in Australia. I do not say this in condemnation of the existing personnel of the private savings banks of Australia—or of the associated banks, as they are commonly termed—but simply as a commentary upon the philosophy which appears evident in many other walks of our economic life. Persons of that philosophy are not interested in any situation out of which a profit cannot be made. The history of the State Savings Bank is contained in a 1934 publication—the year of its centenary—entitled *The State Savings Bank of Victoria, Its Place in the History of Victoria*, which was written by Mr. Alex. Cooch the then general manager of the bank. When one hears the philosophy that I have mentioned enunciated, it is well to remember that the origins of the State Savings Bank owe nothing to the private trading bank system. It is true that the recent addition of savings bank functions to the trading activities of the private banks has resulted in some slight increase in national savings accounts.

In a circular last month the National Bank analysed the increase in savings bank deposits and pointed out that, whereas the aggregate of depositors'

Mr. Lovegrove.

balances has been increasing annually at a rate of 6.7 per cent., for the year 1956-57 the establishment of the new savings banks was reflected in an increase of approximately 8 per cent. I do not know whether that amounts to a radical success on the part of the private trading banks. In my view, those banks would be acting more in the national interest if they devoted some of their policies, not towards the use of current deposits—on which they pay no interest but for the lending of which they obtain anything up to 10 per cent. from hire-purchase financial interests—but towards satisfying the grave lag in public works construction in all States and in particular in Victoria. The Federal Treasurer referred to that matter earlier in the year. I believe the private trading banks are not entitled to any special consideration in respect of competition against the State Savings Bank of Victoria. The honorable member for Brunswick West outlined the necessity of extending the functions of the State Savings Bank so that money may be used as a means of credit. I think it has been commonly accepted that prior to the depression that function was at the best imperfectly understood, but that situation no longer obtains. The need for the national control of both the quantity and price of money available for credit is accepted in principle not only by the Labour party but by every Conservative party in the world. No party in this country would have the courage to oppose the maintenance of an efficient, resilient and adequate central banking system, although at present there is legislation before the Commonwealth Parliament which appears to the Labour party to have been drafted mainly in the interests of the private trading banks. As the matter is properly understood to-day, there can be no logical argument against the proposal of the honorable member for Brunswick West that there should be an extension of the functions of the State Savings Bank to make credit available, not in the way that is being done by the private trading banks, but to small depositors who constitute the great bulk of the customers of the State Savings Bank.

At present about one-third of the sales on the retail market are made on credit. According to a Gallup poll taken a few months ago, 41 per cent. of Australian families are now buying various goods and services on terms. Approximately one-fifth of that percentage are buying homes on terms, which means that about one-third of the total money expended is devoted to credit purchases of goods. The figures can be further broken down as percentage fractions of the total credit market as follows: For the purchase of refrigerators, 10 per cent.; cars, 9 per cent.; washing machines, 5 per cent.; furniture, 4 per cent.; radios, 3 per cent.; sewing machines, 2 per cent.; vacuum cleaners, 2 per cent.; carpets, 2 per cent.; and television sets, 1 per cent. Obviously, the great bulk of those credit purchases are made by the ordinary wage and salary earners in the community, who receive, I suppose, a weekly income of between £14 and £25. Of course, they are not going directly to the hire-purchase companies, which charge astronomical amounts for accommodation. They have to buy under accounting systems which, although they are more reasonable, are loaded with bad debts, such as occur in even the best systems, and administrative costs, which have already been costed and paid for two or three times over in the gross profit margin.

Mr. LOXTON.—Mr. Chifley thought it was all right.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I understand the honorable member for Prahran is something of an authority on banking because he worked in the industry. Consequently, I have great respect for his practical experience. I should be pleased if the honorable member would be good enough at the appropriate stage to throw some light on the accuracy or inaccuracy of the statements I am making.

Mr. RYLAH.—Your inaccuracy is undoubted.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I am only human and, like the Chief Secretary, on rare occasions I have been guilty of inaccuracy, but I admit mine. The Opposition believes there is a real need for some service of the type outlined by the

honorable member for Brunswick West, particularly as, during the last three or four years, apparently the Commonwealth Bank has been submitted to a "deep freeze" as a result of the Commonwealth Government's policy. The Leader of the Opposition referred to business of the future, and I share his views. I think that in given circumstances—with the requisite administrative machinery, and subject to decisions of the character hinted at by the honorable member for Balwyn concerning what moneys would be used for the purpose—the State Savings Bank should at some time be given trading functions. I find no argument against that proposal. However, it is not the objective of this Bill. After some experience of the cheque account system by the State Savings Bank and its customers, possibly some further developments of that nature will crystallize into trading bank functions.

