The whole concept of holiday-making has changed in recent years. As a result of the activities of the Tourist Development Authority, localities that were once obscure or hardly more than marks on a map have been brought into popularity; regional publicity, documented and descriptive, has been issued and the towns concerned have profited from it; scenic spots and places of historic interest, neglected in the past, have hordes of admirers.

Money is being diffused among country business people, who in the off-season find survival fairly difficult. Some resorts in the season have accessions of population that give them almost city dimensions.

The Tourist Bureau is helpful to visitors and our own citizens in framing interesting itineraries. It is in need of accommodation for an extension of its services, and the Bill proposes to provide this.

On the motion of Mr. BORTHWICK (Scoresby), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 16.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

THE SPEAKER.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands).—By leave, I move—

That, owing to important official duties requiring the presence of Mr. Speaker in his electorate, leave of absence be granted to Mr. Speaker until Tuesday, the 23rd November.

The motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands).—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 4.45 *p.m., until Tuesday, November,* 16.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, November 16, 1965.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. R. W. Mack)** took the chair at 4.54 p.m., and read the prayer.

LICENSING BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of State Development), was read a first time.

MOTOR CAR (DRIVING OFFENCE) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—I have the honour to report that, accompanied by honorable members, I this day waited upon His Excellency the Governor and presented to him the Address of the Legislative Council, adopted on the 19th October last, in reply to His Excellency's Speech on the opening of Parliament. His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply:—

MR. PRESIDENT AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL:

In the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign contained in the Address you have just presented to me.

I fully rely on your wisdom in deliberating upon the important measures to be brought under your consideration, and I earnestly hope that the results of your labours will be conducive to the advancement and prosperity of this State.

ROAD TRAFFIC.

WIDENING OF PASCOE VALE-ROAD: PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Is it proposed to widen the pavement of Pascoe Vale-road in a southerly direction from Woodland-street; if so—(i) when was

the project planned; (ii) what money has been allocated and what work has been completed in each subsequent financial year; (iii) what safety precautions have been provided in the plans for pedestrians and school children crossing Pascoe Vale-road between Woodland and Bridge streets; (iv) is any substantial safety or guard rail included in the plans for the protection of pedestrians using the footpath on the east side of Pascoe Vale-road between Woodland and Bridge streets; and (v) what is the anticipated construction time schedule of the project?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

Yes.

(i) 1963.

(ii) 1963-64 Country Roads Board allocations £7,000. Drainage pipes purchased and some temporary work carried out immediately north of Woodland-street, 1964-65. Country Roads Board allocation £9,334. Water mains relocated and negotiations commenced for acquisition of area from service station to accommodate widening. 1965-66 Country Roads Board allocation £5582. Gas mains relocated. Negotiations are proceeding for the acquisition of the area required.

(iii) Provision is being made in the reconstruction of Pascoe Vale-road to include the necessary conduits to provide for signalization of the intersection with Woodland-street. The existing pedestrian crossing at the south side of the intersection of Bridge-street will be extended over the widened pavement. This pedestrian crossing and the existing pedestrian traffic lights north of Woodland-street may be removed if signalization of the intersection is carried out.

(iv) Not in the Country Roads Board plans.

(v) It is anticipated that roadworks could commence late this financial year and be completed by September, 1966.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

MURTOA ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR: PAYMENT FOR WORK.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Further to Question No. 7 asked in the House on 5th October last, concerning accounts owing to Mr. H. Jackson of Murtoa for contract work performed for the Public Works Department during 1963—(i) on what date were the payments made for work performed at the Rainbow court-house and the Rainbow police station amounting to £4 5s. and £29 12s., respectively, what were the cheque numbers, and when were they cashed; and (ii) were the outstanding payments due for work completed during 1963 listed by Mr. Jackson in a statement of accounts outstanding, and re-submitted to the Department on two or three occasions during the past two years; if so, what has been the reason for the delay in settlement?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

(i) Treasury advice is to the effect that a cheque No. 104692, covering the amounts of £4 5s. and £29 12s., was posted on the 5th February, 1963. The cheque has not been cleared through the bank, and the Treasury has now been asked to issue a replacement cheque.

(ii) There is no record of receipt of a statement of accounts outstanding. However, duplicate claims were received from the departmental inspector of works in May, 1965, but as the cheque had been posted it was assumed that the contractor had actually received payment.

MAROONDAH HIGHWAY.

RECONSTRUCTION BETWEEN ANDERSON'S-ROAD AND ACHERON BRIDGE.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) On what date was work commenced on the reconstruction of that portion of the Maroondah Highway between Anderson's-road and the Acheron bridge?

(*b*) How much of the work has been completed?

(*c*) Why has the work been delayed over the past three months?

(*d*) When is it anticipated that the project will be finished?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) 28th October, 1964.

(*b*) Construction work has been completed to the stage where only final cleaning up of the road reserve and final trimming and shaping of the pavement prior to sealing remains to be carried out.

(*c*) Work was suspended on the 12th August, 1965, because weather conditions at this time prevented the outstanding work, as described in (*b*), from being carried out satisfactorily and economically. The contractor was advised that the period of suspension was fixed as from the 12th August, 1965 to a provisional date of 2nd November, 1965.

(*d*) Work recommenced on this job on the 8th November, 1965, and it is anticipated the whole job will be completed and sealed by mid-December, 1965.

FORESTS COMMISSION.

TIMBER EXTRACTION IN ERRINUNDRA AREA: QUOTAS.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province) asked the Minister of Forests—

What are the names of the persons or organizations recently granted timber extraction rights in the Errinundra area, and what was the annual quota allotted to each?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Forests).—The answer is—

Heyfield Orbost Sawmillers Pty. Ltd.—West Errinundra and Delegate Logging Units—12,000,000 sup. feet per annum.

John Sharp & Sons Pty. Ltd.—Ada Logging Unit—4,000,000 sup. ft. per annum.

Narbethong Sawmills Pty. Ltd.—Hensleighs Creek Logging Unit—4,000,000 sup. feet per annum.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

FLINDERS-STREET STATION: REDEVELOPMENT: OPTION HELD BY H.K.J. PTY. LTD.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) On what date was H.K.J. Pty. Ltd., of 430 Little Collins-street, Melbourne, granted the option over the redevelopment of the Flinders-street railway station, and what were the terms of such option?

(*b*) Have any extensions to the option been granted; if so, when?

(*c*) Is a further extension of the option likely?

(*d*) What are the current terms of the option now held by H.K.J. Pty. Ltd?

(*e*) Who are the directors of the company and what is its paid-up capital?

(*f*) Is the Government aware that other developers are interested in the project?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) The arrangement at Flinders-street was with H.K.J. Pty. Ltd. In reply to the honorable member's question of the 16th November, this was inadvertently shown as J.H.K. Pty. Ltd. On the 5th June, 1962, an arrangement was completed giving H. K. Jones & Associates exclusive rights of investigation of the Flinders-street area until the 21st June, 1963.

(*b*) No extension to the arrangement was sought. A formal agreement was signed between the Commissioners and H.K.J. Pty. Ltd. on the 8th May, 1963, and is current until the 8th May, 1966.

(*c*) No application has been received for an extension. The matter will be considered if such an application is received.

(*d*) The agreement is a comprehensive document on which the developer must negotiate very substantial financial commitments and as such I must regard it as confidential.

(*e*) Directors as shown on the last return at the Companies' Registration Office were—

Herbert Keith Jones of 12 Stevenson-street, Kew, consultant.

Maurice Irving Tomlins of 71a Denman-street, East St. Kilda, accountant.

James Huntly Frederick of 4 Waratah-street, Burwood, solicitor.

Herbert Clarence Tiller of "Kilfinora", Woori Yallock, company director.

Paid-up capital .. £23,500.

(*f*) Yes.

LILYDALE-WARBURTON LINE: BETTERMENT TAX.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Was a "betterment tax" collected in connexion with the construction of the Lilydale-Warburton railway; if so, how much money was collected and over what period?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

Under the provisions of the Act (No. 1589) authorizing construction of the line, and the Railway Lands Acquisition Act 1893, a "Lilydale to Warburton Railway Construction Trust", comprising the Shires of Lilydale and Upper Yarra, was constituted in 1899 for the purpose of striking a rate to meet the cost of acquiring the land required for construction of the Lilydale-Warburton line.

The power of the Trust to make rates ceased on the 9th May, 1922, and the Trust was dissolved on the 13th June, 1922.

Searches have been made in the Treasury and the Shire of Lillydale, but have failed to locate any record of the amount collected by the Trust. A search is being conducted by the Shire of Upper Yarra, and the honorable member will be supplied with the information sought if it comes to light.

HALLAM LEVEL CROSSING: ACCIDENTS: SAFETY PRECAUTIONS.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) How many accidents have occurred and how many people have been killed in the last two years at Green's-lane level crossing near Hallam?

(*b*) Is it proposed to install flashing lights or wig-wag signals at the crossing; if not, what safety precautions will be taken by the Railways Commissioners to prevent further accidents at this crossing?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) Four accidents in which three people have been killed.

(*b*) It is proposed to equip the crossing with flashing lights in its order of priority which, in the light of present commitments, should be within the next twelve months.

SOUTH-EASTERN FREEWAY.

ROUTE OF PROPOSED EXTENSION.

The Hon. G. J. O'CONNELL (Melbourne Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

Has the Planning and Highway Section of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works decided on the route of the proposed extension of the South-Eastern Freeway; if so—(i) have the local and other authorities concerned been notified; and (ii) when will objections be heard?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—The answer is—

The route for the proposed extension of the South-Eastern Freeway, as determined by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, appears on the planning scheme maps, which were placed on public exhibition from January to April this year.

A number of objections were made to the route for the freeway shown on these maps, and alternative schemes which have been submitted have been under consideration.

It is proposed to hold a public hearing of the objections on Friday, 3rd December, and the objectors and other affected parties are being informed so as to give them the opportunity to be heard.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

STRATHMORE HIGH SCHOOL: NOISE LEVEL IN CLASS-ROOMS.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Were the Chief Architect and the Chief Mechanical and Electrical Engineer of the Public Works Department requested to inquire into the noise level in the class-rooms of the Strathmore High School fronting Pascoe Vale-road during March, 1965; if so—(i) has the inquiry been completed; and (ii) has a report been considered by the Minister of Education and with what result?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

Yes.

(i) and (ii) An inquiry was made and a report submitted. The Public Works Department also presented a recommendation as to the means whereby the noise might be reduced. The report is in such terms that it is difficult to compare the degree of noise with that in other schools necessarily sited close to traffic and to decide whether it is sufficiently severe to justify the cost of measures which would reduce it to some extent. The Minister of Education has arranged that a senior officer of the secondary schools division will visit the school and advise on the matter.

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF: VISITING TEACHERS STAFF.

The Hon. T. H. GRIGG (Bendigo Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) How many teachers for the deaf are on the visiting teachers staff, how many students are visited by them, and at what intervals?

(*b*) From which towns did the pupils who passed the recent examinations come?

(*c*) To what known vacancies will these new teachers be posted?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—It is assumed that "pupils" in (*b*) means "students" at the Training Centre for Teachers of the Deaf, i.e., teachers doing the course for trained teachers of the deaf certificate.

The answers are:—

(*a*) 14; 470; students are visited according to individual needs, either twice weekly, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or each term, or are checked annually.

(*b*) Melbourne and suburbs, 10. One each from the towns of Casterton, Catani, Heywood, Kangaroo Flat, Maryborough, Ouyen, Red Cliffs, Wangaratta and Woolsthorpe.

(*c*) Postings have not yet been decided, but the vacancies are:—

Victorian School for Deaf Children	6
Glendonald School	5
Princess Elizabeth Kindergarten	4
Ewing House, Ballarat	2
Schools for Mentally Handicapped	1
Visiting Teacher Service	2

STATUTE LAW REVISION COMMITTEE.

VAGRANCY BILL.

The Hon. G. J. NICOL (Monash Province), chairman, presented the report of the Statute Law Revision Committee upon the proposals contained in the Vagrancy Bill, together with minutes of evidence and an appendix.

It was ordered that they be laid on the table, and that the report be printed.

MILK AND DAIRY SUPERVISION (CHEESE FACTORY LICENCES) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1958 with respect to the granting of licences for the manufacture of cheese and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

FUEL AND POWER BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. R. J. Hamer (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—At the outset, I wish to say that it is with pleasure that members of the Labor Party support this Bill, which is one of the most important ever presented to this Parliament. The Bill is drafted along the lines of the English Act, and only slight variations have been made in the initial clauses. I wish to quote from the *English Law Reports* 1945, Public General Statutes, in which, at page 151, subsection (1) of section 1 of the Minister of Fuel and Power Act 1945 is set out as follows:—

> It shall be lawful for His Majesty to appoint a Minister of Fuel and Power (in this Act referred to as "the Minister") who shall be charged with the general duty of securing the effective and co-ordinated development of coal, petroleum and other minerals and sources of fuel and power in Great Britain, of maintaining and improving the safety, health and welfare of persons employed in or about mines and quarries therein, and of promoting economy and efficiency in the supply, distribution, use and consumption of fuel and power, whether produced in Great Britain or not.

This measure was debated in the British Parliament in the closing stages of the second world war. The Act conferred on the Ministry of Power the task of bringing together all the sources of fuel and power available to that country. The debates on this subject in the House of Commons and the House of Lords are well worth reading.

One of the most significant statements made, as reported at page 538, of volume 409 of the 1944-45 House of Commons *Parliamentary Debates*, with which I heartily agree, is that—

> Transport is the greatest and most permanent customer of electricity.

This statement is quoted as having appeared in the official report of 26th February, 1919. The State Electricity Commission of Victoria was then in its infancy.

It is interesting to reflect on the extent to which transport depends on the use of electricity. I refer not only to the railways but also to motor transport which is regulated by electric signalling equipment. Even the motor car depends on electricity. The House of Commons report to which I referred further states—

> Indeed, there is hardly any form in which one seeks to better the conditions of the country that does not require as an essential transport above all. Equally, transport without power is of no value.
>
> These are the two great essentials for progress in this country—transport and electricity.

I think all honorable members will heartily agree with those statements.

Despite some criticism which has been made of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria at various times, I wish to pay a tribute to all

employees of the State Electricity Commission, from the chairman down to the workers in power houses and stores. I came from the ranks of the State Electricity Commission workers, and I appreciate their value. I pay tribute also to the employees of the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria, who, when this Bill becomes law, will come under the control of the Ministry of Fuel and Power. This move is long overdue.

I shall refer later to the discoveries of natural gas which have been made in Bass Strait. It is wise and proper that one Ministry should have full control over the power and natural fuel resources of the State. When the ramifications of the discovery of natural gas, and the use of its by-products are considered, one wonders how far the influence of this Ministry will extend. One may ask whether the Government has considered all the implications and whether it has seen the light on the hill in regard to overseas investments. Are the people of Victoria to be exploited by overseas interests when the natural gas fields are developed, or will they be supplied with natural gas at a reasonable price and reap the benefit of their natural inheritance? I wish to quote from the combined annual reports of the Mines Department, for the years 1962 and 1963, the latest reports of that Department to be tabled in this House. One statement reads—

> The anticipated expansion of brown coal production would be retarded in the event of the local discovery of natural gas in quantities capable of commercial exploitation in competition with Latrobe Valley coal. However, the rate of Victoria's industrial development and population growth should support the use of both brown coal and natural gas by planning to ensure the economic utilization and conservation of the combined fuel reserves.

It is true that much indigenous fuel in Victoria has not been used to the fullest extent possible because of the operations of vested interests from overseas, cartels from Wall-street, and the like. Because of these operations, the Latrobe Valley, with its great possibilities, has suffered.

In the province adjoining the one I represent, one of the largest refineries in Australia is being re-vamped for greater production. This is a natural enough process in a community in which standards are advancing. But petrol is not being produced to the greatest degree possible from the crude oil, and bunker oils and fuel oils are being dumped on the market and sold in competition with the natural fuels of Victoria at prices subsidized by motorists, who are required to pay more than they should for petrol.

Prior to my entering this House, I closely examined this industry as I was connected with a union whose members handle fuel oil, and I know from my own observations how the development of natural resources controlled by the State Electricity Commission has suffered, as have the State Coal Mine and the privately-owned coal mines in New South Wales. We often hear statements by Liberal Party members as to how well they regard private enterprise, but, I regret to say, in this instance they have neglected private enterprise. Liberal Party members do not readily say in this House that they will look after the future of the State Electricity Commission in respect of its great reserves of brown coal, nor do they suggest that restrictions be placed on the dumping of oil. The report also states—

> The possibility of commercial oil and natural gas existing on the Victorian mainland, and off-shore from it, continued to engage the attention of various petroleum exploration companies. The search has been activated by the recent discovery of the Moonie commercial oil field in Queensland and, of particular interest, a geophysical investigation of off-shore petroleum potential has been commenced by Haematite Explorations Co. Pty. Ltd. The Department's deep water well drilling in western Victoria has yielded much information relevant for the search for petroleum.

One of the great shareholders in Haematite Explorations Pty. Co. Ltd. is the Esso company, and consequently the exploitation of our natural resources will benefit overseas shareholders.

Throughout history, man has sought to harness power in one form or another. Honorable members will know of the two laws of thermodynamics relating to the production of energy and the use of power. Many interesting books have been written, taking as their starting point the generation of power in our own bodies and developing the theme to the use of nuclear power. I trust that nuclear power will be used only for peaceful and not for destructive purposes. I experienced the horror of witnessing the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki just after the second world war ended in 1945. I hope that such use is never again made of nuclear energy.

Man's mind can devise peaceful uses for atomic energy which will benefit the world, and I hope to see atomic energy used peacefully in this great country of ours. Before I pass into the "great beyond", I hope that atomic power stations will be realities in Australia and will be set up at a cost that will be within our own investment resources.

I hark back to the power resources of the Latrobe Valley, and I am pleased that Mr. Hewson is to follow me in this debate. I share with most Victorians a great pride in the developments possible in the Latrobe Valley, which has been referred to as the Little Ruhr of the world. I do not agree with that description, because the Governments of this State, and particularly this Government, for some unknown reason, have not ensured that industry has been developed there.

Many natural resources exist there and it is to be hoped that the development of natural gas will encourage the industrial development of the Latrobe Valley so that it will have a balanced economy, including secondary industries. Some of the words in a pamphlet, *Gas from Victoria's Brown Coal,* issued with a foreword written by the late Dr. Andrews, then chairman and managing director of the Gas and Fuel Corporation, on the 5th December, 1956, are well worth recording, because they relate to the fundamental resources of the Latrobe Valley and are relevant to the establishment of a Ministry of Fuel and Power, because it is in in the Latrobe Valley that Victoria's major power generation will develop. The passage to which I refer reads—

> Whatever the variations in the economic life of the community, there is no doubt that the future of the Latrobe Valley area is assured. With its large supply of brown coal for the production of gas, brown coal coke, electric power and fuel generally, the Latrobe Valley is emerging into what might be described as the pulsating heart of Victoria's development. Without doubt the tremendous expansion of secondary industry in Victoria within recent years has been greatly influenced by the fact that industrialists have been aware that Victoria, through its projects in the Latrobe Valley, offers a permanent and expanding source of the "lifeblood" of industrial development.

The article then expands on the future of the valley. It is my belief that if it had been possible to develop commercially the iron deposits at Nowa Nowa, there would have been a steel works there now.

An announcement was recently made in the daily press about the production of iron ore in Tasmania. The source of this iron ore is not far by sea from Welshpool, and with the great natural brown coal deposits, and now the discovery of natural gas, it is possible that a steel industry could be established in the Latrobe Valley. This would use a great deal of the power to be controlled by the proposed Ministry. Everything else necessary for a steel industry is there in abundance. It was unfortunate that the deposits at Nowa Nowa did not come up to expectations, and could not be developed commercially. It is to be hoped, however, that great iron ore deposits will be found in Victoria so that the State will benefit by greater employment opportunities and balanced development in the Latrobe Valley.

It has been suggested that the present Minister of Electrical Undertakings will be the first Minister for Fuel and Power, and I wish him every

success in his new appointment. I do not envy him the difficult task he will face in setting up the organization of the new Ministry. In the past, the Minister has always been willing to give information about the State Electricity Commission in its various aspects, and I am sure that he will continue to be actuated by the same attitude in his new Ministry. I feel that the responsibilities of the proposed new Ministry may take toll of Ministers in future years. This seems apparent when one realizes the wide ambit of the onerous duties to be undertaken. In the future, an Assistant Minister for Fuel and Power may be appointed because of the very great burden on the Minister.

It is extremely difficult to estimate future demands for electricity; if this were not so, we would, over the years, have had reserves of electrical power instead of having had barely enough. I have before me the annual report of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria for the year ended 30th June, 1964, in which are set out the estimated maximum demands for electricity up to 1973. It is estimated that in 1970 the demand will reach 2,882 megawatts, and, in 1973, 3,656 megawatts. It is pointed out that a comparatively small over-all increase in 1970 reflects the intention of Alcoa of Australia Proprietary Limited to have completed its own power station by then. I understand that work on that power station has commenced. However, the over-all demand for electrical power will not be decreased when the station operates. If this Bill is passed, the power generated by that station will be brought under the control of the Minister, as also will power generated by certain privately-owned power stations. I understand that private power stations are operated by Australian Paper Manufacturers Limited, MacRobertson Proprietary Limited, the Shell oil refinery at Geelong, and the Geelong cement company.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Is the 1964 power demand shown in that report?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I thank the Minister for Local Government for raising that point. In 1964, the actual demand for electricity was 1,793 megawatts; for 1965, the estimated demand is 2,019 megawatts, and for 1966, it is 2,193 megawatts. The great growth in demand is apparent.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—The demand will more than double from 1964 to 1973?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—What the Minister says is correct; I am glad he mentioned that aspect. The estimated maximum demand for 1973 is more than double the actual demand for 1964. This indicates not only the great responsibility of the Minister for Fuel and Power, but also that of the staff of the State Electricity Commission, as they will have the responsibility of designing power stations for the future. The designing of power stations can be a thankless task because, by the time the drawings for a power station are produced, scientific advances all over the world in the methods of generation of power could mean that the proposed power station would be out of date. This sort of thing actually happens. This is one of the great headaches which the Minister will have. He will need to know why a power station is out of date before it is built, because questions will be asked in Parliament, and there will be criticism in debates. It will be difficult for the Minister to explain these things to people who are not conversant with this type of development, and what can actually happen in the construction of power houses, which take so long to build.

I have read the report which Dr. Hetherington, from Calgary, Alberta made to the Government of Queensland on the energy reserves of Queensland and their use. I do not think the position in that State has any relevance to Victoria, and it is necessary to look rather at the local

situation than at the position obtaining at Moonie. Much has been said about Dr. Hetherington, and recently I read an article in which someone disagreed with what he said. However, I do not take much notice of that, because there will always be critics.

Some honorable members may have read a book entitled *Energy in the Future* by P. C. Putnam. I have read it several times, and I commend it to those honorable members who have not read it. Whilst it is highly technical in some aspects, it is well worth studying. In this book, at page 3 in regard to nuclear fuels, it is stated—

> One student has stated that nuclear fuels, when and if they became technically feasible, would hardly be able to compete economically with coal; another concluded that, ultimately, nuclear fuels might produce electric energy for five mills per kilowatt-hour or less.

There have been great advances since this book was written, and it is well known that the use of atomic reactors for power generation is causing problems. The new Minister will have to overcome problems along these lines. However, atomic fuel is a thing of the future, and I hope it will be put to a useful purpose so that the economy of the world will reap the benefits which will flow from its utilization.

On pages 73 and 74 of the same book, there are two graphs showing total annual inputs to the energy system of the world from the major sources from 1860 to 1947. These graphs show that fuel wood was the major source of energy until 1880, when it was overtaken by coal, that the maximum contribution by coal was made in 1910, and that since that year it has diminished, and that fuel oils have taken over with an upward trend. However, I still assert that the natural resources of our indigenous fuels of the Latrobe Valley should be used to their fullest extent, and that more power houses should be established in this area. There should be no dilly-dallying by responsible people, and steps should be taken now to enable the erection of a new power station once Hazelwood is completed.

If a new power station is not planned for the near future, Victoria will again suffer from restrictions in the use of electric power, particularly if our rate of expansion follows the same trend as that which has developed since the end of the second world war. However, a power station cannot be built overnight. Many hours of design and construction work are involved.

At page 380 of the book to which I have referred, there appears the following statement in regard to natural gas—

> Natural gas began to be exploited in New York State in 1821. Various other glancing references in the literature were noted to the effect that natural gas has long been used in small quantities, first in New York State, and later in Pennsylvania. Accordingly, the curve of gas production obtained from the Minerals Yearbook was arbitrarily extended backward to the zero ordinate in 1825 along a fair growth curve on arithmetic co-ordinates. This tail was then transferred to the logarithmetic co-ordinates of the gas-production curve and cut off at 1850 because the output prior to that year was statistically negligible.

A press report, which appeared in the *Herald* of 15th November, stated that Esso Exploration intended to drill its fourth well off the Gippsland coast. On the same page, Dr. Hetherington is reported as having made the following statement:—

> NATURAL GAS COST 25 PER CENT. OF COAL GAS.
>
> The Morwell gas complex, employing 300 men, produces only as much gas a day as one good natural gas well, according to Dr. C. R. Hetherington, the State Government's natural gas adviser.
>
> Dr. Hetherington is a Canadian consulting geologist.
>
> "Natural gas can be produced for 25 per cent. or less of the cost of making gas," he told members of the Victorian branch of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy.
>
> He saw a tremendous market here for natural gas.
>
> Between 20 and 25 cubic-feet of natural gas was used in an average house in North America for every degree the temperature fell below 65 degrees.