In April last, the Minister of Housing convened a slum reclamation conference at the South Melbourne Town Hall. The assistant general manager of the State Savings Bank made a report to that conference regarding the lending activities of that institution, and pointed out what the bank had done in the matter of *Crédit Foncier* loans. He stated that under present conditions such loans were granted up to three-fourths of the bank's valuation of the security, with a maximum of £2,500 when the applicant wished it to erect a dwelling, and of £2,000 for the purchase of a house which must have been built within the previous two years, or for the payment of liabilities on a home which must have been built within the previous year.

The *Crédit Foncier* presumably was maintaining those figures as the general level on which the bank would base housing loans so that as many people as possible could share in the money made available by the bank for lending purposes. Since then, I understand, the bank has announced that it is prepared to lend amounts up to £4,000. I cannot understand why in April of this year the bank claimed credit for the fact that it would lend only up to £2,500—on the ground that it was relieving the

low-income mortgagor and was spreading its reserves and resources as far as it could amongst those most in need of it—whereas to-day the ceiling has been raised to £4,000. I am convinced that this extension will not bring about the results hoped for but will mean an immediate increase in the cost of a certain type of dwelling because of the activities of a certain type of builder.

I do not wish to detract from the very good work being done by the Home Finance Trust. Recently the Premier paid tribute in this House to the private trading banks and other lending institutions for having put money into the Home Finance Trust. But that amount of money was relatively negligible.

Mr. SUGGETT.—How much was put in by those institutions?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—In terms of the resources of the private trading banks, it would not add up to a contribution of a worth-while character. The sum advanced by the State Savings Bank constitutes an anomaly but it is proportionately much more substantial than the contribution of the private trading banks and other lending institutions.

Mr. SUGGETT.—Have you taken that into consideration?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I have, and I do not think I have made unfair comment. The State Savings Bank has weathered one of the biggest economic storms ever to have swept this country. After the first land boom in 1893 twelve banks failed. The State Savings Bank survived the depression of the 1930's. Admittedly, that was not due to any intrinsic merit in the sense that it had survived the 1893 blizzard, but it did survive because at that time there were the beginnings of a central banking system in this country. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, during the period of the greatest distress this country has known since 1893—the depression years—the State Savings Bank did a magnificent job to the best of its ability in its dealings with those people to whom it had sold homes and who were unable to meet their obligations because of mass unemployment. The bank can do an excellent job in the future. I congratulate the Premier upon

the observations he made in the course of his second-reading explanation of this Bill and in support of the State Savings Bank. I take it that those observations commit the Government to the support of the bank in the future, even against unfair competition.

**Mr. FENNESSY** (Brunswick East).—As was pointed out by the honorable member for Brunswick West, the Opposition is not opposed to this Bill. It commends the Government for having introduced it, because we all believe that any action that may be taken to further the interests of the State Savings Bank will be good legislation. The honorable member for Brunswick West indicated that the Opposition over the past few weeks has closely examined the Bill and proposes, in Committee, to submit certain recommendations. I do not intend to reiterate his comments regarding those proposed amendments but to indicate the general attitude of the Opposition to this measure I should like to make some observations regarding the activities of the State Savings Bank.

Banking is an age-old institution. One does not need to be an economist to realize that the existence of any country depends upon its banking system. That principle was demonstrated during the last war when a Labour Government found it necessary to amalgamate all the resources of the banking institutions. Although the banks did not approve, that step was taken in the interests of the defence of this country, so that control might be exercised over the whole of the banking institutions and the war prosecuted to the fullest extent. So that this country could regain a stable economy, it was necessary to retain those controls for many years after hostilities ceased. Realizing the extent to which Government control assists the stability of any State, the Labour Government of the day wisely maintained those controls. As was mentioned by the honorable member for Carlton, the Federal Government has brought down legislation to surrender those controls to private banking institutions. Wars have been won and lost by the support given to one side by a particular bank. History records that the outcome of the Battle

of Waterloo depended upon which side was financed by the House of Rothschild. That illustrates the control banking institutions exercise over the affairs of a country.

The Opposition considers that the State Savings Bank of Victoria, which it claims is a socialistic institution, should be maintained and controlled by the people of the State. For that reason, we are pleased to see legislation which will assist the State Savings Bank. Within the past year or two, Federal legislation has granted private banks the right to create their own savings departments, with the result that the activities of the State Savings Bank have been restricted. In support of that contention I quote from the *Age* of 2nd October this year a statement made by Mr. O. R. Carlson, general manager of the State Savings Bank, as follows:—

Competition slows down growth of State Savings Bank. Competition from private savings banks retarded the growth of the State Savings Bank of Victoria still further in the year to June 30.

Deposits increased by only £1,958,851 to a record £266,276,076 during the year, compared with rises of £4,166,846 in 1955-56 and £14,543,470 in 1955.