In Sydney he found only 4 cubic-feet were used for every degree below 65 degrees.

"When I came to Melbourne I found it was exactly half this amount again," Dr. Hetherington said.

"Natural gas is here, and the supplies are going to be available in due course." Dr. Hetherington advised Australians to "keep plugging" if the geological conditions were right.

"If there is one partridge in the bush there may be another," he added.

As a rule of thumb it cost about 2½ cents a 1,000 cubic-feet to find natural gas.

"Fifteen years ago Canada could not get investment funds, now we know just how good it is," he added.

Dr. Hetherington said that gas could be brought from any point in Australia provided the pressures were high enough.

Dr. Hetherington said natural gas in Canadian cities cost about $1 a 1,000 cubic-feet retail. Of this, 60 cents was for cost of reticulation, 27 cents for transportation and 13 cents went to the producer, who also got other materials out of the gas to increase his return.

Problems will also be encountered in the transportation of natural gas, and a great deal of thought will have to be put into this aspect. Corrosion occurs in the pipe-line because of the sulphuric acid in the gas. In my opinion, the pipe-line between Dandenong and Morwell, which is at present used for the conveyance of the Lurgi gas, should be used for the transportation of natural gas.

At this stage, I should like to pay a compliment to the foreman and the men who constructed that pipe-line. They did an excellent job and the conditions under which they worked were good. However, it has been stated that this pipe-line will not be used to transport natural gas. In my opinion, the sensible thing to do would be to connect the natural gas to the Lurgi plant at Morwell and then to transfer it to its destination by this pipe-line. It would be folly to install another pipe-line.

In addition, the State Electricity Commission has to make up its mind whether or not it will use natural gas in the thermo-dynamics of its power stations. This will also bring about problems. At this stage, I aver quite emphatically that Victoria owns the continental shelf, even though many people think we do not. In an interjection in another place during a debate, it was stated that Victoria did not own the continental shelf, but I think the Minister in charge of the Bill will agree with my statement, which is supported by a decision of a Geneva conference.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—It is owned by somebody, whether it be the Commonwealth Government, the Victoria Government, or both.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—It is owned by the sovereign States. In that regard, I refer honorable members to *Petroleum Gazette*, volume 13, No. 5, of March, 1965, wherein it is stated—

THE CONTINENTAL SHELF.

Legal revision and investigation has also gone on recently in relation to oil exploration on the continental shelf. In the 17th century the effective range of a cannon was said to be three miles, and it was accepted that this distance from the shore line should mark the extent of a nation's territorial waters. But, with the world-wide stimulation of interest in off-shore mineral exploration, many countries have had to re-examine the position.

In Australia, Federal and State interests overlap to some degree in relation to off-shore permit areas.

Therefore, it is quite clear that, as a sovereign State, Victoria owns the continental shelf. I am sure that honorable members were interested to learn how the 3-mile limit came into being.

Some of the by-products of natural gas will have great and lasting effects on agricultural science. In regard to those by-products, it is stated in volume 14, No. 5, of the *Petroleum Gazette*—

It is not only as fuel that natural gas is so useful to mankind. It is used as a raw material from which many products can be made. Derivatives of natural gas provide the raw material for plastics, resins, detergents, rubber, fibres and fertilizers. Chemical products made from it include ammonia, nitric acid, ammonium nitrate, urea, carbon black, nethanol, hydrogen cyanide, acetylene, formaldehyde and many intermediates for organic chemicals. As a feedstock, gas is preferred to liquids or solids for the processing of many of these.

Thus, it can be seen how the discovery of natural gas will benefit this country. For some time members of the Country Party have been urging that a fertilizer plant be established in the Portland area, but I think they have been near sighted in this matter. In my opinion, they should be plugging for decentralization in regard to the exploitation of our natural gas reserves in order to ensure that overseas interests do not gain control and thus deprive farmers of the benefit of these resources.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—We are plugging for that now.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—You are getting onto the bandwagon.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—Order! The honorable member is wide of the Bill.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—At what points will the Ministry for Fuel and Power stop and start? Will the by-products mentioned in the *Petroleum Gazette* to which I have referred come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Fuel and Power, or some other Ministry? Much has been left unsaid in respect of this matter. The area to be explored by Haematite Explorations Proprietary Limited embraces more than 60,000 square miles of territory covering the entire Bass Strait area between Victoria and Tasmania, and part of the coastal waters of South Australia. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited tenement areas are beyond the 15-mile strip held by Frome-Broken Hill Company Proprietary Limited, which extends from Cape Schank in southern Victoria to the South Australian border, the area held by Alliance Oil Development, which extends from Cape Schank to Wilson's Promontory, and the slightly narrower strip held by Woodside (Lakes Entrance) Oil Company along the Ninety Mile Beach off the Gippsland coast.

Members of the Labor Party do not oppose the Bill, and they wish the future Minister for Fuel and Power success in overcoming the problems that will be encountered. I hope the Minister will not establish a big Department from the beginning and that he will be guided by the advice of experts in the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation. I trust that the passing of this Bill will not result in the creation of a mammoth Department that will swallow up the Commission and the Corporation, but that those bodies will continue to function under the Acts governing them. Finally, I urge the Government to ensure that the natural resources that belong to the people are not exploited by overseas interests.

The Hon. H. A. HEWSON (Gippsland Province).—I am indebted to Mr. Knight for having undertaken a considerable amount of research in preparing the argument that he has developed in support of the Bill, and I suppose if I were to cover a lot of the same ground I would weary the House. The Country Party commends the Government for its realization of the necessity to place under one Minister the responsibility of co-ordinating all resources of fuel and power. The Ministry for Fuel and Power will be clothed with the administrative authority to determine how all sources of fuel and power can be best developed.

In explaining this Bill, the Minister for Local Government indicated that technical advice available within existing Departments and from overseas sources would be acted upon in the establishment of the most suitable form of administration that can be devised to make the best use of our fuel and power resources, including natural gas, and to overcome the complex problems that will arise in the dovetailing of the work of various Departments. It will not be easy to co-ordinate the necessary activities, but I have no doubt that the Minister in charge will have the necessary ability to handle all the details.

Dr. C. R. Hetherington, of Canada, who is to report on Victoria's natural gas resources, is an expert of international reputation. He has already familiarized himself with the Australian gas field, and has planned the supply of natural gas by pipe-lines to the main cities of Australia.

The Bill provides that any reference in any Act mentioned in the schedule to the Bill to the Minister of Electrical Undertakings and the Minister responsible for the Gas and Fuel Corporation, shall, after the commencement of this Act, be deemed to be a reference to the Minister for Fuel and Power. The schedule lists the Electric Light and Power Act, the State Electricity Commission Act, the Electrical Undertakings Act, the Gas and Fuel Corporation Act, the Gas and Fuel (Borrowing) Act, the Gas and Fuel (Colonial Gas Association Undertakings) Act, and the Gas and Fuel (Maryborough Undertaking) Act. The object of this provision is to facilitate co-ordination of these important bodies.

In his Speech at the opening of Parliament, His Excellency the Governor stated that the finding of natural gas off the Gippsland coast was one of the most important events that had occurred since the discovery of gold in Victoria. As the area is adjacent to the province of which I am a representative, doubtless I shall be expected to show considerable interest in the development of this project, and I am keenly interested in it. I have expressed some concern over the matter, and have voiced my opinion that the development of the natural gas and the dovetailing of certain facets of the administration of the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation will cause some complication in those organizations and in connexion with the provision of the necessary pipe-lines.

I have advocated the establishment of a co-ordinating authority in the Latrobe Valley, and I am pleased to say that the superintendent of the State Electricity Commission in that region, Mr. Schulz, and the chairman of the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board, Mr. J. B. Mulvany, have publicly supported my suggestion. I should like to quote from an article published in the *Latrobe Valley Express* under the heading of "Valley Leader Urges Co-ordinating Authority." The article was written by Mr. Mulvany, who is well versed in the subject; having lived in the area since 1954, he is well aware of the problems that exist. Mr. Mulvany was educated at Christian Brothers College, St. Kilda, and the University of Melbourne, and had a distinguished engineering and military career. A Lieutenant-Colonel at the end of the war, he became a senior engineer with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission before his appointment as inaugural chairman of the Latrobe Valley Water and Sewerage Board in 1954. In the article, Mr. Mulvany stated—

> With reference to a recent statement in Parliament by the Honorable H. A. Hewson, M.L.C., urging the appointment of a planning authority for the Latrobe Valley, and a suggestion by the State Electricity Commission's General Superintendent of the Latrobe Valley, Mr. Schulz, that consideration be given to the appointment of a single co-ordination authority for the area, I, as a former president of the Advance Latrobe Valley Association, agree that possibly the time has come for an objective and unprejudiced look at such suggestion, particularly in view of the electoral boundaries review in the Latrobe Valley.
>
> In no sense are these suggestions a reflection on the work carried out, either past or present, by municipal government or semi-government authorities which have carried out in an admirable manner a difficult and unenviable task in one of the most rapidly growing areas in Australia.
>
> However, achievement can sometimes be followed by admiration and admiration can breed apathy.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The Latrobe Valley Development Advisory Committee has set an example in the co-ordination of Government, semi-government and local authority planning but surely community life involves not only these authorities but other activities that affect every man, woman and child in the valley.
>
> . . . . . .

It is not suggested for a moment that all our services and amenities should be centralized and no one would surely quarrel with the provision of a swimming pool in each and every town, but problems of a regional nature such as transport, air pollution, stream pollution and flood control cannot, either efficiently or logically, be dealt with on a local basis, and it is regarding matters such as this that an over-riding co-ordinating authority with adequate executive power could be invaluable.

The chairman of the proposed co-ordinating authority could well be the Minister for Fuel and Power, and I urge the Government seriously to consider this suggestion. I have already intimated to the Premier that I support such a proposal. Mr. Mulvany finished his article by stating—

The formation of the Advance Latrobe Valley Association some six years ago has done much to achieve a united and an "area" outlook, but that body possesses no executive power and can only, by suggestions and representations, endeavour to secure an orderly, logical and non-parochial development.

I not only support the suggestions of Mr. Hewson and Mr. Schulz, but I am of the opinion that the provision of such an authority is becoming increasingly urgent.

I have discussed this matter fairly broadly, Mr. President. I feel that I may have covered a field a little wider than that embraced by the Bill, and I thank you for your indulgence. I commend the Bill, because I consider that it will have the effect of achieving one of the most desirable objectives in the State, and that is the co-ordination of the fuel and power resources within Victoria.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time.

The sitting was suspended at 6.15 *p.m. until* 9.9 *p.m.*

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

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Interpretation).

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—The Committee is indebted to Mr. Knight and Mr. Hewson, who dealt with the ramifications of this Bill with some particularity, and I wish to make some comments on their remarks. Mr. Knight stated that the Bill does not really provide any limit to the ultimate scope of the powers of the Minister who will control the proposed new Ministry. In that respect he is right, except that those powers are to some extent confined by the subject-matter, that is to say, the Minister will have to determine the means by which the present and the future sources and supplies of fuel and power in Victoria can be developed and utilized to the best advantage of the people. The wording of the Bill is similar to that which appears in the English Act to which Mr. Knight referred, and which could, perhaps, be regarded as the parent of this Bill. Of course, it could lead into wide fields in the future.

Mr. Knight spoke of the necessity —he supported his views with figures —to keep ahead, by long-range planning, of the future power requirements of this State. The Government is well aware of that, and it is known that the power requirements of Victoria will double about every eight or nine years. This means that, as soon as Hazelwood is finished, we must plan to build two more Hazelwoods, or their equivalent, to keep pace with the requirements for the following few years. It is also true that, in the future, the new Ministry will have to deal with nuclear power with all its ramifications. It appears that, already, America is within reach of generating electricity from this source, along with the process of desalinating salt water. Probably we in Australia have a more direct interest in this development than the people in any other country. If this dry continent can be provided with a source of water from a nuclear plant, and if, at the same time, we can use this plant for the generation of electricity, then we shall be avid customers. Many of our large coastal cities will, before the end of the century, need something of that kind of development in order to survive.

Dr. Hetherington, who is at present advising the Government on the development of the natural gas field and other possible fields, is a distinguished man. Not only did he advise the Queensland Government on the development of the Roma field, but he has travelled all over Australia and has investigated gas fields at Mereenie in Northern Territory and at other places. Before he came to Victoria, he had a comprehensive knowledge of Australia and its resources in natural gas. Victoria could not get the services of a better man because he is full of experience and wisdom on this subject. The people of Victoria will have cause to be grateful to him for the advice he has given and will give in the near future.

I shall make some comment on the remark of Mr. Knight that " Victoria owns the continental shelf ". That is hotly disputed by the Commonwealth. It prepared a legal claim whereby it confined the States to the old territorial waters and claimed that the submerged territory to the edge of the continental shelf belonged to the Commonwealth.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—How does the Commonwealth get anything we have not given it?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Mr. Feltham has pointed out a weakness in the argument, but the Commonwealth bases its argument on the external affairs power and on the recognition since Federation of what it calls increased territorial limits by the United Nations and various international conventions. I think it is a very tenuous argument. However, it need not be pursued because in the Parliaments to-day the various Ministers of Mines have made statements concerning the agreement reached between the States and the Commonwealth to permit exploration for and exploitation of off-shore oil and gas fields wherever they are found.

The plan is that the States will administer such areas and that the States and the Commonwealth will pass identical legislation so that it does not really matter to an oil driller what the legal position is as he will get his licence or permit and will know—and this is the important thing at the moment—that there is some power under which he can safely act. The royalties will be shared on a 50-50 basis between the particular State and the Commonwealth, except that the State will retain the power to sell abandoned leases and have power to sell an area adjoining that of any particular gas find.

I can best describe this by saying that when a well is found to contain oil or gas, the explorer will be required to set up a graticule of nine adjoining areas of which he will be entitled to select four. The remaining five will fall back into the hands of the State and may be disposed of by tender. Apparently this system operates in other parts of the world. It means that the successful discoverer of a field has a very good chance of exploiting at least the major part of it, but the rest, and the adjoining areas, are available to other people as well.

I shall not go into detail because the statements have been made to-day. The agreement disposes of the question of who owns the continental shelf—and it makes it one which may never have to be resolved. The States and the Commonwealth were all apprehensive of long legal battles in the High Court and the Privy Council and, in the meantime, the people we are trying to help to discover oil and gas in offshore areas were operating in complete uncertainty. We should welcome this agreement as another example of the way in which the Commonwealth and States can work in accord without resort to legal action.

Mr. Knight referred to the fact that natural gas has advantages other than its use as a gas for heating. As he pointed out, they lie in the fields of petro-chemicals and fertilizers. This is something of which we should take due account. In America, where

natural gas fields have been found, there have grown up quite large industries based on petro-chemicals and fertilizers extracted from the gas.

The gas found in Bass Strait is a wet gas, and it is possible easily to extract from it petroleum at the rate of some 9,000 barrels a day. That is another of the side advantages which the exploring company will have. One can foresee—especially if other fields are opened—enormous subsidiary advantages in these fields and a real opportunity for the decentralizing of industry in the Latrobe Valley.

I have taken note of Mr. Hewson's advocacy for some over-all co-ordinating authority in the Latrobe Valley. I think there is something to be said for it. The fact that a Latrobe Valley Advisory Council has been operating shows that there is a need for such an authority there, as there is in other areas. Whether the authority would take the form Mr. Hewson suggested is another matter, but it is something to be considered, and I shall see that his suggestion is conveyed to the Minister.

I think, Mr. Chairman, I have dealt with all the points raised during the second-reading debate. If I have overlooked anything, I shall be glad to deal with it before the Committee stage is completed.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—I am appreciative of the Minister's remarks. Since the suspension of the sitting, I have been asked to explain the law of thermo-dynamics and, with your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I shall do so. There are two laws, as I said earlier, and they have been propounded for a very long time. I read from *Man and Energy*, by A. R. Ubbelohde, F.R.S., published by Hutchinson's Scientific and Technical Publications—

> The First Law of Thermodynamics: This law, which is essentially the same as the Law of Conservation of Energy, states that energy is conserved in any transformation of matter. Energy can neither be created nor destroyed in any observable process. Superficially, it may seem that energy is created when a fuel such as coal is burned in air, or when an atomic bomb explodes. But a deeper physical study of these and of innumerable other processes shows that the energy which becomes obvious was already present in potential form in the original states of the coal or the bomb. All that happens is a transformation from potential energy into kinetic energy, which is more readily perceived.
>
> The mass of a quantity of matter also contributes a rest-mass term mc^2 to the potential energy. Including this term, the over-all total energy remains constant in any process.
>
> The Second Law of Thermodynamics makes a special reservation about energy when this is in the form of heat. All other forms of energy can be interconverted without restriction, other than that of the Law of Conservation of Energy. But the conversion of heat into other forms of energy is subject to an additional restriction. Heat represents energy which is scrambled or randomized over all the molecules in matter. In a certain way, the degree of randomization is represented by the reciprocal of the temperature of the heat.

I will not take it any further.

The Hon. J. M. WALTON.—It sounds like Ron Hubbard.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—This law was propounded long before Mr. Hubbard's theory, and but for it we would not have power stations. Reference was made to parent legislation operating in England. I said earlier that the Government had not seen fit to take the adoption of this legislation to its logical conclusion. Unfortunately, I do not have the Act available at the moment, but if my memory serves me rightly the English Act provided for the social welfare and health of the people who worked in certain industries. I should have liked to see such a provision in this Bill. With automation coming into industry and with the sociological problems confronting workers in power stations and in the gas undertakings, some provision along these lines should be made.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—To which particular definition in clause 2 is Mr. Knight referring? There are only two, one referring to the Minister and one referring to the secretary.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—The Minister must look after these things. I was pleased to hear the Minister for Local Government say that the Government had decided to extend Hazelwood.

The CHAIRMAN (the Hon. W. R. Garrett).—The honorable member has made a second-reading speech; I suggest that he adhere more closely to the clause.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I am glad that the Hazelwood power station is to be extended because this is a matter of great concern to those people in the State Electricity Commission who have to plan the generation of power.

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

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

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The need for this Bill arises mainly from Commonwealth action, at long last one might say, in connexion with weights and measures, but the Bill also contains references to some matters where agreement has been reached between the Ministers responsible for the administration of weights and measures legislation in all Australian States, and to a few matters which are wholly within the jurisdiction of Victoria.

Of course, the Commonwealth has always had power to make laws relating to weights and measures, but it took no steps to use that power until 1948, when the Commonwealth Weights and Measures (National Standards) Act was passed. It came into force nominally on the 22nd July, 1948, but it had no practical effect at all because the power to maintain Commonwealth standards of measure and make regulations under this Act were not in fact exercised. More recently, the Commonwealth returned to the attack, and passed the Weights and Measures (National Standards) Act 1960, which was substituted for the earlier enactment.

The 1960 Commonwealth Act states that its objects are "to provide for the establishment and use throughout Australia of uniform units of measurement and uniform standards of measurement, of physical quantities." In sub-section (3) of section 4, some matters are specifically left within State jurisdiction. This Bill takes cognizance of this and includes suitable provisions for the continued exercise of these powers. The regulations are, however, in such form as to permit preparatory work to be done, in the way of provision and certification of standards, without, for the time being, invalidating work done on the basis of current State provisions regarding units and standards. The present intention is that the Commonwealth Act will come into force on the 1st January, 1966. This makes it necessary for all State Parliaments to pass Bills to bring their legislation into line with the new Commonwealth system of weights and measures.

In general, it is not anticipated that there will be any great changes in the working practices of the Victorian weights and measures administration, although there will be changes of nomenclature of standards. The main point is that the ultimate standards for the State become those held by the National Standards Laboratory, a part of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, instead of the "primary standards" provided under the present Victorian law.

Commonwealth authority has been given for the superintendent appointed under the Victorian Weights and Measures Act, or the person for the time being performing his duties, to be a "verifying

authority" for the purposes of the Commonwealth regulations, which will enable him to perform functions under Commonwealth law very similar to some which he has been performing under State law.

The provisions of the Bill, in relation to units and standards, can be summed up as the repeal of existing provisions which will become invalid on the full application of the relevant Commonwealth law, and their replacement by other provisions basically similar to but consistent with the Commonwealth law.

The second matter in regard to which provisions of the Bill stem from Commonwealth action relates to the approval of patterns of weights, measures and instruments as being suitable for use for trade, which is dealt with under section 32 of the Victorian Weights and Measures Acts 1958. The Victorian Weights and Measures Regulations 1959, with exceptions for some relatively old equipment, have the effect of prohibiting the verification by inspectors, and, therefore, use in trade, of weighing and measuring instruments which are not of patterns approved by the superintendent under the provisions of the Victorian Act.

The laws of other Australian States include somewhat similar, although not identical, provisions, with the result that a manufacturer of, say, a new type of weighing machine for use in a shop or of a new type of petrol pump must, if he desires to market it throughout Australia, submit a prototype to six separate State weights and measures administrations widely separated in a geographical sense, which is in itself a source of inconvenience and expense. Further trouble to the manufacturer can be caused by differing requirements in the various States. Furthermore, the duty is a troublesome one to State administrations, calling for time-consuming work by skilled personnel.

The requirement of "approval of patterns" is considered a very desirable one, partly because it relieves individual inspectors of any need to attempt to do corresponding work when a new type of instrument first comes to them, which it would not in fact be feasible for them to do adequately, and also because purchasers of these instruments and also the community generally are protected against ill-effects which would occur, if use of inferior instruments were permitted in trade.

Having in mind the difficulties of State administrations in dealing satisfactorily with "approval of pattern" work and also the advantages to traders in having a single approval of an instrument apply throughout Australia, the Governments of all States have requested the Commonwealth Government to arrange for the "approval of pattern" work to become a Commonwealth function.

In 1964, the Commonwealth Parliament passed an Act to amend the Weights and Measures (National Standards) Act 1960. It provided, among other things, that regulations could be made authorizing the National Standards Commission already established under the earlier Commonwealth legislation to undertake the additional duty of examination and approval of patterns of instruments as suitable for use for trade. The Commission has conferred extensively with representatives of State weights and measures authorities, in regard to the basis on which it would examine and approve patterns of weighing and measuring instruments, and regulations have recently been made under the Commonwealth Act making this pattern-approval work a function of the Commission as from 1st January, 1966.

The Commonwealth regulations provide for the States to retain transitory powers in respect of applications for approval of patterns received by the State authorities before the commencement of the Commonwealth regulations. Apart from this, the States will cease to have these powers of "approval of pattern" as from 1st January next.

In short, the Bill recognizes that commerce and trade within Australia are becoming more and more integrated, that separate administrations in each State are time-wasting and inconvenient, and that where the States can act together to eliminate unnecessary duplication they should do so.

The Bill provides for necessary recognition of the Commonwealth approvals, for State purposes, and also for continued recognition of "State" approvals, given on the basis of applications made before the commencement of the Commission's approval of pattern work, whether or not finality had been reached in regard to the applications, before the commencement of the relevant Commonwealth regulations.

Matters included in the Bill as a result of interstate agreement relate mainly to the measurement of liquid in tank wagons and to vending machines. It is proposed to accept in Victoria verifications by weights and measures authorities in other parts of Australia of measuring equipment comprising or associated with such tank wagons. It has been agreed that reciprocal arrangements will be introduced in respect of all States and Commonwealth Territories. The proposed provisions in regard to vending machines are intended to prevent buyers, through vending machines, from being denied protection which they would ordinarily receive under the Weights and Measures Act.

The matters which are dealt with in the Bill and which are exclusively of domestic concern within Victoria relate to the sale of fuel. The present Act provides for the application of provisions of varying degrees of stringency in different areas. Apart from some provisions which apply in all cities and towns, the application of the more stringent provisions has normally been effected by Orders in Council on the application of municipal authorities. The Bill enables the revocation of such Orders in Council which some municipal authorities regard as highly desirable in the light of their experience.

In addition, there is one matter which can be regarded as largely of domestic concern to Victoria, but which is nevertheless affected by an interstate agreement namely, that, in order to facilitate the obtaining of the maximum benefit from decimal currency, graduations should be permitted on weighing instruments, in terms of decimal fractions of a ton, short ton or cental. This is regarded as incompatible, particularly in relation to public weighbridges, with sub-section (4) of section 81 of the present Victorian Act, which requires sale of solid fuel by weight only in one or more tons, hundred-weights or quarters, except as otherwise prescribed. The Bill, therefore, in effect repeals sub-section (4) of section 81.

I have given a brief description only of the proposals contained in the Bill, but I am sure that honorable members will see that it results from a very desirable development in connexion with weights and measures administration. Although it will result in increased centralization, it also provides for more uniformity, and with the Australian commercial community acting more and more as one piece, and less and less as six separate parts, probably this is a desirable development and we should keep pace with it. Therefore, I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. G. J. O'CONNELL (Melbourne Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is one of those measures which all Governments find it necessary to introduce from time to time to correct minor loopholes in the

statute law. Several amendments correct errors purely of a printing nature. For example, item 44 of the First Schedule provides for the substitution of the words "the the" by the word "the". Item 136 of the same schedule provides for the substitution, in section 2 of the Housing (Contracts with Minors) Act 1963, of the expression "that" by the word "the". Obviously those amendments are of a very minor nature.

Clause 3 corrects the Public Lands and Works Act, which was passed by this Parliament in 1964. A number of the drafting amendments which have become necessary relate to that particular Act, which delegated to various Ministers tasks which had previously been carried out by the Board of Land and Works. This category includes amendments such as those contained in items 33 to 36, 38 to 43, 46 to 49, and 53 to 55 in the First Schedule. In most instances, it has been found more convenient to make corrections in the consolidating Acts, but in some cases it has proved simpler to perfect the operation of the Public Lands and Works Act 1964. Clause 3 of the Bill ensures that these alterations will come into operation from the 15th March, 1965.

Clause 4 deals with a different type of amendment, namely, the deletion of sections of Acts which are no longer operative. Following the conversion to decimal currency on the 14th February, 1966, it is proposed to reprint a number of Acts, and in the reprinting the converted currency will be inserted. It is also desirable to bring these Acts up to date in other respects, by modernizing and simplifying them, to save printing.

It is true that a number of Acts on the statute-book contain sections which are no longer operative because they have already performed the task for which they were introduced. In other words, they have amended other Acts, and these amendments will be picked up in the reprints which take place. One example which comes to mind is the Social Welfare Act, which was passed by this Parliament in 1960. A number of amendments are made to the Children's Welfare Act and these, too, will be picked up in the reprint.

It will be noted that in the Second Schedule on page 13 of the Bill, section 11 of the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act is repealed. Honorable members need not become alarmed, as this is one of the Acts which are being repealed in part, and the reason is that the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act amended The Constitution Amendment Act and the amendment will become clear in that Act when it is reprinted. So it is redundant to have the amendment appearing in the Parliamentary Contributory Superannuation Act.

Those are the three types of amendments which are dealt with in the Bill. I propose to adopt the normal procedure of suggesting that the Bill be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination and report, and that the debate be resumed later in the session. Therefore, I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until the next day of meeting.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing).—By leave, I move—

That the proposals contained in this Bill be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination and report.

The motion was agreed to.

MOTOR CAR BILL.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill makes twelve assorted amendments to the Motor Car Act 1958. They are virtually unconnected with one another, except in the general theme of making improvements in the operation of the Act.

The amendments are of varying importance, as I shall indicate to the House as I explain them. I should, however, mention that they include the removal of the £2,000 limit of liability under third-party insurance contracts, which could be termed the "Galbally amendment", although, as I mentioned at the time Mr. Galbally's Bill was before the House in the last session, the subject was already under consideration by the Government. This amendment was foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech at the opening of the present session.

The first change proposed to be made is to require the proprietor of a motor car who repossesses a vehicle pursuant to a hire-purchase agreement or bill of sale to notify the Chief Commissioner of Police of such repossession within fourteen days. The object of the second amendment is to enable the owner of a motor car, the registration of which has been suspended or the owner of which has been prohibited from using on the highway because the vehicle is in an unroadworthy condition, to drive that vehicle, after repair, to a licensed tester for the purpose of examination and test.

The third amendment will enable owners of a large fleet of motor cars to be assigned a general identification mark, usually referred to as a trade plate. Fourthly, a person who purchases a motor car in another State will be enabled to obtain a permit to drive that vehicle temporarily in Victoria for the purpose of taking it to the State of his residence. The fifth amendment makes certain provisions to improve the Act in relation to the testing of vehicles for roadworthiness.

The sixth amendment will reduce the period of operation of motor tractor licences from three years to twelve months and make the provisions of the Act relating to probationary licences inapplicable to tractor licences. Under the seventh proposal, the penalty for the offences of driving a motor car without a licence or the appropriate indorsement where the driver has not previously held a licence or an indorsement will be increased. The eighth amendment will permit the use on highways of commercial passenger vehicles up to a maximum width of 8 ft. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. Under the ninth amendment, it is proposed to exempt overseas visitors temporarily in Victoria from the payment of the £1 surcharge in respect of third-party insurance contracts.

The next amendment, the tenth, is to make it clear that a third-party insurance contract of insurance continues in force during suspension of the registration of the motor car. The object of the eleventh amendment is to remove the limit of liability of an authorized insurer in relation to passengers under a third-party contract of insurance. The twelfth, and last, amendment is to enable a certificate given by the officer in charge of the Motor Registration Branch, or his deputy, to be admissible in court as prima facie evidence of any fact or matter taken from the records of the Motor Registration Branch in proceedings for offences against the Road Traffic Act or the regulations made thereunder or any other Act or law relating to motor cars or trailers.

I shall now deal with the clauses individually. The first amendment is to be found in clause 3. Section 21B of the Motor Car Act 1958 requires a person in whose name a motor car is registered to furnish the Chief Commissioner of Police with a notice of disposal within 48 hours of the disposal. The Crown Solicitor has raised a question concerning the definition of "disposal" in the Act. In his opinion, the definition does not include the repossession of a vehicle because the notice of disposal involves the voluntary giving of possession, whereas repossession is quite frequently against the will of the person. The amendment will require the proprietor who repossesses a vehicle to give notice to the Chief Commissioner of Police within fourteen days. This is not an uncommon

affair; about 800 repossessions take place in Victoria each month, and as no one is obliged to notify repossession the records may become quite inaccurate.

Clause 3 makes it mandatory for the proprietor of a registered vehicle to notify repossession within 21 days and to pay the fee of £1. On receipt of such notification, the Chief Commissioner of Police is authorized to amend the register so that the name of the proprietor only is recorded. The proprietor is then deemed to be the registered owner of the vehicle for the purposes of the Act until the motor car or trailer is disposed of or possession is restored to the person previously recorded as the owner. If at some subsequent time the vehicle is restored by the proprietor to the last registered owner, the proprietor is required to notify the Chief Commissioner within fourteen days. The Chief Commissioner is empowered then to annul the amendment on the register.

The next amendment will make it possible for the Chief Commissioner of Police to assign a general identification mark to a fleet owner on payment of a fee of £5. At present, large fleet owners experience considerable difficulties in moving new motor chassis and vehicles from place to place in the course of preparing them for registration. For instance, it may be necessary to take the vehicle or chassis to an engineering shop to have various adjustments made to render it suitable for the particular type of work for which it is intended, to a body builder to have a tray or body placed on the chassis, to another workshop to have special brakes fitted and still another establishment to have signwriting done on the vehicle. At present, such owners are not entitled to be issued with a general identification mark and, therefore, they have to tow the vehicle from workshop to workshop, which is both hazardous and onerous.

Clause 5 of the Bill enables the Chief Commissioner of Police to issue a general identification plate to an owner of 50 or more motor vehicles for the purpose of driving a new motor vehicle from place to place in the course of preparing it for registration. The present fees of £5 and 10s. for the assignment of an identifying number and the issue of a special plate, respectively, have been in operation for many years. The Bill increases the fees to £10 and £1, respectively.

The fourth amendment relates to cars temporarily in Victoria. Section 19 of the principal Act provides that when a person resident in another State purchases a motor car in Victoria which he desires to register in the State of his residence, the Chief Commissioner of Police may, on payment of a fee of 10s., supply that person with an identifying number plate and permit him to use the vehicle in Victoria for a period not exceeding 28 days. A person who purchases a motor car in a State other than Victoria, and who desires to drive that vehicle through Victoria to the State of his residence, cannot avail himself of the provisions of section 19. He is required in that case to produce a roadworthiness certificate and to effect registration in Victoria and subsequently claim a refund of portion of the registration fee paid. The amendment to section 19 will extend the concession to a person who is passing through or is only temporarily in Victoria.

The fifth group of amendments relate to roadworthiness. Under the Motor Car (Roadworthiness) Act, passed by this Parliament in 1964, there was set up a Safety Inspection Advisory Committee, one of the functions of which was to advise the Minister on matters relating to examination and testing of motor vehicles for roadworthiness. That committee has been operating very well, meeting regularly at monthly intervals, and has now recommended a few minor changes in the system. These changes are incorporated in clauses 7 to 12 of the Bill.

The first of them is in clause 7. The interpretation of "Certificate of Roadworthiness" in section 21A of the Act makes it clear that such a certificate is one given by the licensed tester and that a certificate issued by another person authorized by a licensed tester is not a legal certificate of roadworthiness. That means that licensed testers have virtually to remain on the premises throughout the year for the purpose of signing certificates. The committee has recommended that the Chief Commissioner of Police be authorized to enable another person to sign such a certificate on behalf of a licensed tester. Of course, the licensed tester still has to take the responsibility that the certificate is correct.

The second change is contained in clause 8. It relates to section 21B of the principal Act, which provides that a person who disposes of a registered motor vehicle must deliver to the purchaser a current certificate of roadworthiness. However, it will be recalled that there is an exception —where a purchaser makes a declaration and delivers it to the Chief Commissioner that the motor car has been acquired for the purpose of wrecking, renovation, repair or alteration. On receipt of that declaration, the Chief Commissioner may suspend the registration of the vehicle until a current certificate of roadworthiness is produced. Subsection (7) of section 21B provides that during the course of that suspension, the vehicle shall be regarded as unregistered. Here a difficulty arises similar to that experienced by the fleet owner.

When the vehicle has been repaired or renovated, it has to be taken to the licensed tester to be tested and a certificate of roadworthiness obtained. Clause 8 inserts a new subsection (7A) into section 21B of the principal Act to enable a motor car, the registration of which has been suspended, to be driven from the place where the vehicle was renovated, repaired or altered, to the premises of a licensed tester for the purpose of being examined and tested for roadworthiness. The provision also extends to the return of the vehicle after testing.

Section 14 of the principal Act also enables the Chief Commissioner of Police to suspend the registration of a motor vehicle if he is satisfied that it would be dangerous or unsafe for the vehicle to be driven on a highway. Clause 4 of the Bill extends provisions similar to the new subsection (7A) to registrations suspended pursuant to section 14.

Under the principal Act, members of the Police Force may stop vehicles and conduct roadworthiness checks on the highways. If a vehicle so checked is in need of repair, adjustment, reconditioning or other attention, the member of the Force may, by issuing a prescribed notice pursuant to section 21K, prohibit the vehicle from being used on the highway until the renovation, repair, or other requirement has been complied with and a roadworthiness certificate presented. This is to catch as far as possible unroadworthy cars which are driven on the highways without being sold or transferred. The Bill overcomes the difficulty in precisely the same way to enable the car, when repaired, to be taken to a licensed tester for testing.

Clause 9 deals with a different aspect, namely section 21C of the principal Act, which requires the production of a certificate of roadworthiness on the re-registration of a motor car or trailer previously registered in this State. However, there is no requirement that a certificate of roadworthiness be produced with respect to a second-hand vehicle which has not previously been registered in Victoria—for instance, a motor car previously registered in another State or Territory and brought here, or a car previously owned by a Commonwealth Government Department and sold to the public, or a vehicle previously used on private property in Victoria and

which has never been registered. It is simply an omission from the original Act that in all those cases they should not have to present a certificate of roadworthiness when they eventually come up for registration. Clause 9 inserts a new section 21CA into the principal Act to remove that anomaly.

Clause 10 deals with the Tenth Schedule to the regulations made under the Act which prescribe that no person may examine or test a motor vehicle for the purpose of issuing a certificate of roadworthiness unless he possesses some of the qualifications stated in the Tenth Schedule. There is a difficulty that some persons who do possess the necessary qualifications are not in fact doing the job of testing in a workmanlike manner. There are not very many such cases, but there are some. It is suggested that those people whom the police supervisors find are not doing the job of testing properly, and therefore exposing the public to risk, should be prohibited from carrying out the work. The clause makes that possible, and also provides the workman with a right of appeal to the Safety Inspection Advisory Committee against any such prohibition.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Are these people always individuals, or can a firm obtain a licence?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—My impression is that a licensed tester is a person because he is required to have certain personal qualifications. I do not think a firm—certainly not a company—could comply with this condition, but I shall check that point.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—How about a partnership?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—A partnership is simply a group of persons, and one or other or all of them may be licensed testers. So long as one is licensed, they may carry on the business.

It is now proposed, by clause 12, to insert a new section 21L to deal with unconventional vehicles. There are some vehicles, such as agricultural machinery, road graders, Euclid loaders, Gradall loaders, and so on, which, because they are propelled by internal combustion, steam, gas or electricity or other power and are used on highways, are required at present to be registered as motor cars. They are also subject to the provision of the Act relating to certificates of roadworthiness. The difficulty that has arisen is that some of these vehicles are of such complicated construction that it would take a licensed tester many hours of work, perhaps as long as one day, to properly test it in accordance with the regulations. Furthermore, perhaps many licensed testers would not be capable of carrying out the test anyway. It is proposed, therefore, to amend the roadworthiness provisions of the Act to enable the Chief Commissioner of Police by notice published in the *Government Gazette* to exempt specified types of self-propelled vehicles not designed primarily for carrying passengers or goods on a highway from the need to produce a certificate of roadworthiness.

In regard to proposed new section 21M, various instances have come to the knowledge of the Police Department that certificates of roadworthiness have not been in accordance with the true state of the vehicle. The new section will enable a police supervisor to impound the certificate if, in his opinion, it misrepresents the condition of the vehicle in a material respect. When it is impounded, the certificate will no longer have any force or effect.

New section 21N deals with one of the most serious abuses of the roadworthiness certificate system, that is, the substitution of inferior or worn out parts or equipment on the vehicle during the currency of a certificate of roadworthiness. This is found particularly in the case of tyres; after a certificate has been obtained, faulty tyres are substituted.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—Surely no one would do that!

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Apparently, it does happen. The proposed new section makes it an offence for any person, during the currency of a certificate of roadworthiness and before disposing of the motor car to which it relates, to remove or substitute any equipment or fitment on that motor car so as to detract from its roadworthiness.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER.—Allowances would have to be made for a puncture or a blow-out.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—A person will not be permitted to dispose of a vehicle with inferior tyres in place of the tyres on which the certificate was issued. In some cases I believe it is the practice to put good tyres on the vehicle in order to obtain the certificate and to substitute inferior tyres before it is sold.

The Hon. W. R. GARRETT.—That will be hard to prove and police.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Very difficult, I agree, but some licensed testers have drawn the attention of the police to such cases. They have seen a vehicle on which they have issued a certificate go past carrying inferior tyres.

I pass now to the sixth amendment, which relates to tractor licences. Under the provisions of section 22 of the principal Act, a person over the age of sixteen years may apply for a tractor licence and a person over the age of eighteen years may apply for a licence to drive a motor car or a motor cycle.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—Does a tractor licence operate for a three-year period?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Yes.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—Is a refund payable when a person becomes eighteen years of age?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Not at present.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—Do you not think this is unfair?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Perhaps it is unfair, and this Bill does deal with that particular point. In accordance with section 22B, all licences issued for the first time are issued on probation for three years. The tractor licence was first introduced to enable persons between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years to drive a tractor on a highway for limited journeys between the premises of one primary producer and those of another or for the haulage of goods belonging to the primary producer other than for hire and reward. This meant that if a person wished to continue to drive a tractor after attaining the age of eighteen years, he was required to satisfy the Chief Commissioner of Police that he was qualified to be issued with a licence to drive a motor car. Many persons were unable to do this; they could drive a tractor, but they could not drive a motor car. Therefore, they were prevented from driving a tractor on a highway after reaching the age of eighteen years. Sometimes this prevented a farm worker from carrying on his occupation. To enable those persons to continue to drive a tractor on a highway after attaining the age of eighteen years, the age limit on a tractor licence was removed, and under the existing law any person over the age of sixteen years may apply for a tractor licence.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—How would Mr. Gross's monkey get on?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I do not know. I am surprised to learn that a person between the ages of sixteen and eighteen years who can drive a tractor cannot legally drive a motor car. Apparently, the situation arises quite frequently that a youth of sixteen years of age obtains a three-year tractor licence for which he pays £3. On attaining the age of eighteen years and before the expiration of his tractor licence, he passes the necessary test and obtains an ordinary driving licence for three years and pays a further £3.

There is no provision under the Act for the granting of a refund for the unexpired portion of the tractor licence. The effect of clause 13 of the Bill is to reduce the currency of a tractor licence from three years to one year and to make the fee for the licence £1. The difficulty mentioned by Mr. May has been overcome by providing for an annual licence, and therefore the question of a refund does not arise.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—I was concerned because a son of one of my constituents was a month under the age of eighteen years. His father would not let him drive the tractor for that month unless he had a licence, so he had to take out a licence for three years to cover that one month, and he did not get a refund.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—Under the terms of this Bill, he will be a little better off. It is considered inappropriate to apply the probationary licence system to tractors because they are slow travelling and have limited use on highways. Because of this, it has been decided to place tractors outside the scope of the probationary licence system. It would be a little difficult to commit a driving offence whilst driving a tractor, but if one were committed the offender will not now automatically lose his licence.

I now pass to one of the more serious aspects dealt with by this Bill. It relates to the number of people who drive motor cars on the highway without having licences. Every so often the police conduct a so-called "blitz", and very large numbers of unlicensed drivers are detected. The figures I am about to quote may surprise honorable members. These are the number of unlicensed drivers actually detected by the police. In 1960, there were 4,969; in 1961, there were 4,773; in 1962, either the police were not so vigilant, or people were better behaved, and there were only 3,296; in 1963, there was a sharp rise to 5,409; in 1964, there were 6,062; and in 1965, to the 13th September, there were 3,492. This is a very prevalent offence.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Were they all first offenders?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—It is difficult to say how many were first offenders because the figures were not analysed generally. However, the figures for detections in March of this year were analysed, and they could be regarded as representing a cross-section. Of 397 offences detected, 338 offenders had never taken a test for a driving licence; 21 had taken the test but had failed to pass it; and 38 were unlicensed because they had failed to renew their licences.

There is no reason to think that those figures do not represent a fair cross-section of offenders and, if they do, the vast majority of unlicensed drivers have never even tried to pass the test; some have tried but failed; but only a fairly small number have forgotten to renew their licences. It is perhaps understandable that people can overlook the renewing of licences. In reply to Mr. Clarke's interjection, I can only say that I do not have the age groups of the offenders, but I do have a very clear impression that the vast majority were young people, possibly teenagers. Of course, many of them would be too young to apply for licences.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER.—A person can walk into a dealer's yard, buy a car, and obtain the keys to it without having a licence.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I have heard that some dealers are rather lax; I have heard that statement before from Mr. Snider. Such a dealer can, I think, be dealt with under the provision for aiding and abetting. It is very serious that a large number of people drive cars without being licensed to do so, particularly when a number of them have taken the test but failed

to pass it. The figures for March show that the vast majority of unlicensed drivers have never taken a test.

The present section 22c of the principal Act provides a penalty of not more than £50 or imprisonment for a term of not more than three months for driving a motor vehicle without being licensed to do so, or without having the appropriate endorsement for a heavy vehicle, large trailer combinations, or articulated vehicle. Clause 15 of this Bill re-enacts that section but provides higher penalties for unlicensed drivers who have not previously held a licence to drive or who have not held the appropriate endorsement. The higher penalty provided is a maximum fine of £200 or imprisonment for not more than six months. So there will be two classes of unlicensed drivers. Those who have merely forgotten to renew their licence will be subject to the lower penalty, and those who have never applied for or never obtained a licence will face greatly increased penalties.

The eighth amendment is contained in clause 16, and it deals with the width of vehicles. At present, paragraph (*a*) of sub-section (1) of section 33 of the principal Act requires that a motor car shall not be used on a highway, if its width, together with the load carried thereon, exceeds 8 feet. In 1964, the Australian Motor Vehicles Standards Committee recommended that the permitted width of omnibuses and tourist vehicles be increased from 8 feet to 8 ft. 2½ in. If the House were to ask me why, I would have to say that I have no idea, but no doubt it has something to do with the technical construction of large buses. So this clause merely increases the maximum permissible width from 8 feet to 8 ft. 2½ in.

Clause 17 concerns the length of vehicles. At present, the maximum over-all length of an articulated vehicle allowed is 45 feet and the maximum permitted length of the rear portion, from the foremost point of the rear portion to the centre of the rear axle or group of axles, is 31 feet. The Australian Transport Advisory Council accepted another recommendation from the Australian Motor Vehicles Standards Committee that the maximum permissible length of articulated vehicles be increased from 45 feet to 47 feet overall, but that the maximum permissible length of the rear portion should still not exceed 31 feet The terms of this recommendation are provided for in clause 17.

The ninth amendment to the Act is made in clause 18, which carries into effect a United Nations convention on the taxation of road vehicles for private use in international traffic. Under that convention, it is provided that vehicles registered in the territory of one of the contracting parties—and Australia is one of the contracting parties—when temporarily imported for private use in the territory of another contracting party shall " be exempted, under the conditions laid down from taxes and charges levied on the circulation or possession of vehicles in the territory of that contracting party. This exemption shall not apply to tolls or to taxes or charges on consumption."

At present an overseas visitor cannot drive his vehicle in Victoria unless he takes out a third-party insurance policy here, in one of the other States, or in a territory of the Commonwealth. Under section 41A of the Motor Car Act 1958, he would have to pay a surcharge of £1 in respect of the third-party insurance premium. It is thought that the surcharge is a tax in contravention of the United Nations convention, and therefore clause 18 exempts overseas visitors from payment of that surcharge.

The tenth amendment is contained in clause 19. Doubt has been expressed whether a contract for third-party insurance remains in force during the suspension of registration

of a vehicle. This clause makes it clear that the policy remains in force even though the registration has been suspended.

The eleventh amendment is important. It amends section 46 of the principal Act, which deals with the requirements of the contract for compulsory third-party insurance. Sub-section (2) of section 46 provides that such a contract of insurance shall be valid if it limits the amount of insurance coverage of the owner or driver for the death of or injury to a passenger to £2,000, with a limit of £20,000 for all claims in respect of passengers. These limits of £2,000 and £20,000 were adopted in 1939 when, I suppose, the amounts were fairly adequate. In the States of New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, there is no statutory third-party limitation. In Western Australia, where the limit was once the same as it is in Victoria, the limit for a non-fare-paying passenger is now £6,000 and that for a group of such claims is £60,000, and there is no limit on the amount for fare-paying passengers. In Tasmania, some time ago, the limit for non-fare-paying passengers was £2,000 for any one claim, and the indemnity in respect of fare-paying passengers was unlimited. So, in the course of time, the position has arisen that the limit is more restricted in Victoria than in any other State. As has already been indicated in debates in this House, it is proposed that the limit shall be removed.

The last change is a very small one; it is made by clause 21. At present, sub-section (1) of section 92 of the Motor Car Act provides that if, in any proceedings for offences against the Motor Car Act or the regulations thereunder, it is necessary to prove that a person was or was not the registered owner of a motor car or was or was not licensed to drive a motor car, or any other matter which appears in or can be calculated from the records kept in the Motor Registration Branch, a certificate in the prescribed form signed by the Officer in Charge of the branch or his deputy setting out such particulars shall be prima facie evidence of the facts stated therein. The difficulty with which this amendment deals is that the certificate can apply only to proceedings taken under the Motor Car Act and its regulations, whilst, now, the majority of driving offences, particularly speeding offences, are dealt with under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act and regulations under that Act. The amendment contained in clause 2 proposes that the certificate shall be made available in proceedings under the Road Traffic Act or, indeed, any Act relating to motor cars or trailers.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—Concerning third-party insurance operating during the suspension of registration, what would that cover?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—The suspensions would mostly be suspensions under the roadworthiness provisions. If a second-hand car is purchased in an unroadworthy condition, the purchaser can make a declaration that he intends to repair it or renew it in some way, and it is then possible for the registration to be suspended while he carries out that work in order to ensure that the vehicle is not used on the road in an unroadworthy condition. As soon as the car is in good order, a certificate of roadworthiness may be obtained, and the suspension of registration ceases. There is some doubt whether, if the car was used during the period of suspension —it would be illegally used, of course —the third-party insurance would operate. The provision resolves that doubt. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. Archibald Todd, for the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November, 23.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow, at half-past Two o'clock.

I discussed this matter with party Leaders, and all are in agreement.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.29 *p.m.*

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, November 16, 1965.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER **(Mr. Christie)** took the chair at 4.9 p.m., and read the prayer.

MEMBER.

RETURN AFTER ILLNESS.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—On behalf of all members, I should like to welcome back to the House the honorable member for Grant. He has the good wishes of all honorable members in this Chamber. We hope that he continues in good health and that we will see him often again with us.

Mr. CRICK (Grant).—I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for your words of welcome to me on my return to this House; it is nice to be back. I should like also to express thanks to my colleagues for their assistance in my electoral work whilst I was away sick, and also to honorable members of all parties for their letters and telephone inquiries as to my welfare during my illness.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITIES.

FINANCIAL PROVISION: SOURCE OF FUNDS.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Treasurer—

How much money has been made available in each of the past three years to—(*a*) the Hospitals and Charities Commission; and (*b*) the Mental Health Authority from —(i) Totalizator Agency Board percentages; (ii) Totalizator Agency Board profits; (iii) Tattersall consultations; (iv) State revenue; and (v) Commonwealth Government sources?

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—The answer to this question comprises a statement which includes many figures. I shall not weary the House by reading them, and I seek leave to have the statement, without being read, incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave was granted, and the answer was as follows:—

—	1962–63.	1963–64.	1964–65.
	£	£	£
(*a*) *Hospitals and Charities Commission*—			
(i) Totalizator Agency Board percentages	798,607	1,456,570	2,039,168
(ii) Totalizator Agency Board profits	..	..	..
(iii) Tattersall consultations	3,052,060	3,154,375	3,213,608
(iv) State revenue (other than items (i) and (iii) above)	11,149,333	10,889,055	11,447,224
(v) Commonwealth Government sources	2,591,279	2,150,000	2,198,462

As from 1st January, 1963, the payment of Commonwealth hospital benefits was made direct to the hospitals.