**Mr. BOLTE.**—Yet the over-all savings in Victoria increased by about £60,000,000.

**Mr. FENNESSY.**—It is obvious that by the creation of savings departments in private trading banks the State Savings Bank lost many of its depositors. The Opposition believes that the State Savings Bank should be protected in every way, and, having regard to the competition on the savings bank aspect, it should be allowed to increase its activities by the setting up of a current account section. That step should increase the number of depositors. In reply to an interjection, the Premier could not indicate how the current account system is to operate.

**Mr. BOLTE.**—Do we run the machinery part of the State Savings Bank?

**Mr. FENNESSY.**—The Premier does not run it personally.

**Mr. BOLTE.**—That is what you are asking me to do.

Mr. FENNESSY.—That is not so. When a proposal is put before this House honorable members are entitled to know all the facts associated with it.

Mr. BOLTE.—You want to know the policy.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The Opposition wishes to be advised of all the facts. Perhaps the Premier is unable to state the facts because he does not know what is involved in his own legislation.

Mr. BOLTE.—It has nothing to do with the legislation.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The Premier has not yet explained what is to happen in relation to the operation of the cheque account system. When this legislation was introduced it was followed by an announcement by the State Savings Bank that the limits of the Crédit Foncier system were to be extended and that at the same time the limit on housing loans was to be increased to £4,000.

Mr. PETTY.—Surely you believe in that.

Mr. FENNESSY.—Of course I do. It has been suggested that the Opposition should not attempt to gain a political advantage from this Bill, yet the Premier attempted to do so when a recent change of policy of the bank was highlighted.

Mr. BOLTE.—Who made the statements in regard to the change of policy?

Mr. FENNESSY.—The statement to which I propose to refer was made by the chairman of Commissioners of the State Savings Bank.

Mr. BOLTE.—What have I to do with that?

Mr. FENNESSY.—During the past few months the Premier must have seen a great deal of Mr. Hocking, otherwise he would not have been able to present this Bill. The honorable gentleman attempted to make propaganda out of the announcements made by the State Savings Bank. I consider that to be one of the greatest examples of an attempt to hoodwink the people regarding the availability of loans, which are in fact non-existent. I charge the Premier with having attempted to gain a political

advantage from this matter. I invite honorable members to examine the comments made in various newspapers.

Mr. BOLTE.—Quote mine.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I shall do so to demonstrate what a good judge the Premier is! A statement made by him, and which appeared in the press on 15th October, does not coincide with statements made by other persons who know a great deal about housing in this State. The following statement appeared in the *Sun News-Pictorial* on Tuesday, November 15, under the heading "Home-hunters rush for loans—"

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).**—Order! Does the honorable member believe this matter to be relevant?

Mr. FENNESSY.—Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER.—I do not know what the honorable member proposes to read, but it seems to be wide of the Bill.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The Bill refers to the Crédit Foncier Department of the State Savings Bank, and the statement made by Mr. Hocking relates to the system by which the State Savings Bank makes loans available. It indicates that Crédit Foncier loans will be increased from £2,500 to £2,750 and advises the public at large that the State Savings Bank is prepared to make other loans available at higher interest rates. For that reason, I think the statement is connected with the administration of the State Savings Bank.

Mr. BOLTE.—Read my statement.

The SPEAKER.—Order! The Premier is not entitled to ask an honorable member to read his statement. The honorable member for Brunswick East is addressing the Chair and I ask him to continue.

Mr. BOLTE.—He has been referring to a quotation that he cannot find.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The article in the *Sun News-Pictorial* of 15th October states, *inter alia*—

#### HOME-HUNTERS RUSH FOR LOANS.

More than 200 people again rushed the State Savings Bank in Melbourne yesterday for details of the new £4,000 home loan . . .

That would be on Monday morning. An article in the *Herald* of Saturday, 12th October, states, in part—

About 200 home seekers called at the State Savings Bank, Head Office, Elizabeth-street, city, to inquire about money for housing.

A big crowd was waiting outside the building when the bank's department opened soon after 9 a.m.

Bank officials reported later that their telephones had been "running hot" with similar inquiries.

The Premier was reported as being quite jubilant about the fact. He attempted to make political capital out of it, and made the following statement which appeared in the *Sun News-Pictorial* of Tuesday, 15th October, under the heading "Boom in Houses—Bolte":—

A boom in house building in Victoria was predicted yesterday by the Premier, Mr. Bolte.

He said that next year could be a record year.

He based his forecast on the announcement by the State Savings Bank that home-builders and buyers would receive loans up to £4,000 under its new housing scheme.

"I am certain that, after a lean period, the building industry will pick up as a result of much more money being made available for house building," he said.