—	1962–63.	1963–64.	1964–65.
	£	£	£
(*b*) *Mental Health Authority*—			
(i) Totalizator Agency Board percentages	..	..	..
(ii) Totalizator Agency Board profits	..	..	..
(iii) Tattersall consultations	150,000	150,000	145,000
(iv) State revenue (other than item (i) above) ..	7,195,390	7,706,638	8,231,305
(v) Commonwealth Government sources	..	..	355,689

STATE SUPERANNUATION FUND.

REPORT OF INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Treasurer—

1. Whether, in respect of his answers to questions asked in this House on the 5th and 27th October last, he is now in a position to indicate whether the inter-departmental committee has completed the investigation into the Victorian Public Service Superannuation Fund; if so—(*a*) what were the main recommendations made by the committee; and (*b*) what are the Government's intentions as to implementing them?

2. If he will lay the relevant file on the table of the Library?

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—The Government has received a report and is now considering it. I shall not lay the relevant file on the table of the Library at this stage, but, as soon as I am in a position to make it available to the Leader of the Opposition, I shall be delighted to do so.

TOTALIZATOR AGENCY BOARD.

NEW HEADQUARTERS: METHOD OF FINANCING.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. How the building of the new £1,000,000 Totalizator Agency Board headquarters will be financed?

2. Whether financing the building in the manner proposed will mean that the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the Mental Health Authority will receive less money from the Board?

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

1. Capital expenditure arising out of the establishment of the Totalizator Agency Board and its offices and agencies is met by the contributing clubs (Victoria Racing Club, Moonee Valley Racing Club, Victoria Amateur Turf Club (Incorporating the Melbourne Racing Club), and the Trotting Control Board). The Board itself has no power to borrow money.

2. No. The distribution to the Hospitals and Charities Commission and the Mental Health Authority is derived from the Government's proportion of the commission on off-course betting.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

RECRUITMENT AND WASTAGE OF PERSONNEL: MOBILE TRAFFIC POLICE AND MOTOR VEHICLES: USE OF AMPHOMETER.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Chief Secretary—

1. What amount of money has been spent by the Police Department on recruiting during each of the past five years?

2. How many recruits joined the Police Force each year during the past five years?

3. What was the wastage of personnel through retirements, resignations, &c., for the same period?

4. How many mobile traffic police are on duty and how many motor vehicles are in use by police in the metropolitan area between 5.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. on—(*a*) weekdays; (*b*) Saturdays; and (*c*) Sundays?

5. Whether the amphometer will be used to detect motorists exceeding the speed limits through metropolitan and country shopping centres?

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—The answers to these questions contain a number of statistics, and I seek the leave of the House to have them incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

1.

Year.	*Salaries of Staff of Recruiting Office.	Advertising.
	£	£
1960	3,341	Nil
1961	3,443	251
1962	3,510	16
1963	3,693	127
1964	3,834	158
1965 (to and including 6th November, 1965)	3,291	†731

* This figure does not include salaries and out-of-pocket expenses of members of the selection board who periodically visit country centres on recruiting drives.

† This figure includes an amount of £600 being the estimated cost of producing 20,000 copies of a brochure for distribution to youths in their final school year.

2.

Year.	Appointments.
1960	273 (Includes nine ex-members reappointed)
1961	290 (Includes six ex-members reappointed)
1962	302 (Includes four ex-members reappointed)
1963	239 (Includes one ex-member reappointed)
1964	254
1965 (to and including 12th November, 1965)	225

3.

Year.	Wastage of Personnel through Retirements Resignations, &c.
1960	143
1961	183
1962	164
1963	168
1964	149
1965 (to and including 12th November, 1965)	177

4.

	Mobile Traffic Section Personnel	Mobile Traffic Section Vehicles.	* Other Police Vehicles.
(*a*)	20	16	92
(*b*)	17	11	94
(*c*)	13	9	71

* All these vehicles would be on the road during the times in question, subject to the nature of duties being performed and inquiries being undertaken.

5. Amphometers are not generally used on highways passing through metropolitan and country shopping centres, as the operators must be completely satisfied that the vehicle being checked is clearly the one that actuates the instrument. However they are sometimes set up in proximity to a collection of shops on highways in country areas which are within a speed restriction zone.

I have available for the information of honorable members copies of the latest recruiting pamphlet issued by the Police Force.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

PORTABLE CLASS-ROOMS: NUMBER PROVIDED: COST: FUTURE REQUIREMENTS.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Education—

1. How many portable class-rooms have been constructed and sited in each year since 1960, giving—(*a*) the schools at which these have been located; and (*b*) the number of such class-rooms situated at each school?

2. What has been the annual cost to the Education Department, since 1960, of providing this type of school accommodation?

3. How many portable class-rooms it is anticipated will be provided in the next school year?

4. When it is anticipated that the need for this type of accommodation will cease?

5. Why it is necessary to provide this type of building instead of anticipating future needs and providing permanent buildings?

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

1.

Financial Year.	No. of Portable Class-rooms Erected.
1960–61	22*
1961–62	66
1962–63	86
1963–64	82
1964–65	69

* Ten of these class-rooms were for emergency accommodation at Christ the King, Catholic school, Braybrook, and have since been sold to that school.

Parts (*a*) and (*b*) of this question consist of a detailed statement, and I seek leave of the House to have it incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the statement was as follows:—

Name of School.	Total Number Provided since 1960–61.	Number still Used by the School.
High Schools.		
Altona North	2	..
Bairnsdale	2	..
Bendigo Girls' Secondary School	2	2
Bentleigh	1	..
Blackburn	1	1
Bonbeach	2	2
Box Hill	1	1
Brighton	2	2
Brunswick	5	5
Brunswick Girls' Secondary School	2	2
Buckley Park	5	..
Burwood	1	..
Canterbury Girls' High School	3	..
Casterton	3	..
Castlemaine	2	2
Caulfield	14	..
Chadstone	5	..
Charlton	2	2
Cheltenham	2	..
Cobram	4	..
Croydon	1	1
Croydon West	2	2
Dandenong	5	5
Dandenong Girls' Secondary School	1	1
Doveton	1	1
Derrinallum	2	..
Echuca	1	1
Eltham	3	1
Fitzroy	2	2
Flemington	6	6
Flemington Girls' Secondary School	1	1
Footscray Girls' Secondary School	2	2
Geelong	2	2
Glenroy	1	1
Hawkesdale	3	..
Heidelberg	1	1
Heywood	7	..
Huntingdale	1	1
J. H. Boyd Domestic College	2	2
Karingal	1	1
Kaniva	2	..
Kerang	3	1
Koonung	7	7
Koo-Wee-Rup	2	..
Korumburra	3	..
Lalor	3	..
Leongatha	3	3
Lilydale	1	1
Mt. Waverley	8	8
Mentone Girls' High School ..	1	..
Maribyrnong	2	2
Moe	3	..
Moreland	2	2
Monash	4	4
Monbulk	4	..
Morwell	3	2
Neerim South	2	..
Newborough	4	..
Noble Park	2	..
Oakleigh	5	5
Oak Park	5	1
Parkdale	4	..
Pascoe Vale Girls' Secondary School	1	1
Prahran	1	1
Preston Girls' High School ..	1	1
Preston East	8	8
Princes Hill	2	2
Portland	1	1
Reservoir	2	..
Ringwood	1	..
Robinvale	2	..
Sale	3	3
Shepparton	1	1
Strathmore	3	3

Name of School.	Total Number Provided since 1960–61.	Number still Used by by the School.
Sunshine	2	..
Sunshine West	3	..
Sunbury	1	1
Swan Hill..	2	2
Templestowe	2	..
Traralgon	1	1
Trafalgar	4	..
Upper Yarra	2	..
Vermont	4	2
Wangaratta	1	1
Watsonia	1	..
Williamstown	2	2
Williamstown Girls' Secondary School	1	1
Consolidated Schools.		
Cobram	1	..
Balmoral	1	1
Teachers' Colleges.		
Burwood	4	4
Toorak	2	2
Technical Schools.		
Aspendale	4	2
Box Hill Girls'	4	4
Blackburn	2	2
Broadmeadows	3	..
Colac	5	..
Clayton	8	3
Corio	8	3
Doveton	1	1
Footscray	7	..
Frankston..	1	1
Glenroy	2	2
Gordon Institute of Technology	3	3
Hamilton	4	..
Kangaroo Flat	2	..
Mildura	5	5
Mooroolbark	3	..
Moorabbin	2	..
Preston	5	5
Preston East	3	3
Ringwood	6	4
Sale	4	4
Shepparton	3	3
Swinburne	6	3
Sunshine	4	4
Tottenham	1	1
Wonthaggi	4	4
Wodonga	2	2
Primary Schools.		
209 Eltham	2	..
295 Hamilton	1	1
298 Horsham	3	..
450 Fitzroy	2	2
649 Werribee	2	..
631 Thomastown ..	1	..
734 Clayton North ..	1	1
946 Toolern Vale	1	1
1267 Bendigo North ..	2	..
1307 Ferntree Gully ..	2	..
1441 Tatura	1	1
1480 Charlton	1	1
1490 North Fitzroy ..	2	2
1813 Wendouree	3	3
2062 Greensborough ..	2	2
2219 Glen Waverley ..	2	2
2617 Boolarra	2	2
2634 Armadale	1	1
2837 Moreland	2	2
2902 Kyabram	1	..
2900 Croydon	5	..
2959 Research	1	..
2923 Blackburn	1	..
2981 Leongatha	1	..
3058 Hall's Gap	2	2
3432 Mr. Waverley ..	1	..
3531 Langwarrin	1	1
3818 Wallinduc	1	1
3835 Seaford	1	1
4159 Point Cook	1	1
4190 Nunawading	1	..
4305 Notting Hill	1	1
4417 Mooroolbark	4	4
4440 Seaholme	1	..
4575 Murtcaim	1	..
4642 Wangaratta West ..	2	2
4657 Shepparton	1	1
4666 Shepparton	2	2
4680 Morwell	2	2
4682 Frankston East ..	2	..
4687 Moorabbin	2	..
4692 Morwell	3	3
4693 Bennetswood ..	2	2
4697 Horsham West ..	2	2
4700 Traralgon	2	2
4736 Norwood	4	4
4739 Keon Park	3	3
4741 St. Albans East ..	1	1
4743 Swan Hill North ..	1	..
4754 Cheltenham East ..	1	..
4765 Laverton	2	2
4763 Cheltenham North ..	2	..
4714 Syndal	2	..
4753 Rosanna Golf Links ..	2	2
4727 Koonung Heights ..	2	..
4764 Preston North East ..	2	2
4771 Lyndale	6	2
4773 Warrnambool East ..	1	..
4775 Colac South West ..	1	1
4776 Newcomb	2	2
4779 Fawkner North ..	2	2
4780 Overport	3	3
4787 North Park	1	1
4798 Bonbeach	1	..
4800 Blackburn East ..	2	2
4801 Amstel	1	..
4803 Beaumaris North ..	2	..

Name of School.	Total Number Provided since 1960–61.	Number still Used by the School.
4802 Heatherhill	1	1
4805 Altona East	1	..
4804 Bell Post Hill ..	2	3
4806 Gowrie Park	2	2
4809 Glenroy West ..	1	1
4810 Dandenong South ..	1	1
4812 Avondale Heights ..	3	3
4813 Beverley Hills ..	3	3
4811 St. Albans North ..	1	..
4820 Doveton West ..	4	2
4826 Merrilands	1	..
4835 Warrawong	4	2
4836 Glen Waverley Heights	1	..
4839 Jacana	2	..
4843 Parktone	1	..
4851 Westall	1	1
4854 Park Orchards ..	1	1
4860 Blackburn Lake ..	1	1
4861 Doncaster Park ..	2	2
4865 Eastmeadows ..	2	2
4869 Bulleen	3	..
4872 Frankston Forest ..	10	..
4873 Bellaire	2	..
4863 Laburnum	1	1
4877 Keilor Heights ..	2	2
4878 Middlefield	2	2
4880 Norlane West ..	4	..
4881 Parkmore	1	..
4884 Waverley North ..	2	1
4897 Eltham (Grove-street)	1	1
4903 Essex Heights ..	1	..
4904 Heatherdale	1	1
4900 Dallas	16	16
4914 Glen Devon	2	2
4931 Altona North ..	2	2
4934 Stawell West ..	1	1

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—The answers to the remaining questions are as follows:—

2. The annual cost of providing and erecting new portable class-rooms is as follows:—

1960-61	£50,473
1961-62	£133,144
1962-63	£162,058
1963-64	£164,547
1964-65	£146,193

It is not possible without considerable research to give the additional cost of moving and re-erecting existing class-rooms of this type.

3. In addition to the transfer of a substantial number of existing portable class-rooms from other schools, it is expected that 93 new units will be constructed in time for use during 1966.

4. The need for portable class-room accommodation is not expected to cease while the present expansion in State schools continues. However a complete survey covering all aspects of this type of accommodation will be made during 1966.

5. Every endeavour is made to anticipate future needs and to provide permanent buildings. This is evidenced by the fact that 4,987 permanent class-rooms have been erected since 1960. Portable class-rooms are only erected to provide good temporary accommodation in emergencies or until permanent buildings are completed. They represent only 6.5 per cent. of the total number of class-rooms erected in the past five years.

KEW HIGH SCHOOL: COST OF SITE WORKS.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Minister of Education—

How much was expended from Government funds on site works at the Kew High School?

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

An amount of £25,299 was expended from Government funds on site works at the Kew High School. This expenditure was recommended as, and was in fact, in accordance with departmental policy as applied or being applied to high schools erected on small sites, such as Chadstone, Brunswick and Flemington.

HEATHMONT STATE SCHOOL: REFUSAL TO RE-ADMIT PUPILS.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Education—

1. Whether Peter and Linda Smith were refused re-admittance to Heathmont State School; if so on what date?

2. On what date they enrolled at the school?

3. What section of the Education Act authorizes the action taken in this case?

4. Whether delay has occurred in reviewing this decision; if so, why?

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

1. Yes, on 13th September, 1965.

2. Peter Smith on 5th February, 1964. Linda Anne Smith on 3rd February, 1965.

3. Education Act 1958, Part IV., Attendance at School, section 64.

4. The decision was conveyed to Mrs. Smith by departmental letter dated 26th August. She requested a review by letter dated 13th September. She was interviewed on 17th September. The case was reviewed immediately, and my decision was conveyed to her by letter dated 17th September.

Mrs. Smith has since taken legal proceedings, which will involve considerable delay.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

GEELONG TRAMWAYS SYSTEM: CESSATION: ELECTRICITY TARIFFS.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong West) asked the Minister of Electrical Undertakings—

Whether, whilst the tramways system operated in Geelong, a surcharge was made on domestic or other electricity charges in the Geelong area to cover losses incurred by such tramway system; if so—(*a*) what total annual amount of surcharge was imposed on domestic and industrial consumers, respectively; and (*b*) whether the surcharge was abolished after the tramways system ceased to operate in Geelong?

Mr. G. O. REID (Minister of Electrical Undertakings).—The answer is—

There was no surcharge on electricity tariffs in Geelong to cover losses on the tramway system, but the Commission always made it clear that, in fairness to other electricity consumers, it must view the electricity and tramway operations of the district as a whole, and therefore it could not consider the reclassification of Geelong electricity tariffs to lower priced schedules until losses on tramways were eliminated.

In January, 1961, domestic and commercial consumers in the Geelong urban area received the benefit of an intermediate tariff schedule with rates about midway between metropolitan and country tariffs. By that date the Commission had substantially discharged its commitments in respect of road rehabilitation at Geelong following discontinuance of the tramways in 1956. Industrial consumers were not affected as a single tariff schedule had applied to this class for many years previously.

BREAD INDUSTRY.

INSPECTION OF METROPOLITAN BAKERIES.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Minister of Labour and Industry—

1. How many inspectors of the Department of Labour and Industry were on duty inspecting metropolitan bakeries for offences on the night of Thursday, 9th September, 1965?

2. At what times these inspectors commenced and ceased duty?

3. In what areas they operated?

4. At how many bakeries they called and were admitted?

5. At how many of these bakeries they detected offences?

Mr. G. O. REID (Minister of Labour and Industry).—The answers are—

1. Two teams of two inspectors each were on duty on the night in question and their duties included inspection of bakeries to ascertain whether the provisions of the law regulating hours of baking were being observed.

2. They commenced duty at 1.09 p.m. and ceased duty at 9.30 p.m., which latter time was the legal time for commencing the making and baking of bread on that night.

3. The Hawthorn area and the West Melbourne–Kensington area.

4. They called at five and gained entry at four bakeries.

5. Offences were detected at four bakeries.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

TRACK MAINTENANCE: ANNUAL EXPENDITURE.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What was the annual expenditure by the Railway Department for track maintenance in each of the last five financial years?

2. What are the respective amounts allocated to branch lines in western Victoria for track maintenance for the present financial year?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answers are—

		£
1.	1960-61	3,686,000
	1961-62	3,746,000
	1962-63	3,720,000
	1963-64	3,853,000
	1964-65	4,057,000

2. No specific amounts are allocated to any particular line for maintenance, but the approximate cost of maintaining light country branch lines is £500 per mile per annum.

LAND SETTLEMENT.

EXPANSION.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Minister of Lands—

1. When the big expansion in closer settlement in Victoria, as predicted by him at Morwell, will occur, and in what parts of Victoria this settlement will take place?

2. Approximately what additional areas will be made available in each instance?

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands).—The answers are—

1. This will depend on investigations currently being conducted by the Land Utilization Advisory Council in various parts of Victoria to determine the most suitable use of the land in those areas and on negotiations which are proceeding between the Forests Commission and the Lands Department concerning the release for settlement of Crown lands at present under the Commission's control.

On present indications, the greatest scope for development is in western and eastern Victoria, and, with proper safeguards against erosion, some of the foot-hill country throughout Victoria. Changes in existing legislation concerning improvement purchase leases, plantation area leases, grazing leases and grazing licences are currently under consideration, and the Government hopes to be in a position next session to introduce certain amendments which appear necessary to streamline the administration of the proper development of Crown lands in this State.

2. Investigations at this stage have not proceeded far enough to enable detailed information on areas to be given, but should the honorable member require further information, or have any particular areas in mind for settlement I would be pleased to discuss these matters with him.

STATE HIGHWAYS.

MILEAGES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE METROPOLITAN AREA: ANNUAL EXPENDITURE.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Acting Minister of Public Works—

1. How many State highways are in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Planning area, giving—(*a*) where they are located and which municipalities they traverse; and (*b*) where they enter the area and at which point they cease to be State highways?

2. What is—(*a*) the length in miles of each State highway; (*b*) the total mileage of State highways in the area; and (*c*) the total length of State highways outside the area?

3. When each of the various highways was declared a State highway?

4. What moneys were spent on each State highway in the area in each of the years 1955 to 1965?

5. What moneys were spent on State highways outside the area in each of the years 1960 to 1965?

6. What influencing factors determine the proclamation of a State highway?

Mr. BALFOUR (Acting Minister of Public Works).—The answers to these questions contain a great deal of statistical information, and I ask leave of the House to have them incorporated in *Hansard* without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

1. See statement A.

2. (*a*) See statement A.

(*b*) 106.8 miles.

(*c*) 4,392 miles.

3. See statement B.

4. See statement C.

5. See statement D.

6. Section 70 of the Country Roads Act states that the Board may by resolution declare to be a State highway any highway which in the opinion of the Board is of sufficient importance to be a State highway. State highways are the principal traffic arteries of the State which cater for long-distance "through" traffic. Generally they are interstate routes or the main routes connecting important centres of population or industry. Factors influencing their selection are:—

(*a*) Type of traffic, e.g., percentage of "through" traffic.

(*b*) Weight and volume of traffic.

(*c*) Interests served, e.g., interstate route, connecting important centres of population or commerce.

(*d*) Availability of alternate transport services, such as railways.

(*e*) Availability of funds. As the Country Roads Board bears the whole cost of all works carried out on State highways, the amount of money available to the Board determines the extent to which State highways may be declared.

STATEMENT A.

State Highway.	(a). Municipalities Traversed.	(b). Start of Declaration.	Mileage from G.P.O.	Exit Point from Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area.	Mileage from G.P.O.	Length in Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area.	Remarks.
			miles.		miles.	miles.	
Princes, West ..	Footscray and Sunshine Cities, Werribee Shire	Lynch's Bridge (Maribyrnong River)	3·4	Near Werribee	17·4	14·0	
Western ..	Footscray and Sunshine Cities, Melton Shire	Princes Highway, West Footscray	4·6	East of Melton ..	17·1	12·2	Gap in Footscray 5·0–5·3 miles
Calder ..	Essendon and Keilor Cities ..	Leake-street, Essendon ..	5·6	North-west of Sydenham..	16·9	10·2	Gap in Keilor 7·0–8·1 miles
Hume ..	Coburg and Broadmeadows Cities, Bulla Shire	Baker's-road, Coburg ..	6·1	At Craigieburn	15·5	9·4	
Maroondah ..	Camberwell, Box Hill, Nunawading and Ringwood Cities	Union-road, Camberwell ..	7·9	North-east of Ringwood ..	17·5	9·6	
Burwood ..	Box Hill and Nunawading Cities	Warrigal-road, Burwood ..	8·3	Dandenong Creek, near Wantirna	14·1	5·8	
Princes, East ..	Malvern, Oakleigh, Waverley, Springvale, and Dandenong Cities, Berwick Shire	Waverley-road, near Caulfield Station	7·1	East of Hallam ..	24·4	17·3	
South Gippsland	Dandenong City, Cranbourne Shire	Princes Highway East, east of Dandenong	20·7	South-east of Lyndhurst..	25·7	5·0	
Nepean ..	St. Kilda, Caulfield, Brighton, Moorabbin, Mordialloc, and Chelsea Cities, Frankston Shire	Dickens-street, St. Kilda..	4·4	North of Mount Eliza ..	27·7	23·3	

Nine State Highways in Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area. Total length in Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area: 106·8 miles.

NOTE.—Where part of a route is declared as a by-pass road it has been included as part of the relevant State highway.

STATEMENT B.

State Highway.	Total Length.	Length in Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area.	Length *ex* Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Area.	Year in which First Declared.
	(miles.)	(miles.)	(miles.)	
Bass	37·4	..	37·4	1947
Bellarine	19·8	..	19·8	1947
Bonang	72·0	..	72·0	1932
Borung	76·7	..	76·7	1947
Burwood	12·7	5·8	6·9	1960
Calder	349·3	10·2	339·1	1925
Cann Valley	28·9	..	28·9	1960
Glenelg	175·9	..	175·9	1947
Goulburn Valley	139·4	..	139·4	Sec. 1, 1940; Sec. 2, 1960.
Hamilton	144·3	..	144·3	1960
Henty	244·7	..	244·7	1938
Hume	183·7	9·4	174·3	1925
Kiewa Valley	48·9	..	48·9	1960
Loddon Valley	76·8	..	76·8	1940
Maroondah	108·3	9·6	98·7	1947
McIvor	27·5	..	27·5	1960
Midland	311·0	..	311·0	Sec. 1, 4, 5, 1932; Sec. 8, 1938; Sec. 3, 1947; Sec. 2, 1960
Murray Valley	462·5	..	462·5	1932
Nepean	55·4	23·3	32·1	1947
Northern	88·5	..	88·5	1925
North Western	176·9	..	176·9	1947
Omeo	184·8	..	184·8	1925
Ouyen	80·9	..	80·9	1947
Ovens	47·4	..	47·4	1947
Princes East	314·7	17·3	297·4	1925
Princes West	278·1	14·0	264·1	1925
Pyrenees	91·9	..	91·9	1947
South Gippsland	159·4	5·0	154·4	Sec. 1, 3, 1932; Sec. 2, 1938, 1947
Sturt	72·1	..	72·1	1932
Warburton	23·0	..	23·0	1960
Western	267·3	12·2	255·1	1925
Wimmera	138·6	..	138·6	1960
Totals	4,498·8	106·8	4,392·0	

NOTE :—Where part of a route is declared as a by-pass road it has been included as part of the relevant declared State highway.

STATEMENT C.

EXPENDITURE ON STATE HIGHWAYS IN MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA.

Highway.	1955–56.	1956–57.	1957–58.	1958–59.	1959–60.	1960–61.	1961–62.	1962–63.	1963–64.	1964–65.	Total.
	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.	£'000.
Princes Highway West ..	43	49	52	213	58	121	99	76	115	182	1,008
Western Highway ..	37	36	18	16	4	169	196	116	254	90	936
Calder Highway	4	7	8	7	5	76	64	115	190	203	679
Hume Highway	18	8	5	52	119	148	279	49	188	209	1,075
Maroondah Highway ..	11	11	18	36	245	109	155	96	335	166	1,182
Burwood Highway ..	..	..	..	..	..	62	62	39	50	282	495
Princes Highway East ..	15	29	286	88	181	238	212	401	637	61	2,148
South Gippsland Highway ..	8	13	10	12	2	2	2	24	54	13	140
Nepean Highway	24	33	74	86	82	116	237	318	121	335	1,426
Total ..	160	186	471	510	696	1,041	1,306	1,234	1,944	1,541	9,089

STATEMENT D.

EXPENDITURE ON STATE HIGHWAYS OUTSIDE MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA, 1960–61 TO 1964–65.

	£'000.
1960–61	5,840
1961–62	5,526
1962–63	5,371
1963–64	7,632
1964–65	7,002
	31,371

MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN.

PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Health—

When the additional accommodation for mentally retarded children as referred to in *Hansard* of 26th October, 1965, at page 1037, will be available for occupation at—(*a*) Kew Cottages; (*b*) Janefield; (*c*) Travancore; (*d*) Stawell; and (*e*) St. Nicholas?

Mr. ROSSITER (Assistant Minister of Education).—The Minister of Health has supplied the following answers:—

It is anticipated that accommodation will become available at the various institutions as follows:—

(*a*) Kew Cottages.—One 48-bed ward in April, 1966, and two 33-bed wards in December, 1966.

(*b*) Janefield.—One 48-bed ward in March, 1966, and three 48-bed wards in December, 1966.

(*c*) Travancore.—There are no buildings under construction nor contemplated at Travancore at this stage.

(*d*) Stawell.—Two 33-bed wards in March, 1967.

(*e*) St. Nicholas.—Two 24-bed wards will be available in approximately two months.

The remainder of the accommodation at St. Nicholas is dependent upon the major renovation of a five-storied block which will contain out-patient and other facilities in addition to patient accommodation. No firm date can be given for the completion of this work.

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Health—

1. How many beds are provided for patients at the St. Nicholas hospital for mentally retarded children?

2. How many of these beds are occupied?

3. What was the cost of equipping this hospital?

4. What is the proposed patient-capacity of this hospital?

Mr. ROSSITER (Assistant Minister of Education).—The answers provided by the Minister of Health are—

1. One hundred and forty-four.

2. Ninety-six.

3. The costs are as follows—

	£
Building works ..	334,027
Furniture	51,410
Mechanical works ..	50,735
Electrical works ..	21,407
Total costs to date ..	457,579

4. Three hundred.

NUMBER OF CENTRES: GOVERNMENT GRANTS.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Health—

1. How many mentally retarded children's centres were in Victoria in each of the years 1960 to 1965?

2. How many of these centres received grants out of the sums provided in the Public Works Loan Application Acts of 1960 to 1964, what are the names of these centres, and what was the amount of each grant?

Mr. ROSSITER (Assistant Minister of Education).—The answers furnished by the Minister of Health consist of detailed statistical information, and I ask leave to have them incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading them.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

1.

Year.	Day Centres.	Residential.	Total.
1959–60 ..	26	3	29
1960–61 ..	26	3	29
1961–62 ..	28	2	30
1962–63 ..	29	2	31
1963–64 ..	30	2	32
1964–65 ..	31	2	33

2. Grants Approved—1959–60.

	£	s.	d.
Ballarat	8,744	0	0
Croydon	9,200	0	0
Kew–Balwyn ..	16,296	0	0
Mildura	12,168	13	6
Northcote ..	991	0	0
Oakleigh	10,276	0	0

Grants Approved—1960–61.

Ballarat	665	0	0
Croydon	957	8	0
Frankston ..	341	0	0
Geelong	11,176	0	0
Ivanhoe	10,969	12	0
Kew–Balwyn ..	4,347	0	0
Mildura	10,754	0	0
Shepparton ..	849	3	10
Terang	172	0	0
Warragul ..	12,512	0	0

Grants Approved—1961–62.

Brighton	2,309	16	0
Footscray ..	14,288	0	0
Geelong	1,007	18	10
Ivanhoe	350	18	10
Northcote ..	609	16	6
Oakleigh	1,764	0	0
Richmond ..	6,400	0	0
Shepparton ..	57	12	0
Terang	5,600	0	0

Grants Approved—1962–63.

Croydon	11,920	0	0
Dandenong ..	4,640	0	0
Maffra	2,640	0	0
Oakleigh	119	3	9
Prahran	4,000	0	0
Shepparton ..	40	0	0
Warragul ..	553	12	0

Grants Approved—1963–64.

Ballarat	9,760	0	0
Box Hill	15,648	0	0
Coburg	20,249	4	0
Dandenong ..	1,160	0	0
Footscray ..	450	0	0
Geelong	607	4	0
Kew–Balwyn ..	1,267	0	0
Oakleigh	5,109	10	9
Northcote ..	5,558	8	0
Richmond ..	96	0	0
Rosebud	12,800	0	0
Shepparton ..	190	0	0
Terang	1,600	0	0

Grants Approved—1964–65.

Ballarat	2,314	0	0
Coburg	4,200	0	0
Croydon	3,394	8	0
Dandenong ..	41,748	0	0
Frankston ..	13,600	0	0
Hamilton	1,613	0	0
Kew	68	4	0
Maffra	21,896	0	0
Rosebud	2,184	0	0
Shepparton ..	105	12	0
Terang	409	11	0
Warragul ..	152	16	0

RIVER MURRAY.

FLOW PAST SWAN HILL.

Mr. STIRLING (Swan Hill) asked the Minister of Water Supply—

1. How many acre-feet of water passed down the River Murray past Swan Hill during each of the months of August, September, and October, 1965?

2. Whether this water was stored for future use; if not, what was its destination?

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

1. The volumes of water carried by the River Murray past Swan Hill during each of the months of August, September and October, 1965, were:

August ..	196,310	acre-feet
September ..	568,080	acre-feet
October ..	125,000	acre-feet
Total for three months ..	889,390	acre-feet.

During the months of August and September, much of the flows passing Swan Hill were contributed by the unregulated discharges of the Kiewa, Ovens and Broken rivers, undivertible and surplus flows of the Goulburn river below Lake Eildon, and minor overflows from Lake Eppalock.

During October, flows passing Swan Hill were as regulated to meet the normal requirements of the Lower River Murray.

2. Supplemented by inflows to the River Murray downstream of Swan Hill from the Murrumbidgee and Darling rivers, these volumes of flow were utilized as follows:—

——	August.	September.	October.
	acre-feet	acre-feet	acre-feet
Impounded in Lake Victoria for future use	14,000	21,000	..
Diverted for Irrigation			
Victoria	3,050	11,300	19,600
New South Wales ..	1,000	4,000	7,000
Meeting statutory entitlements to South Australia	94,000	114,000	95,000
Total Utilization ..	112,050	150,300	131,600
Flow surplus at Swan Hill passing to the sea	84,260	417,780	..

(Lake Victoria was raised to full supply level in September).

PETITION.

SEAL POPULATION ALONG VICTORIAN COASTLINE

A petition was presented by Mr. Cochrane from certain citizens of the State of Victoria praying that action be taken to reduce the number of seals along the Victorian coastline.

Mr. COCHRANE (Gippsland West).—The petition is respectfully worded, is in order, and bears 720 signatures. By leave, I move—

That the Standing Orders be suspended so as to allow the petition to be read.

The motion was agreed to.

The Clerk read the petition, which was in the following terms:—

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND THE HONORABLE THE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF VICTORIA IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble petition of the undersigned citizens of the State of Victoria :

SHEWETH:

1. That, in the opinion of your petitioners, the seal population has grown out of its natural proportion and is now forced to harass all type of fish, especially fish heavily loaded with roe, causing fish to eject the roe in places unsuitable for its incubation.

2. That the seals' activity is causing a shortage of fish on the coastline and is doing extensive damage to nets and fishing gear causing fishermen to seek grounds much farther out and increasing the cost of fish to the public.

3. That the petitioners request that seal numbers be reduced immediately while a shortage of meat and fish meal exists, and the price of these commodities is so high.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honorable House will take this matter into consideration, and take such action as may be necessary to restrict this rapid increase in the seal population along the coastline.

4. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Mr. COCHRANE (Gippsland West).—I move—

That the petition be taken into consideration to-morrow.

The motion was agreed to.

GOVERNOR'S SPEECH.

PRESENTATION OF ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—As directed by this honorable House, Mr. Speaker waited upon His Excellency the Governor to-day and presented to him the Address of the Legislative Assembly, agreed to on the 30th September, in reply to the Speech of His Excellency on the opening of Parliament. His Excellency was pleased to make the following reply :—

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Legislative Assembly:

In the name of and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to our Most Gracious Sovereign contained in the Address you have just presented to me.

I fully rely on your wisdom in deliberating upon the important measures to be brought under your consideration, and I earnestly hope that the results of your labours will be conducive to the advancement and prosperity of this State.

SUPERANNUATION BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This is a short Bill to amend specific provisions in the Superannuation Act and has four main purposes, which I shall explain in the order in which they appear in the Bill. Following a Crown Solicitor's opinion in a particular case, doubt has been raised as to the legal position of certain officers—for example, members of the Public Service Board, the Town and Country Planning Board, the Teachers Tribunal and others—who are contributing to the Superannuation Fund by virtue of a saving provision in the Acts under which they were appointed. I should like to refer at this stage to the sad and tragic death of the chairman of the Public Service Board, the late Andrew Garran. I believe this State has suffered grievously in his loss. He was ideally suited to the position which he occupied. Mr. Garran had a backgound which enabled him to engender confidence in all those with whom

he became acquainted; he also had ability and imagination to enable him satisfactorily to carry out his task.

Mr. CLAREY.—I agree with those comments concerning the late Mr. Garran.

Mr. BOLTE.—The Bill, as originally drafted, would not have covered the late Mr. Garran's case. Consequently, it was necessary for the Bill to be reprinted to-day to ensure the legality of his case and claims that will be made. No credit for this action having been taken is due to any individual; it would have been the wish of this Parliament.

There is no doubt that the intention is that the officers to whom I referred should enjoy the benefits and accept the liabilities of the superannuation scheme as applied to their present offices, and the Superannuation Board is accepting contributions and paying benefits on this basis. The purpose of clause 2 of the Bill is to provide that these officers, from the dates of appointment to their present offices, come within the meaning of the term "officer" under the Superannuation Act.

The second purpose of the Bill relates to certain persons appointed to statutory offices who continue to serve after they attain the age of 65 years, and to other officers whose services are extended beyond the the normal retiring age of 65 years. These contributors are not entitled to a pension until they actually retire and then only from the date of their retirement. At present, after attaining the age of 65 years, they are not entitled to contribute for any additional units of pension consequent on a salary rise or to take up any units which they failed to take up previously as a normal right. For the period during which these officers continue to serve after attaining the age of 65 years, the Consolidated Revenue gains by not having any pension commitment.

The Superannuation Board has recommended that these persons be given the opportunity to elect for additional units to which they may become entitled and to take up units which they failed to take up previously in the same way and on the same terms as an ordinary officer in his last year of service is entitled to do. Provision is made in clause 3 to give effect to this recommendation.

As honorable members are aware, the Superannuation Act was not included in the Decimal Currency Bill because a decision regarding the conversion of the rates of contribution had not been reached at the time the Decimal Currency Bill was introduced. The present scales of contributions as set out in the schedules to the Superannuation Act are not readily convertible to decimal currency and contain some anomalies. It is therefore considered that new scales of rates of contribution are essential.

The contribution scales for females have been reported by the actuary as being too low, and also the proposal in clause 5 of this Bill to alter the benefit on resignation, which I will explain fully later on, would theoretically require an increase in contributions. Because of the higher interest rate which the Superannuation Fund is earning, it is proposed, in calculating the new scales of contributions, to use a higher interest rate than previously so that, with the exception of odd cases, and then only to a minor degree, the new scales to apply to existing contributors will not be higher than the existing scales at any age.

The present shortage of qualified staff in the Actuarial Branch of the Government Statist makes it impossible for the calculations to be completed during the present session, but it is essential that the new scales be in force not later than "C" day, i.e. the 14th February, 1966. The purpose of clause 4 therefore is to admit of the amendment of the scales by regulation. Recent press reports would indicate that the Commonwealth proposes to adopt a similar

procedure. The honorable member for Melbourne would recall that I referred to this problem during the debate on the Decimal Currency Bill. Because of the varying amounts that would be involved, it is not possible to prescribe in a Bill the exact conversion figures. This problem is again emphasized in this measure.

As I have stated, the purpose of clause 5 is to alter the benefit payable to a contributor when he resigns or otherwise ceases to be an "officer" under the Superannuation Act and is not entitled to a pension—for example, a female teacher who marries. At present, the contributor is entitled to the actuarial reserve of the contributions he has paid into the Superannuation Fund. To calculate this reserve, it is necessary to know what amount has been paid into the fund in respect of each unit. In the vast majority of these cases, the amount refunded in respect of all units is less than 100 per cent. of the total contributions paid.

The introduction of decimal currency will create difficulties in calculating the refunds of contributions payable in the future. In view of the long historical records required to ascertain the actuarial reserve, it will be almost an administrative impossibility for Departments to convert their present records to decimals, calculate the amount paid up to "C" day in respect of each unit, add the contributions paid after "C" day, and apply the relevant percentage payable to the individual amounts.

The majority of superannuation schemes now provide for 100 per cent. refund of contributions on resignation and the amendments proposed in clause 5 provide that, for the future, this percentage will apply to the State Superannuation Fund. This will obviate the detailed and cumbersome work involved in the calculation of actuarial reserve refunds which would become almost impracticable after the change to decimal currency with respect to contributions made before that change. Honorable members will appreciate that that is a simple way of doing it. By providing for a 100 per cent. refund of contributions, it will not be necessary to calculate for intangibles.

At present, a female teacher who marries is entitled to the actuarial reserve of the contributions she has paid to the fund. If she elects to join the Married Women Teachers' Pension Fund, she may pay the amount of the actuarial reserve into this fund. The provisions of subclause (3) alter the actuarial reserve to 100 per cent. refund. This straightforward measure will correct certain anomalies which exist in the Superannuation Act and, accordingly, I commend it to the House.

On the motion of Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

HOME FINANCE (SECOND MORTGAGES) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Home Finance Act 1962 is a consolidation of the Home Finance Act 1955 and a number of amending Acts. The Act provides for the setting up of a Home Finance Trust with power to receive money on deposit or on overdraft for the purpose of making loans on the security of a first or second mortgage of a dwelling-house. "Dwelling-house" means the land together with the dwelling and other improvements erected or to be erected thereon.

Originally, the Trust made loans available on first mortgage only, but honorable members will recall that, late in 1962, the Act was amended to enable the Trust also to make loans on the security of a second mortgage of a dwelling-house. This provision was inserted to assist prospective home-owners to meet the difference

between the loan made available on first mortgage by the lending authority and the tender or purchase price of the dwelling-house. The Government considered that this was desirable in order that these people would not be forced to pay high interest rates on loans obtained on second mortgage to bridge the gap to which I have just referred. Honorable members will recall the predicament of a great number of people who were using fringe finance. If it had not been for the assistance of the Home Finance Trust, many of them would have lost their homes or the money they had paid towards the cost of their homes.

The Trust charges an interest rate of 6¼ per centum with quarterly adjustments of interest in respect of these second-mortgage loans. I am pleased to say that this scheme met with immediate success, and in the two and one-half years since its introduction it has helped many hundreds of persons, who previously would have been unable to do so, to obtain homes of their own.

In October, 1961, the Act was amended to increase the valuation limit with respect to first mortgage loans from £4,500 to £5,000 because of the increased costs relating to housing. The amount of £5,000 was also fixed as the valuation limit with respect to second mortgage loans when the Act was amended to provide for such loans in 1962. Recent experience has shown that the valuation limit of £5,000 is now too low to enable people to obtain homes of modest proportions, and the Government considers that this limit should be raised. It is emphasized that it is the policy of the Trust not to make loans available on expensive homes, and this is a policy which has my wholehearted support.

There is a special group of people —a certain wage group—who have been eligible for finance from the Trust towards the cost of the purchase of a home. As years have gone by, and as the cost of home purchase has increased, it has been found necessary to increase the upper limit of the cost of a home on which the Trust will make a loan. The Government—I am sure all Governments would act in a similar manner—wants to continue to assist that group and to retain their interest in this type of investment. Therefore, I do not think the periodical increases in the upper limit have brought in a new group of people; they have catered for the same type of people as previously.

The Trust continues to make loans available to country areas not served by co-operative housing societies and where difficulty is experienced in obtaining housing finance. The Act contains further restrictions on the making of first and second-mortgage loans by the Trust, including an age limit of two years and a stipulation that the percentage of the total loan to valuation must not exceed 95 per centum of the valuation.

The purpose of this Bill is twofold: First, to raise the valuation limit in respect of both first and second-mortgage loans, and, secondly, to facilitate the making of second-mortgage loans to borrowers from the Trust on first mortgage.

I shall now deal with the clauses of the Bill. Clause 2 provides for the raising of the valuation limit with respect to first mortgages from £5,000 to £5,800. It is considered that this increase will enable the Trust to make loans to those people who, hitherto, have been precluded from obtaining loans owing to increased valuations associated with higher housing costs.

Clause 3 provides for a similar increase in the valuation limit with respect to second-mortgage loans. It follows that the circumstances which make it necessary to raise the limit with respect to first mortgages also apply to other lending institutions that make loans on first mortgage

which are supplemented by loans on second mortgage made available by the Trust.

The provisions contained in clause 4 will, without regard to restrictions currently contained in the Act, permit the granting of second-mortgage loans to persons who have already obtained loans on first mortgage from the Trust. It has been found that in many cases, particularly where the first-mortgage loans were made some years ago, sewerage has now been provided. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works does not now permit the cost of the installation of sewerage to be met by instalments, and house-owners unable to pay cash are, therefore, forced to obtain the money on second mortgage at high rates of interest.

A number of borrowers have already found it necessary to add one or more rooms to provide adequate accommodation for increased families and, here again, not having the cash to pay for such additions, they are forced to obtain high-interest second-mortgage loans. As one of the reasons for the introduction of second-mortgage loans was to avoid high interest costs and, at the same time, enable people to obtain suitable terms of repayment, it is reasonable that the Trust should assist its own borrowers on first mortgage in these respects.

When a person originally applies to the Home Finance Trust, he is encouraged to buy a home as cheaply as possible. If his requirements are four or five rooms, he is encouraged to buy such a home, but provision is made for additional rooms should they be required in the future. Now the stage has been reached where a number of original applicants want to add rooms to their homes, and for that purpose it is necessary for them to obtain a second mortgage because they already have a first mortgage from the Trust. This Bill will enable the Trust to make money available on second mortgage for this purpose.

Mr. Bolte.

As many of the houses originally financed are now more than two years old and, in many cases, the valuation would have exceeded £5,000, it is necessary that these restrictions be removed in respect of the second-mortgage loans now proposed to be made. Although the Bill provides for an increase in the valuation limit as previously mentioned, the same conditions would apply to loans made on first mortgage in future years. The other restrictions at present contained in the Act with respect to second-mortgage loans are retained to the extent to which they are applicable in the circumstances of each case.

The following information concerning the activities of the Trust since its constitution just over nine years ago will be of interest to members. Long-term first-mortgage loans granted and subsisting total 3,017, the amount involved being £9,150,-248, while, since the inception of the second-mortgage scheme, 1,167 loans have been granted for an aggregate amount of £528,560. I am sure that the more flexible conditions proposed will enable the Trust to do an even better job than it has in the past. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. LOVEGROVE (Fitzroy), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

OFF-SHORE PETROLEUM LEGISLATION.

Mr. DARCY (Minister of Mines) (*By leave*).—The Governments of the Commonwealth and of the Australian States have reached agreement on a system of legislation to control and safeguard the exploration for, and exploitation of, the petroleum resources in Australian off-shore areas, both within and beyond territorial limits.

Interest in exploring the petroleum resources of the seabed has quickened considerably in recent times. However, apart from Territory ordinances, the Commonwealth has at present no legislation governing this sort of activity. All States, as well as the Northern Territory and the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, have granted exploration permits under their existing legislation, and the Commonwealth has granted subsidies for exploration of some of these areas. The discovery of natural gas in the area of Bass Strait is encouraging both to the companies concerned and to the country as a whole. It is hoped that further exploration will bring fresh discoveries of both oil and natural gas.

A series of conferences extending over a period of more than two years has taken place between the Commonwealth Minister for National Development and the State Mines Ministers, and the Commonwealth and State Attorneys-General. The Minister for Territories has also been associated with the discussions. The discussions have been limited to resources of petroleum, whether in gaseous, liquid or solid form.

The objectives in the extensive Commonwealth - State discussions that have been taking place have been to work out a scheme that would give certainty of legal title to operators in off-shore areas who undertake the substantial expenditures involved in off-shore exploration and exploitation, and, at the same time, would enable constitutional issues to be put on one side, thus avoiding constitutional litigation of the kind that has been going on in the United States of America for many years. The several Governments have mutually agreed that without abating any of their constitutional claims—that without abandoning those claims—they should try to arrive at a concerted policy with common administration and with complete agreement between them as to what is to happen. This has been achieved.

That it has been possible to reach this agreement is a unique tribute to the strength of our Federal institutions, and I think we may take satisfaction in the thought that statements similar in content are being, or will be, made to-day in the State and Federal Parliaments—thus demonstrating the unanimity of purpose of the several Governments.

The scheme agreed to by the Governments will be effected by Commonwealth and State legislation in similar terms and will be presented to the several Parliaments pursuant to a formal agreement between the Commonwealth and the States setting out details of the agreed arrangements and the basis of, and understandings behind, such arrangements and evidencing the intention of all parties.

The legislation proposed by both the Commonwealth and the States will include provision for the application in off-shore areas of the general body of law in force in the adjacent State or Territory. This will include both State and Commonwealth laws and will apply in off-shore areas in relation to the exploration for, and exploitation of, petroleum.

The legislation will also include a mining code devised by the Commonwealth and the States in co-operation, and providing for a common set of principles to apply to all off-shore petroleum operations anywhere around the Australian coast, but allowing sufficient flexibility to enable the peculiar circumstances and problems off-shore from any individual State or Territory to be met. The administration of this legislation will be in the hands of the States and the Territories, save only that the States have agreed that the Commonwealth will be consulted on all aspects which may affect the Commonwealth's own special responsibilities under the Constitution in matters such as defence, external affairs, health, immigration, customs, navigation, and so on, and

that in these matters the States will give effect to Commonwealth decisions.

Because of the very natural interest in the principles of the off-shore mining code on the part of companies currently holding off-shore tenements or contemplating off-shore exploration, I propose now to give a brief outline of the basic principles which will be included in the legislation to be introduced both by the Commonwealth Government and the several State Governments. These principles have been agreed between the respective Governments and will be submitted to the Parliaments.

The general run of existing State petroleum legislation provides for a three-stage system—that is, a permit to cover basic exploration, a licence over a much smaller area which gives permission to carry out drilling operations, and a lease to cover the production stage. The new off-shore legislation will be a two-stage system. A permit will cover all stages of exploration including drilling, and a licence—equivalent to a lease on land —will cover production.

Under the scheme, a permit may be issued initially for a period up to ten years; a permit issued initially for a lesser period may be extended to a total life of ten years. If its duration exceeds two years, either as an initial grant or because of extension, such duration shall be divided into successive specified periods and there will be provision for reduction of the areas of the permit at the ends of such periods. This is to encourage companies to concentrate their efforts on the most prospective areas which they discover but not at the same time hold large off-shore areas which are not being effectively explored.

Companies holding permits will be required to carry out exploration work in accordance with programmes approved by the State Mines Ministers or by the appropriate authorities in Commonwealth Territories.

Mr. Darcy.

There will be provisions requiring operations to be carried out in such manner as will not interfere unjustifiably with navigation or fishing, or with the conservation of the living resources of the sea and the seabed, with underwater cables or pipe-lines, or with mining operations for minerals other than petroleum.

Rental will be payable to the States or Territories at an annual rate of 2s. per square mile but not exceeding the sum of £1,000 for any permit area. This is a comparatively modest rate, but it is the view of the several Governments that companies should be encouraged to spend as much as possible in actual exploration. Rentals will be kept by the States.

There will be many other details customarily found in petroleum legislation, such as a requirement that operations be carried out in accordance with good oil field practices, that proper safety procedures be observed, that reports be submitted at specified intervals, together with provisions for the voluntary relinquishment of a permit, and also for cancellation if the permittee fails to comply with the terms and conditions laid down in his permit.

I deal now with the granting of production licences. In the event of a permittee discovering payable petroleum, he will have a preferential right to a licence for production. Licences will issue for periods of 21 years, with the licensee having the right of extension, provided that he has satisfactorily carried out the conditions and covenants of his licence, for a further period of 21 years. During the first 21 years, royalty will be payable at the rate of 10 per cent. of value of production at the well-head. The second 21 years will be divided into three seven-year periods, during each of which the royalty may be varied by agreement between the several Governments. Further extensions of the licence may be granted. The effect of this is that an operator is assured, provided that

he carries out his side of the bargain, of holding his licence area for at least 42 years and that during the first half of this, the royalty rate will be fixed at 10 per cent. of value at well-head. Royalties will be divided on a 50:50 basis between the Commonwealth and the adjacent State. The disposition of royalties in the case of the Territories will depend on the general financial relationships between the Commonwealth and the particular Territory concerned.

The method by which areas of a licence for production will be determined is of interest. The Commonwealth and the States have agreed that there shall be established over off-shore areas a graticule system of block areas, the size of each graticular block to be 5 minutes of arc of latitude by 5 minutes of arc of longitude. In the areas of Northern Australia, this results in graticular blocks of a little over 30 square miles in size, reducing as one moves south until in Bass Strait the blocks are approximately 25 square miles. Reduction in size is, of course, brought about by the fact that minutes of latitude decrease in length between the equator and the South Pole.