What absolute, crass stupidity for the Premier of this State to make such a statement. Both Senator Spooner and the Minister of Housing have said that there is a shortage of finance for home-building and that the building industry in this State is in dire straits. Therefore, the forecast that more homes will be built next year is ridiculous. The Minister of Housing has admitted that the Housing Commission will build fewer houses this year than it has built for several years past. Obviously, the Premier was trying to make political capital out of the announcement made by the State Savings Bank.

Mr. SCOTT.—A member of your party accused employees of the Housing Commission of corruption.

**The SPEAKER (the Hon. W. J. F. McDonald).**—Order!

Mr. FENNESSY.—I appreciate the interjection of the honorable member for Ballarat South.

The SPEAKER.—I do not. I ask the honorable member for Brunswick East to continue.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The loans of up to £4,000 proposed by the State Savings Bank will be available only to a small section of the community. Mr. Hocking stated that the interest rate on such a loan would be between  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and that weekly repayments would be £7 10s. It is quite obvious that few people in the community could undertake such a commitment. No one on the basic wage could do so. The Crédit Foncier department of the State Savings Bank has done a creditable job ever since its formation.

I was most interested to read a letter which appeared in the *Age* newspaper on 19th November last. It was written by a person named W. E. Brann of Box Hill who stated, *inter alia*—

At one time one could go to the State Savings Bank, look at a book of plans, and put £50 down on the counter and secure any particular design for a house one wanted, built in a few months under the supervision of the bank's housing department.

That was in "the bad old days." Now, in these more enlightened times, the bank official, poker faced, calmly informs the hopeful couple that they need £1,500 as well as the block of land they hold for a house costing between £3,000 and £4,000.

No wonder the hair of British immigrants turns grey when they find what our housing conditions are like. It also explains why many return at the first opportunity.

That letter reveals exactly the existing position in relation to housing. I remind the Premier that his press statement, which I read a few moments ago, was ridiculous. While remarks of that nature might sound all right on an election eve, we would expect him to make more statesman-like utterances in a period some time before an election.

I think it is agreed that this Bill is a worth-while measure. Anything that can help the State Savings Bank in its competition with the savings departments established by private banks is worth while and will be supported by the Labour party. However, we expect the Premier, when he introduces legislation of this nature, to present to the House all the facts associated with the proposals. The honorable gentleman intimated, by way of interjection, that he is not the head of the State Savings Bank. I agree that that is the position, but I point out that he is the Premier of

the State. I am sure that in his heart he realizes that he has great influence over the activities of the State Savings Bank. I recall that when the Home Finance Trust was established, the first contributor to its funds was the State Savings Bank with an amount of £500,000. That came just out of the blue. Nobody else could obtain advances from the bank at that stage, but when the Premier spoke up for the Home Finance Trust, funds were forthcoming. Yet he says he has no influence at all with the State Savings Bank! He under-estimates his authority. For the reasons I have given, we support the Bill. The Labour party has amendments to propose in Committee. I hope the Premier will acknowledge them to be worth while and will accept them.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Progress was reported.

### ADJOURNMENT.

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

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

The motion was agreed to.

*The House adjourned at 4.37 p.m.  
until Tuesday, November 26.*

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Tuesday, November 26, 1957.*

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The **PRESIDENT** (Sir Clifden Eager) took the chair at 7.54 p.m., and read the prayer.

### MOTOR CAR (REGISTRATION FEES) BILL.

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

### LABOUR AND INDUSTRY (CARRIAGE OF BEES) BILL.

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

### GEELONG WATERWORKS AND SEWERAGE (BELLARINE OFFICERS) BILL.

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

### POLICE OFFENCES (UNLAWFUL USE OF BOATS) BILL.

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

### WATER (AMENDMENT) 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.

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

**POLIOMYELITIS: NUMBER OF CASES:**  
**INOCULATIONS: SUPPLIES OF SALK VACCINE.**

For the **Hon. W. O. FULTON** (Gippsland Province), the **Hon. R. W.** May asked the Minister of Health—

(a) What is the number of poliomyelitis cases in Victoria—(i) for the years 1952 to 1956, inclusive; (ii) for the year 1956-57; and (iii) since the introduction of Salk vaccine?

(b) How many children have been inoculated since the inception of the campaign?

(c) Are there any children who have not been inoculated; if so, how many are awaiting inoculation and in what age groups?

(d) Are ample supplies of Salk vaccine available for present use and is it anticipated that full supplies will be available for all future needs?

**The Hon. E. P. CAMERON** (Minister of Health).—The answers are—

(a) (i) The number of cases of poliomyelitis in Victoria for the years 1952-1956 was:—

|      |    |    |     |
|------|----|----|-----|
| 1952 | .. | .. | 297 |
| 1953 | .. | .. | 283 |
| 1954 | .. | .. | 569 |
| 1955 | .. | .. | 235 |
| 1956 | .. | .. | 252 |