Following a discovery of petroleum within a permit area, the permittee will be asked to nominate a graticular block which will then become the centre of a group of nine graticular blocks which for purposes of simplicity will be known as a location. Each side of the location will be three blocks in length. From within this location of nine graticular blocks, a permittee will be entitled to select any four blocks and to be granted a production licence covering such blocks. The permittee will have at least two years in which to make his selection, and this period may be extended to four years if the State Minister—or the appropriate authority in Commonwealth Territories—considers further time is needed for adequate exploration and assessment of the area of the location. Those graticular blocks which are not selected by the permittee will be excised from the permit area and may be disposed of by the States or Territories by tender. The original permittee will have the right of first option over any such graticular blocks at the top price offered by any other tenderer provided that if the top price offered is not considered satisfactory allocation may be deferred and the blocks re-advertised. The proceeds from the sale of these blocks will be retained by the adjacent States.

It will be noted that this arrangement will enable the permittee who discovers petroleum to secure as of right a licence for production over an area of 100 square miles or more, according to latitude. This is the normal maximum size of a lease currently provided for in State legislation. The permittee has the right to nominate the central block of the location so that he can have the location established over the area which he thinks will most suitably cover the geological structure in which he is interested. The permittee has a second choice, in that he can take his pick of four blocks out of the nine constituting the location. There will be no limit to the number of licences that may be granted to any one company. This arrangement, we believe, is fair to the permittee, while at the same time taking into account the national sentiment that the Australian people as a whole should benefit appropriately from the development of our natural resources.

If the block nominated as the centre of a location is so positioned that to make it the centre of a location of nine graticular blocks would encroach on areas already included within other locations or would encroach on other permit or licence areas, the location pertaining to the discovery and its nominated block shall be limited to that number of graticular blocks which are not already encumbered, and the permittee will be allowed as of right to choose blocks over which he will be granted production licences according

to a laid-down scale. For instance, if the location is limited to seven blocks, the permittee may be granted licences over four. If the location is limited to four blocks, the permittee may be granted a licence over two, and so on.

A permittee who discovers payable petroleum will also have a preferential right to a pipe-line licence for the purpose of bringing his product ashore by a reasonably direct route.

I should like now to deal with the position of companies holding tenements issued by the States or Territories. Throughout the discussions between the Commonwealth and the States, the Commonwealth has made clear its intention, wherever possible, to honour tenements which have been issued by States or Territories and accepted by companies in good faith prior to the passage of Commonwealth legislation. There will be provisions in the legislation relating to the confirmation of existing tenements for the unexpired period of their life, and to this end confirmatory permits may be issued temporarily with boundaries that do not conform to the graticular system to which I have referred.

Existing tenements are of comparatively short duration. Many will expire in 1966, a few in 1967 and 1968, while four run until 1969. As mentioned earlier, the new legislation will provide for permits of up to ten years' duration. Some companies may therefore prefer to be issued with a new permit under the new legislation. Others, whose permits have only a comparatively short time to run, may find it more convenient to have their old permit confirmed for the unexpired period of life. This will be a matter for negotiation between the companies and the State Mines Departments. The Commonwealth and the States have agreed together on the general principles under which confirmation should be handled.

This, then, is a summary of the intention of the Commonwealth and the States with regard to off-shore petroleum legislation. I emphasize that the proposed system has been designed to ensure security of title and tenure to off-shore operators, to avoid costly and time-consuming litigation, and to establish an effective and legally sound administrative regime supported co-operatively by the Commonwealth and the States.

Legislation for this purpose will be brought down during the next session of Parliament. By leave. I move—

That this House takes note of the Ministerial statement.

On the motion of Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

PUBLIC OFFICERS SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES BILL.

Mr. MANSON (Minister without Portfolio) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of a Bill relating to the salaries, allowances and fees of certain public officers.

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

On the motion of Mr. MANSON (Minister without Portfolio), the Bill was brought in and read a first time.

PUBLIC WORKS LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 11) on the motion of Mr. Balfour (Acting Minister of Public Works) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Scoresby).—This Bill consists of 79 items involving an expenditure of £46,348,410. Before addressing myself to matters concerning my own electorate, I should like to comment on the Public Works Department. Honorable members will recall that Sir Horace Petty, the

former Minister of Public Works, cut down the use of day-labour gangs within his Department, and sought to have more work done under contract. Most honorable members agreed with his decision.

However, the work involved in the maintenance of school buildings, carried out by the Public Works Department, is mounting year by year, and the Department is having great difficulty in obtaining tenders for relatively small jobs of the type involving an expenditure of up to £1,000. As the number of day-labour gangs employed by the Public Works Department is now greatly reduced, I suggest that the Acting Minister of Public Works should investigate this situation and ascertain whether it is appropriate at this stage to increase to some extent the number of day-labour employees, so that relatively minor jobs at the different schools could be dealt with much more expeditiously. Day-labour gangs can be used to advantage for a number of small jobs where the Public Works Department, through the Education Department, appropriates a fixed amount of money. The use of day-labour gangs on site under the supervision of excellent engineers of the Civil Engineering Branch of the Public Works Department would allow more elasticity to the engineer in the use of that money. Often on-site difficulties are encountered which were not anticipated in the drawing up of the initial plans. The judicious use of day labour can often overcome these problems. I ask the honorable gentleman to investigate the matter.

While discussing this Bill, it is appropriate to examine the backlog of school maintenance within the Education Department. I understand that an over-all amount of £1,300,000 from both revenue and loan funds is available this year through the Public Works Department for maintenance under item 1 of the schedule. On account of the increased number of schools of light timber construction, it is obvious that large amounts of money for the maintenance of these buildings will be required at a much earlier date than in the case of schools of solid brick construction built in years gone by. From my discussions with senior officers of the Public Works Department, it would seem that an additional annual £2,000,000 could be spent on the arrears of maintenance that have been increasing in the twenty years since the second world war. During the war years, very little maintenance was undertaken and the backlog has not yet been overcome. The amount expended has not kept pace with the maintenance programme, which is getting further into arrears. This is one of the major financial problems of the State.

Many honorable members, I understand, propose to speak to item 1. I am disappointed that sufficient funds are not available for the establishment of a special school within my electorate. The nearest special school to Scoresby is the relatively new establishment at Mitcham. It may well have been thought that, as the special school would handle a relatively small proportion of the school population, the Mitcham special school would cater for the general area of Lilydale and Fern Tree Gully for some years to come. I instance the case of a child from Boronia whose parents made application for her admission to the Mitcham special school. It was found that she could not be admitted until 1968. In the meantime she would have to go to Montague, which is a long distance to travel. The parents have to take the child to Box Hill, where she is picked up by a special bus and taken to Montague. Later in the afternoon she is returned to Box Hill, from which point the parents must pick up the child to take her home.

As a result of a survey, I find that 3 per cent. to 5 per cent. of the school population should go to special schools or opportunity grades. Some years ago the Education Department purchased a site at

the Mountain Gate estate, on which to erect a special school, but in this Bill I see no provision for the establishment of that school. Apparently this is a forgotten area in the field of education. I have suggested that, as a temporary measure, the Department might examine the use of the Dorset-road school at Boronia, which, since the erection of the new schools in the area, is now hardly used. This school could be equipped so that, as a temporary measure, special opportunity grades could be provided. As a special school is urgently required in my electorate, I ask the Acting Minister of Public Works to examine the position.

I direct attention to the high school at Croydon West, which is on the boundary of my electorate and that of the honorable member for Ringwood, where the children are accommodated in portable class-rooms. The school was opened at the beginning of this school year. As the tenders have not closed at this late stage of the year, it is obvious that the school will not be available in February of next year; in fact, it is doubtful whether it will be available for the second school term. A worth-while suggestion has been made that the Public Works Department should be asked—as it has already been asked by me—to programme the erection of this building in stages. It should be possible for the first stage to be completed with suitable toilet facilities and offices, pending completion of the contract, so that the children can be admitted. If that suggestion was adopted, the children could be taken out of the temporary accommodation at a much earlier date. There are some dangers and hazards for children being on site whilst building operations are in progress, but honorable members know that to-day classes are built in wings. If the school is built in stages, and the first stage is built quickly, the present unsuitable situation could be alleviated.

Mr. Borthwick.

I am disturbed that there is no provision in this Bill for the erection of a new high school at Fern Tree Gully. This general area is serviced by the three high schools at Upwey, Bayswater and Boronia. It is obvious that, with the build-up of primary schools in recent years, there is need for additional secondary school facilities. This is evidenced by the fact that the Public Works Department will soon be calling tenders for the construction of an additional technical school to be known as Knox Technical School. As a result of the population growth within this area, which is increasing by 12 per cent. per annum the build-up of children at the primary level, additional secondary schools are urgently needed. Upwey and Boronia high schools are already full, and Bayswater is rapidly filling.

I direct my remarks to item 3 concerning research farms and stations, inspection depots and laboratories. In the past few weeks, it has been my privilege to attend field days at two research stations, one with the honorable member for Mildura at the Walpeup Research Station in the Mallee, and the other on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture to open the "strawberry field day" at the Scoresby Horticultural Research Station, which is in my electorate. Scientists are carrying out excellent research at the various research stations throughout Victoria. If any honorable member has the privilege and the time to visit these stations and confer with the officers connected with them, and see the field work that is carried out under their administration, he will be most impressed. I ask the Government to provide additional laboratories for the Scoresby Research Station. The manager has moved from his official residence, and it is now used as offices. Premises being used as laboratories are inadequate. Some wonderful equipment is provided in these premises. Excellent scientists,

such as Dr. Fillipovic and other newcomers to this country, have been enthralled at the opportunity of assisting in the development of agriculture in Victoria, but they are working under most unsuitable conditions.

Perhaps I could illustrate the value to Victoria of agricultural scientists by referring to the relatively small strawberry industry in this State. Four or five years ago, strawberry production in Victoria yielded about three-quarters of a ton per acre. As a result of the activities of scientists and the strict control exercised by both Federal and State Governments over the importation of various varieties, together with the development of new methods of cultivation, the average yield during the past four or five years has been increased to 4 or 5 tons per acre, with some individual growers under special circumstances obtaining up to 15 or 20 tons to the acre. This is an indication of the remarkable change which can be brought about in agricultural activities by research and the guidance of men such as Mr. Mullett, Senior Horticultural Research Officer, and Mr. Kroon, who is in charge of this work at the Scoresby Horticultural Research Station.

The scientists are disturbed that their experiments, which are designed to increase strawberry production, are being delayed because of a lack of adequate fencing. This may sound somewhat humorous to some people, but it is tragic that research work over a number of years can be jeopardized because of the research farm being situated adjacent to a swimming pool, which attracts young boys, particularly on Sundays. The research officer is not satisfied that the maximum results can be achieved until the property is adequately fenced. Accordingly, I invite the Minister of Lands to urge the Public Works Department to call for tenders for the provision of a "boy-proof" fence at this location.

I should like to deal now with the Police Department, which is covered under item No. 10 of the schedule. Problems exist in almost every field of activity in the areas adjacent to the metropolitan area, particularly with regard to education, but also concerning police protection. In recent years I have had a number of discussions with Police Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners, and, broadly, it has been agreed that to the east of Melbourne two central police stations should be established some twenty miles out—one at Fern Tree Gully and the other at Croydon—which would ultimately provide a 24-hour service. The Fern Tree Gully police station, which has recently been enlarged and is almost ready for occupation, could be developed to provide a 24-hour service. At present, it is manned by a sergeant and seven constables. I understand that an additional appointment has been made, but that the new appointee is a member of the police band. Honorable members will realize how much time he will be able to devote to police activity in the district.

Tenders have not yet been called for the construction of the large police station which has been promised for Croydon, and I doubt whether provision has been made for it in this Bill. At present, the Croydon police station is functioning in a converted shed at the rear of a residence. This building accommodates eight men who work under a sergeant. A vacant allotment next to the police station is owned by the Police Department. It is urgent that the Public Works Department should call for tenders for the erection of the first real police station for Croydon. I have always agreed with the Police Department's policy to build two large central stations in the district, preferably connected with outlying stations by means of land lines, so that the rapidly-growing areas on each side of the range line will be served for 24 hours of the day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member for Scoresby not to

canvass the administration of the Police Department. So far as the Police Department is concerned, this Bill deals with the erection of buildings.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—Great pressure has been exerted upon me to seek the erection of police stations at Mooroolbark and Kilsyth. I have resisted this pressure, not because police stations are not needed in these places, but because it is far more important that a major police station should be erected at Croydon so that in the general area a 24-hour police service might be available.

Mr. JONA.—Where is the nearest major police station situated?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—It is located at Ringwood, which is some 3 or 4 miles away. The Public Works Department is responsible for preparing plans and calling for tenders for the erection of police stations and, if it is slow to act, attention should be directed to its tardiness during the debate on this Bill. I was advised that tenders would be called for the Monbulk police station during the last financial year, but so far no action has been taken. The reason why tenders have not been called is that the plans have not been completed by the Public Works Department. I ask the Acting Minister of Public Works to take action to ensure that these delays will be investigated.

I congratulate the Chief Secretary on the work that has been done at Ferntree Gully, but I urge him to press on with the preparation of plans for the Croydon police station in order that the Police Department will be able to provide the type of service that is needed. Ultimately, smaller stations must be erected at Kilsyth and Mooroolbark, which should be linked by land line with the central station at Croydon. There are many items in the schedule to this Bill for which the Government should be praised.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Government for its action making available, under item No. 67, to the Council of the Kindergarten Training College a grant towards the cost of additions, alterations, furniture and equipment at the college premises at Kew. I believe that the Premier's decision some years ago to make available special grants for capital works to allow the college to be modernized and enlarged is already bearing good fruit. The allocation of money for this purpose is greatly appreciated by all those who are connected with the college.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I wish to direct the attention of the Government to several matters that are causing me grave concern. I refer first to item No. 1 of the schedule, which relates to the financial provision for schools, hostels, residences and teachers' colleges. For some time, I have been concerned with the situation which exists at the Melbourne Secondary Teachers' College. I have raised this matter on previous occasions in this Chamber, but, from inquiries I have made, it appears that the situation, if anything, has deteriorated. This is largely attributable to the lack of Government action, which should have been taken some three years ago. The Melbourne Secondary Teachers' College is located adjacent to the Melbourne university. In 1962, a plan was submitted to the Education Department for the provision of a wing embracing science teaching facilities and improvements to the existing library facilities. This comprehensive plan, which represented forward thinking by the persons responsible, ensured that the Government was aware of the needs of the college. Unfortunately, the Government has shown a marked lack of interest in the college and, as a result of its inactivity, students are forced to carry out their studies in make-shift accommodation and use library facilities that are hopelessly overtaxed. Another alarming feature is that, this year, as a result of the shortage of science teaching facilities, Physics B has been dropped from the course.

Students at the Secondary Teachers' College are undergoing instruction which is designed to enable them to obtain a secondary teacher's certificate, yet, through lack of teaching facilities, one particular section of the instruction has been dropped. This will result in teachers who have not had the benefit of certain practical experimental work and lectures being posted to our secondary schools.

For years, this college has had to rely on the generosity of the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to make available science teaching facilities. Last year, the University of Melbourne found that it could no longer make facilities available, and it was forced to advise the Secondary Teachers' College to seek alternative accommodation elsewhere. This could not be arranged, so it was necessary for the college to drop Physics B for this year. When it is known that the attention of the Government has been directed to the lack of facilities at this college since 1962, one is entitled to say that it is time the Government showed its sincerity and provided adequate facilities.

In pursuing this matter, I asked the Minister of Education, on the 12th October, 1965, a series of questions as follows:—

1. What progress has been made with the planning of the new science wing at the Melbourne Secondary Teachers' College?

2. Whether a starting date for the building of this wing has been fixed; if not, whether he will indicate when a starting date will be fixed?

3. Whether there will be adequate time for the setting up of the equipment and carrying out of necessary pilot courses before the commencement of the 1966 school year?

4. What provisions have been made for temporary accommodation for science teaching facilities at the college?

The answers of the Minister of Education were—

1. Requirements for the new science wing are at present under consideration in conjunction with over-all requirements for the Secondary Teachers' College and the adjoining Melbourne Teachers' College.

2. No starting date for the building of this wing has been fixed. So many factors are involved that I am unable at present to indicate when a starting date will be fixed.

3 and 4. It is proposed to convert the basement of the Secondary Teachers' College building into temporary science rooms, and if everything goes according to plan this work should be completed by the commencement of the university year in 1966.

There we find the extent of the Government's ability to cope with this aspect of State education. After being advised in 1962 of the requirements of the Secondary Teachers' College, all the Government can do is to propose to convert a basement for use as temporary science rooms. If everything goes according to plan, the work should be completed by the commencement of the university year of 1966. That will be a momentous occasion for the Minister of Education. After three years' consideration, that is his answer to the detailed planning of the teaching staff. I am sure that honorable members appreciate the importance of this aspect of teacher training, and I do not think it can be over emphasized, even if the Minister of Education appears to be reluctant to realize its importance.

Mr. DIXON.—He has greater appreciation of it than you have.

Mr. WILTON.—I find it very difficult to find evidence of his appreciation.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—The honorable member is speaking about works at the college and not about the running of the institution.

Mr. WILTON.—That is true, but I was relating my story in such a way as to emphasize to the House the importance of the building work required. I feel that this is the only way I can place emphasis on the necessity for this building work to be carried out expeditiously in order that those responsible for running the college can give full rein to their ability.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—The honorable member is in order: I did not say that he was not.

Mr. WILTON.—A period of three years is more than adequate for the Government to provide the requirements of such an important institution. Therefore, I urge it to take the necessary steps to have a new wing built at this college as expeditiously as possible so that adequate scientific instruction can be given.

I am deeply concerned, because within a short period of two years my children will be attending high school and will possibly receive tuition from teachers who, through no fault of their own or of the teachers at the Secondary Teachers' College, have not been adequately trained, but simply because the Government has failed to act on advice given to it by people who are most capable of judging what is necessary. Consequently, I consider that I am justified in bringing this matter forward in this debate, and I hope the Assistant Minister of Education, who is at the table, will take up this matter with his colleague, and will use his eloquent, persuasive powers to convince the Minister of Education that the expeditious building of a new wing is most essential.

I also wish to refer to one other matter which concerns the Education Department—the provision of a new high school in the northern section of the City of Broadmeadows which the Education Department has decided to call Upfield. In May last, I was advised by the secretary of the Education Department that it was the Department's intention to establish a high school at Upfield in February, 1966. This was most pleasing news, of course, and I was happy to receive it. I then sought further information from the Minister of Education, and in a letter to me dated 31st August last, the Minister stated—

> I enclose a site indication map as requested. The present intention is to house Upfield High School in portable class-rooms in the grounds of Broadmeadows High School until the new school is built. The portable class-rooms will provide general class-room accommodation. It is hoped it will be possible to use practical facilities at Broadmeadows, but no firm decision can be made on this until final enrolment figures for 1966 for both schools are known.

When I received that letter, I was most alarmed. At present the Broadmeadows High School is used to full capacity, and its facilities have been provided not only by the Department, but also as a result of a great number of activities undertaken by the parents and their organizations. However, they are by no means adequate to cope with the demands that will be placed on them by what will be virtually two schools in one. A similar situation prevailed recently in relation to a primary school, when an entirely new school was located in the grounds of an existing school by the use of portable class rooms. I pursued the Upfield proposal further by asking the Minister of Education, on 28th September last, the following question:—

> 1. Whether tenders have been let for the building of the Upfield High School; if not, when it is proposed to let the tender?

His answer was—

> 1. Tenders have not yet been let. The site is not yet available. It is difficult to forecast when tenders will be invited, but it will probably not be until early in the 1966-67 financial year.

That means that while the school will be established in February, 1966, tenders for the building will not be called until June, 1966. I asked the following further question of the Minister:—

> How many portable class-rooms will be placed in the grounds of the Broadmeadows High School to accommodate the students of Upfield High School?

I phrased the question in that way because the honorable gentleman had advised me in writing, on a previous occasion, that it was proposed to locate these portable class-rooms in the grounds of the Broadmeadows High School. The Minister's reply to my question was—

> Three portable class-rooms will be provided, but the location of these has not yet been determined. Broadmeadows High School is one of the sites being considered.

That is different from the answer I received from the Minister by letter; now the honorable gentleman is not sure where the portable class-rooms will be located. Apparently all the students who will be enrolled in the new high school—I can assure the House that the number is such that the high school is warranted—will be accommodated in portable class-rooms at some as yet unknown location. This is most unsatisfactory, and it is unfair to the students, who will start their secondary education in portable class-rooms. At the moment they do not even know where they will have to travel to attend school. This is another example of the Government's inability or unwillingness—I do not know which—to face up to the need to plan properly for the requirements of our expanding State education system.

When the Premier and Treasurer makes his Budget speech in the House, the honorable gentleman uses flowery phrases; he states how much he is doing for education, how much money will be spent in this sphere, and what a wonderful job the Government is doing. The Treasurer gives hand-outs here and there in the hope that he will receive in return the political kudos for which they are designed. I am pointing out that fundamental problems are confronting the State education system. Proper facilities should be provided when they are required—not twelve or eighteen months later. I can see no planning in the method that the Government has adopted of saying, "Here is your school in these portable class-rooms. We shall come back later and build a school." By this method, the students and staff affected are being treated unfairly, and in a most unsatisfactory manner. No wonder members of the teaching profession are getting fed up. They are dissatisfied, not because they do not want to teach, but because of the conditions under which they are required to work. I am in complete sympathy with them. I hope the Government will adopt a more practical attitude to this problem.

I do not want to be over-critical in this particular aspect, but apparently my constituents who raised it saw or heard what was taking place at the Kew High School. That school has a very fine building. I would love to see one like it in Broadmeadows, but there is very little hope of that. In answer to a question that I asked to-day the Minister stated that £25,000 of Government funds were spent on site works for the Kew High School. I know that the site is an unusual one and that it is smaller than is now generally accepted as the site for a secondary school, but I point out that this money has been spent at a time when secondary schools in my electorate are required to go for years with undeveloped site works, with very little assistance being provided by the Government. It is difficult to reconcile the Government's attitude to high schools in my electorate with what happens in another area, as the Minister's reply to my question revealed. I am sure the parents and students who attend the Kew High School are delighted with their building and the site works. If I could get even £5,000 spent at the Broadmeadows Technical School, whose site also is unusual because much of the land has been reclaimed, I would be very happy. I assure the Assistant Minister of Education that all the parents and staff would also be extremely happy.

Mr. ROSSITER.—Have you asked for it?

Mr. WILTON.—Yes, but if the Assistant Minister advises me to do so, I shall make another approach to the Government on this matter of site works for the Broadmeadows Technical School. A large amount of its land has been reclaimed. On behalf of the students and parents who will be associated with the Upfield High School, I voice a strong protest to the Assistant Minister of

Education against the proposal to establish this school in portable class-rooms at some unknown location. This is a most unsatisfactory way to bring a school into existence. I urge the honorable gentleman to reconsider the plan of not calling tenders until early in the 1966-67 financial year. That would mean that the school would be accommodated in portable class-rooms for more than twelve months and possibly much longer—that is, unless there is to be a repetition of what happened in the case of the Hadfield High School where the school was built around the students. While students were trying to study and the staff were trying to deliver lectures and teach the pupils, building operations were taking place around them. They had to suffer the noise of hammers, electric saws and other mechanical apparatus. I hope that will not happen in the case of the Upfield High School, and I urge the Government to re-examine its plans in this connexion.

Item 59 of the schedule covers payments to municipalities and other public bodies for or towards the cost of drainage and other works and purposes, and payments to the Municipalities Assistance Fund. A situation in Keilor has caused the Keilor City Council some concern, and the matter was taken up with the Minister for Local Government and the Minister of Transport. It concerns the construction of a private street abutting land used by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board for a tramline from Keilor-road to a point where the line enters the Melbourne airport. This private street, which is known as Matthews-avenue, was constructed by the Keilor City Council in two sections, or under two separate schemes.

To assist honorable members, I shall briefly describe the situation. On the eastern side of the street I mentioned, there is a strip of land, which is owned by the Commonwealth Government and which was made available to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board for the tramline. On the western side, Matthews-avenue is fronted by private property and council-owned land. The construction costs were apportioned to the private landowners in the normal way under Local Government Act, and the council recouped from these people their share of the scheme, although there is still an amount outstanding. Scheme No. 1 includes portion of such thoroughfare between Keilor-road and Cameron-street. The actual amount chargeable to the property, the land which carries the tramline, is £7,788 19s. 7d. Under scheme No. 2—the construction of the remaining section of Matthews-avenue in a northerly direction—the amount chargeable against the property is £14,589 12s. 1d., making a total of £23,378 11s. 8d. in so far as Matthews-avenue abuttal to the reserved tramway area is concerned. As honorable members will agree, this is a fairly large sum of money. I have made representations to the Minister of Transport, and also to the Minister for Local Government, who visited the area and examined the situation with local councillors and gave us a good hearing. He led me to believe that he was most sympathetic towards the council and felt that it had a just case.

When it comes to a question of who is going to make a contribution, the Commonwealth Government shows no interest in the matter. The land in question was acquired, I believe, in the early war years when it was found that the airport required substantial development in a short time and that a large work force would need to be transported to and from the airport. I suppose the Commonwealth Government acquired the land under its emergency powers. At all events, the tramways Board was enabled to lay a tramline right to the airport.

At the time, it was expedient that the work should be carried out as quickly as possible. The City of Keilor

is now completely developed in this area and the council has to face up to its responsibilities in the carrying out of street construction work for the benefit of the ratepayers and the community at large. It is faced with a debt of £22,378 11s. 8d. I believe the Minister for Local Government consented to write to the appropriate Federal Minister in an endeavour to convince the Federal authorities that some action should be taken to assist the council. I do not think it is fair that the council should be left to face this debt from its own general revenue; this state of affairs is unfair to the council and to the ratepayers. Therefore, I ask the Minister of Lands to take up this question with the Treasurer and his colleague, the Minister for Local Government, whose Department probably has a file relating to the matter. On behalf of the City of Keilor, I ask the Government to consider making some contribution to the council in order to assist it to meet this debt.

The sitting was suspended at 6.19 *p.m. until* 8.00 *p.m.*

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD (Rodney). —Mr. Deputy Speaker, I refer to item No. 1 in the schedule of the Bill and particularly to school residences. One wonders what can be expected in the future. At the school at Patho, which is a very small country centre, there is no residence for the teacher. School committees everywhere do a very valuable job in assisting the educational programme of this State. The Patho school committee took up the matter of a residence for the teacher with me. I wrote to the Assistant Minister of Education, and this is the reply I received—

> I refer to your letter of 18th February regarding the erection of a residence for the head teacher of the Patho State School.
>
> I regret that there appears to have been some delay in the calling of tenders for the erection of new residences in country areas. However I have taken this matter up with the Minister of Public Works in an endeavour to expedite this type of work.

That was in February. I have received a complaint of a similar nature from Harston, but that was taken up at a later stage. In February I could only tell the Patho school committee of the reply I had received. I subsequently found that the Public Works Department could not expedite the work in any way and that the Education Department will be forced to have plans and specifications drawn up by a private architect. I also ascertained that some 50 similar residences are required throughout the country. That matter was dealt with in February, but to date nothing has happened, and tenders for the construction of residences have not been called. If no residences for head masters are to be provided in these remote areas, the people who are there now will want to leave the area, and others will not want to go there. Many other country centres are in the same predicament. Good housing for teachers is complementary to good teaching; good accommodation for the teachers is just as necessary as are good schools, and we must think of this.

I must say that I received the greatest co-operation from the Assistant Minister of Education, but on this occasion he has placed the blame on the Public Works Department, and the Public Works Department, having no one to whom it can pass the blame, has just taken it in its stride. It is not fair to school committees to allow this type of situation to continue, as in the view of the committees, a teacher's residence is an adjunct to the school. The committees give valuable time in assisting to create better schools, and failure to provide accommodation for teachers is not fair to them. If school committees are to continue to assist the Education Department, it behoves that Department to show its appreciation and be a little more co-operative.

Given the opportunity, school committees can save the Department, and, in turn, the Government,

many hundreds of pounds. It is repeatedly found that the local tradesmen have nothing to do with the small jobs around the school, because contractors for the Public Works Department do the work. If the school committees were given more encouragement, they would have these jobs done and so save the Government much expenditure. I do not say this lightly; I believe it to be true. The best type of men are associated with school committees in country areas, just as they are in the city. Surely, if men in responsible jobs are prepared to assist to make better schools for the children, they should be allowed to carry out more work on these school buildings. If they were permitted and encouraged to do so, there would be a tremendous saving to the Department. This year the Education Department will expend a record amount of money, but it is not merely the amount of money spent that matters; it is the spending of it economically that counts. The school committees should be helped to do some of these jobs which otherwise would not be done because of a current lack of Government finance.

Still speaking to item No. 1 of the schedule, I wish to refer to the "provision of subsidies to State school committees, high school advisory councils, and technical school councils for approved purposes, and to approved bodies for the improvement and maintenance of recreational areas used by State school pupils". I particularly wish to mention assembly halls. Many school councils throughout the State are endeavouring to raise money to build assembly halls and to provide watering systems and other facilities. Possibly, the Department will never realize the value of the voluntary work carried out by school councils. With their tractors and machinery they can complete a job, which, if done by the Public Works Department, might cost thousands of pounds. This type of assistance should be encouraged as much as possible.

The Government has announced that it has decided to assist registered schools, as from the beginning of the 1966 school year, by the payment of interest on funds borrowed for the provision of secondary school buildings. School committees believe that, if it is good enough for the Government to do that for registered schools, it is good enough to assist the committees by paying interest on the money borrowed to build assembly halls or for any other work which they undertake and which should really be done at the expense of the Department.

In plans for assembly halls there are often embodied many items, and expensive items, which should really be a charge on the educational system, not on the advisory committees. Some of these items have really nothing to do with assembly halls. I refer to such amenities as conveniences and changing rooms for teachers, and if the Department desires that provision for these be incorporated in plans for assembly halls it should be prepared to pay for them. If the cost of these requirements were separated, the cost of assembly halls would come within the amounts of money which the school councils could raise. If the committees are expected to borrow money to build assembly halls, they should be assisted on the same basis as the registered schools and the interest charges on borrowed money should be paid by the Government.

The Cohuna and Kyabram schools councils have written to me along these lines. The people associated with these councils are particularly good citizens, and they ask for help so that they can do everything possible to improve the schools. The Government should help these people in the same way as they are prepared to help the registered schools. It is most unfair that, although

these representations are made repeatedly, the school councils receive no assistance at all.

The excellent work carried out over the years by school advisory councils has saved the Department many thousands of pounds. My suggestion is only one way by which the Government could show its goodwill towards school advisory councils.

I should now like to refer to item No. 18, which provides finance for the work of the Cancer Institute, which is one of Victoria's greatest assets. No Government could do too much to assist this body. When the anti-cancer appeal was launched some years ago, it was over-subscribed in every centre of the State. This is clearly indicative of the fact that people are aware of the value of an institute of this type where patients can receive advice and treatment. It is in the interests of the State to ensure that the work of the Cancer Institute is developed still further. Probably, those associated with cancer sufferers who have received treatment from the Institute have a greater appreciation than anyone else of the splendid work that is being done in this regard.

Although the mortality rate amongst cancer sufferers in the past was high, I understand that to-day 75 per cent. of the cases are cured provided that they are detected in the early stages. I do not know whether the Government fully appreciates the value of the Cancer Institute and the need for its receiving greater financial assistance. All honorable members should take a keen interest in the work of the Institute. In the past, the cancer clinic called at Echuca and other places in order that cancer sufferers could receive treatment. To-day, unfortunately, because of the shortage of doctors, these visits no longer take place. When the clinic visited Echuca, people from places within a radius of 50 miles attended for interview and treatment.

Apparently, the Department of Health has been unable to obtain enough medical practitioners to enable country visits by the clinic to be re-commenced, but this should be done as soon as possible. The clinic provided a wonderful service to the State, and its activities should be increased rather than retrenched. Because country districts are no longer visited, many country people are forced to come to the metropolitan area for treatment. I understand that an average of 30 persons per day visited the travelling cancer clinic, which provided a valuable service to the community.

Under item No. 38, an amount of £125,000 will be made available for contributions to the Tourist Fund for the purposes of the Authority constituted under the Tourist Act. The Tourist Fund has enabled many country places to develop the tourist industry. Tourism has never been as popular in Victoria as it is to-day. Towns where there are potential tourist attractions should be encouraged to develop facilities for the benefit of tourists. Some towns have taken advantage of the Tourist Fund and have developed their facilities, but others are still in the doldrums, so to speak, because they do not appreciate the value of tourism. Echuca is fortunate in having one of the best caravan parks in Victoria, and possibly in Australia, which is borne out by the annual takings. Other towns which are seeking to develop the tourist industry could well emulate Echuca's example in this regard.

Under item No. 43, finance is made available for contributions to the Aborigines Welfare Fund. The welfare of Aborigines was fully debated recently in this House, and from the debate I was under the impression that welfare committees would be set up in certain areas in which the Aboriginal population posed a problem. I do not think any action has yet been taken along these lines. If the Aborigines Welfare Board is to function properly, all phases of welfare work for Aborigines must be assisted. Welfare committees are

established to advise the Board concerning action which should be taken for the benefit of Aborigines, particularly from the viewpoint of providing adequate housing accommodation. Unless action of this type is taken, it is of little use enacting legislation for the benefit of Aborigines.

I should like to deal briefly with item No. 60, under which grants are made to agricultural and pastoral societies. Generally, those people associated with agricultural and pastoral societies devote a tremendous amount of time to the development of agricultural work. The whole purpose of these societies is to create competition and to develop the best types of breeding so that the quality of our beef and other primary products will be improved. The Government has been generous in this respect, and the assistance which has been provided has given new life to these societies. To-day, many country agricultural and pastoral shows are bigger and better than they were in the past. The Bill does not provide a tremendous amount of money for public works, but we must ensure that what is provided is spent wisely and not wasted.

Mr. TREZISE (Geelong West).—I am not opposing the Bill. However, it is obvious that the total allocation available under this measure is insufficient to overcome the urgent requirements in regard to public works throughout the State. Under item No. 1, finance amounting to £15,500,000 is sought in relation to school works. Undeniably, thousands of school works in Victoria urgently require attention. Probably, each member of this House could cite many such cases in his electorate. There are a number of such urgent works requiring attention in my electorate. The situation at the North Shore Primary School is serious. It is so urgent that the parents of scholars and the school committee have warned that unless something is done within fourteen days regarding water supply facilities direct action will be taken by the committee.

Mr. ROSSITER.—What sort of direct action?

Mr. TREZISE.—The Assistant Minister of Education received correspondence concerning this matter last week. If the honorable gentleman had read the correspondence, he would know all about the matter to which I am referring.

Mr. ROSSITER.—Did the correspondence mention direct action?

Mr. TREZISE.—Yes. Did the Assistant Minister read the letter?

Mr. ROSSITER.—I can read, but I have not received the letter yet.

Mr. TREZISE.—Apparently the office boy has not yet passed it on to the Assistant Minister. To allow pupils at the school to obtain a drink of water on warm days, it has been necessary to extend recess periods by fifteen minutes. At the present time, there are 22 taps available for approximately 700 pupils, and, to obtain water from the taps, the children have to suck at them like pigs in order to draw water from the taps up into their mouths. The lack of water pressure on warm days also renders toilet facilities at the school unworkable. This is not only a disgrace but also a personal health risk to the children. Approximately ten days ago, I was informed by the secretary of the school committee, Mr. A. L. Olney, that unless action to remedy the situation was taken within the next fourteen days, a public meeting would be called in Geelong to which the Premier, the Minister of Education, the Assistant Minister of Education and representatives of all local education and civic bodies would be invited, and at the meeting the parents and the school committee would claim that the facilities at the North Shore Primary School are inadequate to cater for the present enrolment. That correspondence was forwarded on to the Assistant Minister last week.

Mr. ROSSITER.—You refer to last week. What about all the years before?

Mr. TREZISE.—Over the past two or three years, the school committee, I am informed, has corresponded with the Minister of Education and various other authorities in an endeavour to overcome these problems, but up to date no remedial action has been taken. I was brought into this matter last July, and on the 6th of that month, I sent the following letter to the Assistant Minister of Education:—

I have received an inquiry from the school committee of the North Shore State School No. 4301.

They had received a report after a long period of waiting that improvements had been approved for the school's toilet facilities.

To clarify the position, could you, at your earliest convenience, inform me

(*a*) what improvements are planned for the toilet facilities

(*b*) when such work will be commenced.

The present conditions are primitive, unhealthy and certainly below those at other schools in the area.

Trusting immediate action can be taken on this matter.

A stock reply, dated 15th July, was received; it reads—

I refer to your personal representations on behalf of the North Shore State School Committee regarding improvements to the school's toilet facilities.

I am having inquiries made in this matter and will write to you again as soon as practicable.

On 3rd September, I wrote again, only to receive an almost similar reply. However, on 30th September, I received the following note from the Assistant Minister of Education:—

I refer to your representations on behalf of the North Shore State School Committee concerning the school's water supply.

The Public Works Department is being asked to furnish an urgent report on this matter, and when it comes to hand consideration will be given to authorizing any necessary work.

As a follow-up to that letter, I understand that inspectors of the Public Works Department visited the school to examine the facilities, even though they did not confer with teachers or anyone else concerned. The fact remains that up to the present no action has been taken, and the position has been aggravated by recent warm spells when, as I stated previously, it has been necessary to extend recess periods. I trust that immediate remedial action will be taken, not only to remove the threat of direct action, but more so to ensure that pupils at this school are not forced to continue to attend a school the facilities of which are in such an unhealthy and primitive state as is the case at the present time.

Item No. 21 reveals that there has been a decrease of £25,000 in the vote for Parliament House as compared with the previous allocation. As a relative newcomer to this Parliament, I consider this to be a backward step, particularly when so many of the facilities available to members are inadequate and are in need of improvement. Administrative matters have been brought to the notice of the House on many occasions by more senior members than myself, so I will not refer to that aspect. However, I wish to point out that the provision of a gymnasium at Parliament House would be of great assistance in maintaining the physical and mental health of members. I say this in all seriousness because frequently we are called upon to sit for fifteen hours or more on end without any facilities for physical activity, even though we indulge in a certain amount of mental activity. The provision of a gymnasium would be of great assistance to members who like to keep fit. At the end of a long sitting and when they are starting to feel the strain, some physical activity would be a great rejuvenator.

Mr. ROSSITER.—The nets are up in the Parliamentary gardens, and there is a turf wicket available.

Mr. TREZISE.—It is all very well for the Assistant Minister of Education to say that the nets are up and for other members to refer to the tennis court and the bowling green. We must realize that for eight months of the year these facilities cannot be used, nor can they be used

on days like to-day when the weather is inclement. I believe that for an expenditure of under £100, a room could be set aside and equipped with pulleys, a few weights and perhaps skipping ropes and other equipment. This would enable honorable members to spend a quarter of an hour on physical exercises, irrespective of the weather prevailing or the season. They could then have a shower, and come away refreshed. They would certainly be in better shape to carry on work for their electors than they are at the present time. I consider that all members should support this proposal, particularly in view of the fact that a healthy mind is certainly the outcome of a healthy body.

I support item No. 35 which provides a substantial contribution for the development of the ports of Geelong and Melbourne by the provision of modern dredging facilities.

Item No. 49 allocates the sum of £25,000 to the Zoological Board of Victoria for improvements in facilities for lions, tigers and seals at the zoo. Whilst this money might be better spent on educational and other works, it is certainly pleasing to see a step forward being taken in the improvement of amenities for caged animals.

Item No. 8 relates to the Prisons Division and the Training Division of the Social Welfare Branch, and includes, I am pleased to note, provision for a new prisoners' mess hall at the Geelong Training Prison. This amenity is long overdue. For much too long, the inmates of the Geelong Training Prison have been treated no better than animals, so far as facilities for eating their meals are concerned. Whatever the weather may be, they are forced to eat their meals more or less in the open and are at the mercy of the elements. A tin roof is provided in the courtyard for cover, but there are no walls to keep out the rain and the wind. For at least nine months of the year, the prisoners have to eat their meals whilst wearing heavy overcoats. What is proposed is an improvement so far as these facilities are concerned, but I believe the present facilities in the cells could be improved. At present, the prisoners have to use buckets for over-night toilet facilities, and that is not up to the standard required in this modern era. I hope that better facilities in this regard will be provided in the near future.

I agree with many of the provisions of the Bill, but I disagree with other allocations. I trust that the matters I have raised to-night will receive the serious consideration of the Ministers concerned.

Mr. DIXON (St. Kilda).—Before relating my remarks to this important and significant Bill, I should like to ask the honorable member for Geelong West whether he considers a gymnasium in this building to be of greater importance than the work he suggested required to be done at a school in his electorate.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr. Fennessy).—Order! The honorable member cannot ask a question of another honorable member.

Mr. DIXON.—Through you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I should like to ask whether or not the honorable member for Geelong West considers that a gymnasium should have priority over the school in his electorate to which he referred, or whether he would like to suggest which item in this Bill has a sufficient lack of priority that a gymnasium could be given priority over it. I think he must have been listening to that fitness fanatic, Mr. Peter Pianto.

I should like also to refer to the matter raised by the honorable member for Broadmeadows, who pointed out that the Secondary Teachers' College was in need of a new wing in which the students could conduct science experiments. It occurred to me that the honorable member does not consider two factors which seem to me to be of the utmost importance in the erection of new wings to the

Secondary Teachers' College. The first is the allocation of absolute finance which is available to this State through the Loan Council. I point out that the Loan Council is a body comprised of the Commonwealth and the States, but the voting is weighted very much in favour of the restriction of finance which would otherwise possibly be available. The Commonwealth Government has two votes plus a casting vote and, provided that it can swing a little bit of extra finance to States such as Tasmania and Western Australia, where extra finance per head is of tremendous significance, it has complete power over the Loan Council, and Victoria can do very little about it. Everything we say in relation to this Bill is conditioned by the fact that the absolute total amount of finance available is laid down for us.

Every time a member of the Opposition or, for that matter, a member of any party says that the allocation for a particular item should be more than it is, if he is going to act with integrity and honesty he should at the same time say that additional money for this item should be given in preference to another item, which he should indicate. It is of no use saying that the expenditure on one item ought to be increased without, at the same time, saying, " However, I can make certain that the Commonwealth Government, through the Loan Council, will ensure that the funds are increased, or alternatively, that some other work should have a lower priority ". That has not been done and, I think it ought to be done. I have yet to be convinced that any member of this House has constructively put his finger on a project which could have been more efficiently handled. The second factor is whether the Secondary Teachers' College is intended as a temporary or a permanent institution.

The total amount made available by the Loan Council this year is £61,603,000, and the allocation in 1964-65 was £60,477,000. As the honorable member for Flemington has pointed out, this is an increase of £1,126,000. He also indicated that, of this increase, an amount of £434,000 is allocated to education. He incorrectly said, therefore, that the remainder of this increase of £1,126,000 is allocated to other works covered by this Bill. In point of fact, this increase has to be distributed over the Railway Loan Application Bill, the Forests Loan Application Bill, the Water Supply Loan Application Bill and to other works which are within this Bill.

Mr. HOLLAND.—I was relying on what was stated in the Minister's second-reading speech.

Mr. DIXON.—The honorable member's point would be enhanced if he read the Minister's speech more closely. If he did so, he would learn that the Minister made the statement I have just made. Nevertheless, this is not of great significance, and it serves to stress the point made by the honorable member for Flemington, that there cannot be a very significant adjustment in any of the other measures outside education.

It is interesting to note that a comparison of the loan moneys allocated to education over the past three years reveals that there has in fact been a slight decrease. In 1962-63, the proportion of loan funds allocated to education was 26.3 per cent., and in 1965-66 it is 25.8 per cent. I suggest that the priorities that have been given have been thoroughly analyzed with the utmost care and foresight. It would be only through the exercise of this care and foresight and the formulation of priorities that the finance for a matter of such extreme importance as education would in fact have decreased in percentage over three years.

It is also of interest to analyze the total loan funds made available by the Commonwealth Government since 1962-63. These have increased by 14 per cent., whilst the total expenditure on education has increased by 40 per cent., and the expenditure on teachers' salaries has increased by 37 per cent. In actual

fact, the increase for education facilities over this period out of loan funds has been 3 per cent. per annum. The tax reimbursement grants have increased by only 7.7 per cent. per annum. It can be expected that expenditure on education at the present level could increase by 12 per cent. per annum at least, so I think it will be agreed that the funds being made available by the Loan Council certainly do not take into account the necessary expenditure involved in education.

Nor can it be obtained further within these other fields, when one realizes that in fact the percentage of loan funds devoted to education has been slightly reduced. We can analyze the position and find out precisely one of the reasons why this is happening. The statistics I have presented create a confusion between revenue, on the one hand, and loan funds, on the other. It is not always advisable to confuse revenue and loan funds.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member should speak about loan funds and not revenue.

Mr. DIXON.—But to clarify the loan funds position, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is necessary to contrast it with the revenue position. A predominant proportion of finance comes to Victoria in the form of loan funds, and I shall compare the position with New South Wales. Taking the year 1952-53 as a base, the percentage of loan funds finance which goes to New South Wales has increased by 49 per cent., while in the case of Victoria the increase is 55 per cent. When one divides the loan funds by population in each State an amazing position is revealed. The Victorian increase of 55 per cent. in loan funds results in £23 5s. 9d. per head, as against £22 2s. 11d. per head in New South Wales. So Victoria is better off than New South Wales so far as loan funds per head of population are concerned.

Mr. WILKES.—The Premier does not agree with you.

Mr. DIXON.—I have the statistics here. They are available in returns provided by the Federal Treasurer. Contrasting the loan funds with the revenue position, we find that Victoria receives £29 13s. 10d. per head out of financial assistance grants, while New South Wales receives £29 19s. 1d. per head. Furthermore, taking the total revenue payments, New South Wales receives £40 15s. 7d. a head, while Victoria receives only £38 12s. 4d. a head. In other words, Victoria receives slightly more per head of loan funds than New South Wales, but receives less than New South Wales per head of population on the revenue side. Honorable members may ask what is the significance of this. The point is that interest is paid on loan funds, but it is not payable on the amount that this State receives from the Commonwealth Government by way of financial assistance grants and other specific purpose grants.

I draw attention to this matter because I think it would be a good idea if those who are in charge of financial assistance grants—it is the Commonwealth Government which makes the unilateral decision; let us make no mistake about that—and those who are responsible for loan funds—again it is the Commonwealth Government, which has two votes plus a casting vote—would take another look at this situation. Victoria is getting a very bad deal. This State is required to pay additional interest because the money that is not received in revenue is to a certain extent, but not to the extent which it ought to be, made up in loan funds. This involves this State in a fairly large additional interest commitment, which is unjust and unfair. I should also like to point out that the amount of loan funds which is made available to Victoria comes partly out of the surplus made by the Commonwealth Government. In the year 1964, the Commonwealth had a surplus of £67,000,000 which was made available to the States. This money had to be repaid by the States with interest. I have referred to this matter previously.

Mr. WILCOX.—Where does the Commonwealth's surplus come from?

Mr. DIXON.—It is a surplus of taxation over expenditure. This is taxation which we all pay. Not only did the Commonwealth Government contribute this amount of £67,000,000 to the State as loan funds ; it also paid off its own debt to the extent of £32,000,000.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I think the honorable member is canvassing too widely the question of Commonwealth-State financial relations. I must rule the honorable member out of order.

Mr. DIXON.—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall leave that matter on your wise and considered ruling, and proceed to the specific item of expenditure of loan funds on education. A sum of almost £16,000,000 is to be spent on buildings for education purposes and universities. It is rather interesting to dissect this expenditure, so far as this can be done. As I understand the position, expenditure on school buildings amounts to nearly £13,000,000, and a sum of approximately £2,500,000 will go to the universities. Of course, the universities are dealt with specifically under the Bill, and I shall refer to the financial problem of our universities.

The Australian Universities Commission is primarily responsible for controlling the amount of loan funds and revenue which goes to the universities. It is responsible for the amounts which are made available to the universities for building, so it is worth while analyzing the grounds on which the Commission makes these funds available. If, in fact, the Commission adopted a different set of grounds or parameters, naturally the funds made available through it would be matched by the Victorian Government, and one could expect those funds to be increased.

First, I should like to make this point about the Commission : In its two reports it has consistently refused to publish the submissions of the universities. Therefore, one cannot tell whether or not the recommendations made by the Commission are approved by the universities. Of course, if one analyzes the statements made by the university vice-chancellors, one finds that they are very much in disagreement with the Commission. Therefore, I suggest that the Commission should publish the submissions that are made to it by the universities, and give detailed reasons why it refuses to accept them.

I should like to deal specifically with the amount made available to the University of Melbourne. It receives approximately £1,000,000 less per annum than the Sydney University. Yet on the basis of students and staff the two universities are comparable. The Australian Universities Commission has given two main parameters for its reasons. The first is the students per staff ratio. The Commission points out that taking the equivalent full-time student ratio, which I shall explain later, Sydney has 16.9 students per member of staff, while Melbourne has only 13.9 students per member of staff. This, prima facie, is a reason why the Sydney University should receive £1,000,000 more than the Melbourne university. However, when we examine the actual workings of the universities and discover the number of graduates, not students—that is, the product of the university—we find that, in terms of graduates per member of staff, the Melbourne university has a higher ratio than the Sydney University.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Is the honorable member again discussing revenue?

Mr. DIXON.—No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter to which I am now referring relates to the amount of money made available for capital works, within the scope of the Bill, and controlled by the Australian Universities Commission. It is also the basis on which the Commission makes its recommendations for building.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Purely on capital works?

Mr. DIXON.—That is so. The graduate per member of staff ratio in Sydney is 2.16 as against 2.37 in Melbourne. One may ask how this arises. I should think that one of the factors involved is that the University of Melbourne does a better job than the Sydney University.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member is now discussing the control and conduct of universities and not the use of loan funds for the construction of buildings and the provision of services for the universities.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Fitzroy).—With the greatest respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the honorable member for St. Kilda is discussing the unit of measurement used by the Australian Universities Commission in making capital and other grants to the University of Melbourne and other universities. I suggest that he is in order.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I shall hear the honorable member for St. Kilda.

Mr. DIXON (St. Kilda).—I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am discussing the parameters used by the Australian Universities Commission in the allocation of loan funds. The parameter is the factor which decides the actual amount; the factor on which a judgment is made.

The cost per student is the second parameter, and in 1963 the figure for Sydney was £433 and for Melbourne £442. Again, there is a basis of similarity, and a basis on which one could say that the payment of £1,000,000 extra to Sydney University could be justified. However, the cost per graduate in Sydney in 1963 was £3,070, and in Melbourne £2,433.

The second point which arises is the basis of classification of the equivalent full-time student. The Australian Universities Commission gives a full-time student a ratio of 1, a part-time student a ratio of one-half and an external student a ratio of one-quarter. By this means, it works out the equivalent full-time student ratio. The point that arises is: How is it possible to know whether a student is full-time, part-time or external?

The two categories with which I am concerned are the full-time student and the part-time student. The University of Melbourne allows a person who works and goes to the university to study only two subjects, and classifies him as a part-time student. Many other universities throughout Australia allow a student who works, and can show just cause, to do three subjects and thus classify him as a full-time student. This means that the equivalent full-time student ratio can be weighted in accordance with whether students are classified as doing two subjects or three subjects.

Because the University of Melbourne, in its wisdom, decides that it wants to have students who are doing what they are capable of doing, —and therefore proportionately reduces the number of equivalent full-time students—and because, as the figures prove, it produces many more graduates per student than other universities, it is penalized by the Australian Universities Commission, almost to the extent of £1,000,000 per annum, and, as all honorable members know, this is extremely significant from the point of view of the construction of academic institutions at the University of Melbourne.

I contend further that even if we take the equivalent full-time student ratio, the number of students per graduate in Sydney is 7.66 and in Melbourne, 5.92. Thus, in the major task of producing graduates, Melbourne clearly operates more efficiently than any other university in Australia. I have a stack of figures for the rest of the universities, if honorable members are interested in them.

I revert to a point I raised earlier. It is common knowledge that Monash University applied for £9,000,000 last year and received

only £5,500,000 without any word as to why that happened.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Is the honorable member talking about revenue?

Mr. DIXON.—I am proposing to deal with the medical school.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I should like the honorable member to talk about loan funds.

Mr. DIXON.—Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am somewhat surprised to learn that an amount of £2,300,000 was allocated for the building of the medical school at the University of Melbourne, but that it has not been constructed. It seems to me to be impracticable for the Australian Universities Commission to grant such a large amount for buildings within the University of Melbourne to be spent within a period of three years, with no scope for prior planning, and to announce that if the money is not spent within the period of time stated, no further grant will be made. In other words, the university must make use of this sum within the next triennium. The work would have been carried out before if the money had been distributed more evenly, and the faculties of law and arts could have been considered for somewhat smaller projects.

As the honorable member for Kara Kara pointed out, the La Trobe University grant does not come within the scope of this Bill, but I wonder whether it is possible for members to discuss that matter by virtue of the fact that had the relevant Act not been passed last year, the matter would be within the scope of this Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—The honorable member knows full well the scope of this Bill.

Mr. DIXON.—It seems to me that members will never be given the opportunity to discuss, by means of the Bills that come before the House, the amount of loan funds which are allocated to the La Trobe University because they come within the ambit of the university Act, and are not within the scope of the Public Works Loan Application Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—The honorable member knows that he will have other opportunities of discussing that subject; he is now speaking to this Bill, which does not provide for that.

Mr. DIXON. — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In conclusion, I should like to refer briefly to several items contained in the schedule to the Bill, including item No. 3, under which the Government has made a significant contribution to the Institute of Dairy Technology at Werribee, and item No. 11, which, I believe, shows that we have at last awakened to the need of a State Library, as expenditure is increased to £61,000 from £27,000. I consider that this is extremely welcome, and I hope it is the forerunner of a large increase in the facilities and services that can be made available by the State Library, because I believe it has a tremendously important role to play, primarily in the field of research within the State.

I should like also to refer to items Nos. 31 and 33. Item No. 31 relates to expenditure on piers, wharves, jetties and harbors, and I hope that the correct research has been carried out as regards their location on the foreshores of Port Phillip Bay and other parts of Victoria. This is a problem of the utmost signifiicance. I realize that certain piers, wharves, jetties and harbors which have been constructed have led to severe erosion and have had a severe effect on beaches and foreshores elsewhere on the coastline. I hope that some research is being undertaken in connexion with the placement of piers, wharves, harbors and jetties.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Can you tell us where a few of them are?

Mr. DIXON.—I shall do so at a later stage. I also wish to mention foreshore protection works. One of the reasons why foreshore protection works are necessary is because of

the construction of piers, wharves, jetties and harbors. Items Nos. 31 and 33 are complementary and must necessarily be considered together. It is important not to allow structural engineers simply to say, "This is how we shall construct this pier or jetty because this method enables us to work in the easiest fashion so far as construction is concerned" because consideration may not be given to the effect of tides, waves and sand, which is the fundamental reason for erosion occurring on the foreshore.

Finally, I direct attention to the tremendous job of work that is being done at the National Art Gallery and Cultural Centre. I have been tremendously heartened to find that the expenditure on this magnificent institution, which is going to be of untold benefit to Melbournians and Victorians, is being kept almost within the limits of the original estimated expenditure, which is in marked contrast to the situation that applies to a cultural centre in another State.

Mr. LOVEGROVE (Fitzroy).—In explaining this Bill, the Minister made no attempt to apologize for the measure, possibly because the Treasurer did so in his Budget speech. At page 74 of the current *Hansard,* the honorable gentleman is reported to have said—

> In the light of the very high level of activity at the present time, the Government believes that 1965-66 is not a year in which we can, or should, plan too great an increase in expenditure levels, and in consequence in the levels of Government services provided by the various Departments.

This Bill deals with a disappointing sum to be set aside for public works. I point out that whereas the allocation of £60,477,000 for 1964-65 was £4,342,000 more than the sum of £56,135,000 allocated for 1963-64, the allocation for 1965-66 of £61,603,000 is only £1,126,000 more than the allocation for 1964-65. Whereas last year the State had nearly £4,500,000 more to spend on public works than in the previous year, this year it has less than £1,250,000 additional to spend—despite the fact that Victoria is taking 44 per cent. of Australia's population intake by net migration, as the Treasurer pointed out in his Budget speech. The result of this deliberate policy on the Government's part is a shortage of services everywhere in the public sector.

Mr. WHEELER. — Migrants were brought here because Victoria had employment to offer them.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is what the Treasurer has said. The private sector of the Victorian economy is flourishing.

Mr. WHEELER.—You would not want it any other way, would you?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so, but I point out that the fact that the private sector is flourishing is no credit to this Government, which has no control over it. Parliament has to consider not that sector of the economy, which is run efficiently in many ways by private enterprise, but the public sector of the economy for which this Government is directly responsible. The first point to be noticed about this Bill is that it represents the smallest increase in loan moneys for public works of any increase in the past ten years. Various reasons have been advanced for this state of affairs. No Minister in this House has advanced any reason, and it is left to back-bench members on the Government side of the House, who have a little more initiative, to try to advance explanations. The explanation given by the honorable member for St. Kilda is not valid in substance, because it is of no avail to apply the kind of measuring rod that he used. I am not speaking critically of the honorable member for St. Kilda; I am speaking critically of all those who apply this measuring rod of taking so much loan funds or so much revenue and dividing it into the population and saying that in this State we are getting £2 or £3 a head of revenue or of loan moneys compared with another State which receives only £1 or £2. The meanest intellect in Parliament must know that the use of the arithmetical average was

never intended to measure societies which are so dissimilar as those of New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr. DIXON.—I was differentiating between revenue and loan funds.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I appreciate the point made by the honorable member. I do not wish to misquote him, because he pointed out that when we get more in loan moneys than in revenue, we have to pay interest. The reason why Victoria requires comparatively more loan moneys than New South Wales is because New South Wales is older and better endowed—it is a richer State than Victoria—and also it is not being subjected to the same strains and stresses in the public sector.

Mr. DIXON.—But that applies equally to revenue.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is true. Therefore, one cannot measure the public sector in one State by dividing the population by the total money available and comparing the result with that of another State. One must measure the situation in that State—the age groups, the persons who are being educated, persons on the pension, workers, and above all those who are in the greatest need of the services which can only be furnished by the public sector of the economy. The reason that there is such a shortage of everything in Victoria to-day is that Victoria is not obtaining enough investments adequately to service the public sector of the economy.

Mr. DIXON.—It is because you would not support a State income tax.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—The honorable member for St. Kilda attempts to resolve this question in terms of the nature or type of the system of taxation, but it cannot be resolved in that manner when Governments of the same political complexion are in office in both Victoria and Canberra. The Liberal Party and the Country Party in the Commonwealth sphere are deliberately starving Victoria in such a cynical manner that one can find no reference to Victoria in the Commonwealth Treasurer's Budget speech.

As I said earlier, the increase in the allocation of loan funds for public works this year is smaller than last year. This fact has given rise to the endemic shortages that are now a feature of every Victorian Budget.

I agree substantially with some measure of what the honorable member for St. Kilda said about universities. The only thing I wish to add is that the University of Melbourne rejects two of the parameters, but the one in particular which it submitted to analysis is the equivalent full-time student formula. Without taking up too much time to read this analysis—which I think is a valid one and which I think the honorable member had in mind when he spoke of the requirements of the University of Melbourne—I wish to quote one of its conclusions in its submission to the Australian Universities Commission in February of this year—

> In the light of these considerations, it would seem important that comparisons of the relative size and needs of universities should not be made on the equivalent full-time student basis alone.

The equivalent full-time student-staff formula and the student ratio formula and another formula used by the Australian Universities Commission are submitted to a brief reference which epitomises the critical analysis made by the responsible authorities at the University of Melbourne.

I wish to direct attention to a comparative statement made by the planning committee of the Professorial Board of the University of Melbourne in October this year. This committee makes the point very well to underline the needs of the university by saying that it has been estimated that over the next ten years, from the end of 1966, the university will need £18,500,000 for building at current cost levels, based

on the assumption—which of course is unwarranted—that the present cost structure will be stabilized for some ten years. An examination of the enormous constructional requirements and capital investment in construction which must be undertaken at the University of Melbourne, if it is to meet the needs of a growing population in the next ten years, and the requirements of a metropolis which, it is estimated, will by the end of the century, have a population of 5,000,000, reveals that the kind of planning associated with the Public Works Loan Application Bill, which is an annual measure, is completely inadequate. This type of planning makes it impossible to predetermine the requirements of the State as they should be determined at least ten years ahead. I mentioned earlier that we suffer from a lack of forward planning because the University of Melbourne has gone to the trouble of trying to estimate its future requirements for the next decade.

Mr. MANSON.—It is not a lack of planning.

Mr. LOVEGROVE. — There has been no lack of planning on behalf of the University of Melbourne, but it is impossible to find any evidence of any planning by responsible Government members in this regard.

Mr. MANSON.—Are you not overlooking the shortage of finance?

Mr. LOVEGROVE. — The point made by the Minister without Portfolio concerning a shortage of funds is valid, but no shortage of funds should deter the Government from estimating its future requirements. On the contrary, a shortage of finance should act as an incentive to the Government to say, "This is what we want for the next ten years." So far as the University of Melbourne is concerned, I should like to quote from a table in the report issued last month by its planning committee. The report sets out the areas of land which are at present available for Victoria's three universities. The University of Melbourne is spread over seven sites, consisting of 46 acres, 50 acres, 3 acres, 4 acres, .75 of an acre, and 3 acres. Exclusive of teaching hospitals, the total acreage of the University of Melbourne is 106.75 acres. The undergraduate student population of the University of Melbourne is 13,000, while the post graduate population is 800, making a total student population of 13,800.

The land available to Monash University is 250 acres for a projected student population of 12,000, whereas it is estimated that 500 acres will be available for La Trobe University, which will have a projected student population of 10,000. In estimating the minimum area that is required by the University of Melbourne, it is concluded that academic buildings, excluding colleges, occupy 51 acres, and it is recommended that an additional 30 acres should be reserved for the needs of the university during the next twenty years. It is difficult to look ahead beyond this point, but an additional 50 to 100 acres will be required in the next century, when the population of Melbourne is likely to be 5,000,000.

It has been emphasized by the University of Melbourne that to satisfy its requirements of space alone would take, on the current costs structure, an expenditure of somewhere in the vicinity of £4,000,000, without any regard to estimating the buildings that would have to be provided. I do not wish to weary the House with all of the difficulties of the University of Melbourne, but, again, I emphasize that the contributions being made by the Australian Universities Commission to-day are completely inadequate not only for the University of Melbourne in terms of the reason given by the honorable member for St. Kilda and myself, but also in terms of the financial implications and the fact that each university must estimate its requirements for the next three years on the basis of the costs structure of this year or last year.

Mr. DIXON.—The Commission will not even publish what the universities say they want.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so. Without showing any disrespect to the Australian Universities Commission, I point out that in many circles to-day there exists the opinion that some of the " hole-in-the-corner " methods that have been adopted concerning the Commission's relationship to universities in Victoria should be abandoned as soon as possible.

The accommodation requirements of students are astronomical. When dealing with another Bill in this Chamber the other day, the Minister of Education stated that it was not felt that the accommodation requirements of students were of any substantial dimension, but I contend that the present position is chaotic. It is incredible that students or members of the academic staff should be expected to work under the overcrowded conditions which exist in the university or, in the case of students living out, to expect them to live under the deplorable conditions under which large numbers are living, and at the same time, to achieve academic success. I direct the attention of the House to the fact that although the education vote has been increased, it has not been increased sufficiently, and, despite the fact that the Australian Universities Commission is supposed to represent the Commonwealth Government's best efforts, these best efforts are not enough. The programme is completely unsatisfactory and ineffective in the case of the University of Melbourne.

A few months ago, I asked the Premier a question about the amount of money borrowed by State school committees with which to finance school constructions which, in our view, are the responsibility not of the parents, but of the Government. The honorable gentleman furnished a list of 100 loans which had been obtained by school committees. The amounts borrowed totalled more than £400,000 on which the committees were required to pay interest totalling £5,000 a year. Since then, the Government's Budget proposals have been debated and discussed in many places, and I received the following letter, dated 11th of this month, from the Princes Hill High School Advisory Council, of which I am a member:—

Dear Sir,

The Princes Hill High School Advisory Council forwards herewith a copy of a letter forwarded to the Premier of Victoria by the President of the Victorian Council of School Organizations.

Members of this Advisory Council believe that the two requests are important and request that you give what support you can towards having—

(*a*) the limit of the subsidy raised; and

(*b*) the interest on funds borrowed by parent organizations of State owned schools for the provision of assembly halls paid by the Government, as has been promised to non-State schools.

The letter is signed by the honorary secretary of the Princes Hill High School Advisory Council. Attached is a copy of a letter forwarded to the Premier on the 7th October of this year by the president of the V.I.C.S.S.O.—the State schools association. The letter reads—

Dear Mr. Bolte,

Following discussion with a number of representatives of schools affiliated with this Council, I am writing to you concerning two matters raised by you in your recent Budget speech.

Your Government's decision to raise the amount of subsidy grants for assembly hall construction is noted, but the general view is that the new limit of £36,000 is quite inadequate in view of current building costs.

While I make this observation on your announced programme the overwhelming view of our affiliated membership is that such buildings are properly the entire responsibility of the Government, a view that is strengthened by past promises in this regard.

The other matter to which I refer is your announcement that your Government "has decided to assist the Registered Schools as from the beginning of the 1966 school year, in the payment of interest on funds borrowed for the provision of secondary school buildings."

I note, too, that you refer in an earlier part of your statement to the fact that "27 (Government) schools have received

Government grants towards assembly halls and 64 applications have been approved to proceed as soon as possible."

I am certain that in most, if not all of these cases, large sums of money have been, or will be, borrowed to provide the local contribution, generally through the agency of co-operative societies.

These loans are being, or will be, repaid from funds raised by local effort.

Our member schools take the view that the building of assembly halls in high or technical schools must surely be construed as "the provision of secondary school buildings", and to do this, they are compelled to borrow money in the same way as registered schools.

I am asking, therefore, that your Government might consider treating parents of children in Government schools in the same way as is proposed for registered schools.

My request, on behalf of our membership, is that while the present policy of building assembly halls or any other school project continues, i.e., Government subsidy plus local funds, the interest payments on money borrowed by local bodies should be met by the Government.

This request seems even more reasonable when it is remembered that the assets created by parents in Government schools in fact become the property of the State and I therefore ask that your Government give earnest consideration to this request.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) J. T. DUNN, President.

I was encouraged to read that letter because, since the Treasurer introduced his Budget and made a gesture of some assistance towards the registered schools——

Mr. STEPHEN.—A very small gesture.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—That is so; it was a small gesture when compared with the needs of the registered schools in districts such as Fitzroy, Carlton, Richmond, Collingwood and other inner suburban areas, but a nonsensical and fantastic gesture when compared with the relative needs of Scotch College, Xavier College, Melbourne Grammar and schools of that type. Why should the taxpayers of Victoria be required to subsidize schools of this description? This point was raised by the honorable member for Richmond. Since this matter was debated on the Budget, the Commonwealth Government has made another significant gesture of a similar nature in regard to the underwriting of the building costs on certain school construction works.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—I invite the honorable member for Fitzroy to return to his first reference which had some bearing on the Bill which is now under consideration, but I ask him not to deal with the wider subject of assistance to registered schools.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I consider that provision should be made in Public Works Loan Application Bills to meet the request made by Mr. Dunn on behalf of the State schools. Furthermore, the Government should immediately demand from the Commonwealth Government that the gesture which it is so grandiloquently making on its own behalf with the tax revenue it collects from the States should be extended to the Victorian Government to assist State schools. I say that without any prejudice to the registered schools or private schools. All honorable members are aware of the difficulties which these schools are facing.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I invite the honorable member for Fitzroy not to canvass the wider subject of assistance to registered schools.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I do not desire to canvass that topic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I point out that, during the debate on this Bill, you have allowed some latitude in that regard. I do not wish to take more latitude than you have already permitted. My only other observation is that the honorable member for Scoresby referred—if I did not misunderstand him—with a certain nostalgia to the days when there were day labour gangs who went onto school jobs at the behest of the Public Works Department and the Education Department and did a job that did not have to be condemned and for

which they were paid the correct wages. I join the honorable member in his observation because unfortunately the Opposition is still getting a multiplicity of complaints in regard to both the type of contractors and the quality of the work being carried out on a certain cross section of Public Works Department jobs. I do not propose to blame the Department for all of the complaints.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Some of the workers may be to blame.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I shall come to that. There is some responsibility on the Public Works Department to be more selective in the type of contracts it lets and the type of contractors it employs. Over the past four or five years, the building industry has undergone not only a technical revolution but also a radical change in the nature of its labour force. When the honorable member for Scoresby referred to what had occurred in regard to schools, he was unconsciously reflecting on what is occurring in the building industry generally, which is that the work force engaged on day labour has been reduced and subcontract work has been increasing. The result has led to a situation whereby there is a shortage of labour and of contractors, and Government Departments, as well as sections of private enterprise, that want jobs done or big buildings constructed have been subjected to all kinds of extortion and exploitations and substantial oncost by that section of the building industry which is less reputable and which in ordinary times would not get a job.

I am aware of the difficulties that confront any Government Department in such a situation in its dealings with the building industry, but I do not think Departments gain anything by letting work to fly-by-night contractors. These men are getting work not only from the Public Works Department but also from the Housing Commission.

Mr. SCANLAN.—How would you let the contracts?

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—I propose to say something about that later, if I am permitted. Some of these contractors advertise for labour in a newspaper, and the prospective employees are invited to meet the employer on a street corner in Melbourne. People who answer an advertisement of that kind are newcomers to our country who are unfamiliar with the manner in which employment should be offered and obtained in Australia. Cases have been quoted—they are familiar to the Department of Labour and Industry—where four or five persons of one nationality have met a sub-contractor on a street corner. He has taken them to a job, sometimes in the country, and finished up owing them hundreds or thousands of pounds, and the unions have had to approach the Department to try to get the money for them. In some cases, the same contractors have been able to get further contracts, despite the fact that the Department of Labour and Industry knows that they are no good and has prosecuted them in the metropolitan industrial court.

In answer to the interjection by the honorable member for Oakleigh, I inform him that it has been suggested that Government Departments should adopt a more selective form of tendering. Two systems have been suggested, the first of which is bonding, which is current amongst the generality of Government contracts in the United States of America, and the second in covenanting. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has actually let contracts under the bonding system, with a good deal of success. I do not pretend that the job of the Minister of Public Works is an easy one—it must be extraordinarily difficult having regard to the state of the building industry—but there is no excuse for any Government Department which condones under-payments, bad work and exploitation of the taxpayers.

Everybody in the building industry knows that if a person wants a certain kind of job done and calls for

tenders, the prices submitted will be £20,000 or £30,000 above the highest estimate made by the architect. That is occurring because the builder does not want the job or he is prepared to put the principal in the position whereby if he wants the job done badly enough he will pay extra for it.

It is true that there are over-award payments in the building industry, but they are not sufficiently high to account for the fantastic tenders being submitted by men who do not want the work or by fly-by-night sub-contractors who, under normal conditions, would not be in the industry because they have not the qualifications.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—Are there any signs of collusive tendering in the building industry?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I invite the honorable member to ignore the interjection.

Mr. LOVEGROVE.—The building industry in Victoria, in my view, is not as bad as it is in some other countries. I regard it, despite the criticisms I have made of a section of it, as reputable and one which has made a major contribution towards the industrial progress that has occurred in Victoria. The industry is as anxious as the Parliament, and as the Government should be, to rid itself of the elements I have described.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—I shall relate my remarks to item No. 1, and shall first direct attention to the need for a head master's residence at the Merbein High School. Shortly after this high school was commenced, the Department obtained one residence in the township—not a particularly good one—and the head master at the time decided that it was not good enough for him to live in. So, he requested that a residence be purchased in Mildura, some 6 miles away. I point out that this high school has two residences attached to it, but the one occupied by the head master is not in the town in which the school is situated. From experience, the advisory council has found that this is not a good thing, and it has taken steps to try to get a new residence, either purchased or built, for the head master in Merbein.

When I was first elected to this House, I zealously pursued this matter, and, after correspondence with the Education Department, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Department, dated 27th November, 1963, in which it was stated—

> I refer to your representation on behalf of the Merbein High School Advisory Council regarding the provision of another departmental residence for teachers on the staff of the high school.
>
> I am pleased to inform you that it has been decided to erect a residence for the headmaster in Merbein.

Things moved very slowly, and after a great deal of discussion a suitable site was purchased and the Estates Branch of the Education Department had everything in order. However, on 29th October of this year I received another letter from the chairman of the advisory council asking me to refer the matter to the Department again because a residence had not been provided for the head master in Merbein. In a discussion with representatives of the Department, I pointed out that, in 1966, it is expected that there will be seven male married teachers on the staff of the Merbein High School and there will be only two residences. I realize that there are difficulties, but I doubt whether there are many other high schools of equivalent size in the State which have only two residences attached to them. To-day, I received a letter from the secretary to the Department, which indicates that there has been a somersault on somebody's part in this case. The letter reads—

> I refer to your personal representations on behalf of the Merbein High School Advisory Council regarding the provision of departmental residences at Merbein.
>
> The possibility of purchasing a house for a head master has now been examined by the Residence Selection Committee but, as

the Department has purchased a site on which to build a new residence and as the head master is satisfactorily housed at present in Mildura, it was decided to proceed with the erection.

It is only the Department's view that the head master is satisfactorily housed in Mildura.

Due to the need to conserve funds for the school building programme the provision of residences is limited to the most urgent cases and teachers must make every endeavour to secure accommodation privately. However, if they are unsuccessful, they may, after taking up duty in their new positions, request the Department to provide accommodation.

It is the final paragraph about which I complain. It states—

Should a problem arise at Merbein in 1966, the teacher concerned should promptly report the matter to the Department's Welfare Officer who, if necessary, will refer the case to the Residence Selection Committee.

So, we are back where we started.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—At least you have a block of land.

Mr. WHITING.—Yes, and it is a suitable block. However, when a problem arises the teacher has to refer the matter to the welfare officer, who will decide whether or not it will be necessary to refer the case back to the Residence Selection Committee. I believe this matter is one of extreme urgency because, as I have said, there will be seven male married teachers on the staff next year and only two residences are available. In common with most country towns, in Merbein there are few suitable vacant residences for members of the teaching staff, so a real problem will be encountered in the very near future. I should like the Assistant Minister of Education to examine this problem and to try to convince somebody that there is a need for a residence for a head master in Merbein.

Throughout the entire western portion of the State, there is a problem associated with hot classrooms in which children have to study and sit for leaving and matriculation examinations. The Assistant Minister paid a visit to parts of this area last February and made some recommendations to the Department. In fact, a special committee has been appointed to examine this problem, but up to date not a great deal of satisfaction has been achieved. Experiments are being conducted at some schools with the object of arriving at a suitable type of cooling unit, but this will take much time and money. A sum of £10,000 a year for the next five years is being set aside for this purpose, but those connected with some schools in the area are going to be unhappy because they have not been chosen for experimentation; they may have put in a considerable amount of work on their own accord but not gained any recognition for it.

The Assistant Minister of Education has given an assurance that 32 portable cooling units will be provided for examination halls during the coming examination period, and at a later stage these coolers will be distributed to various schools. However, the schools concerned have not yet been advised as to which is to receive them and the circumstances under which they will be provided.

State School No. 4389 at Mildura South has been very active in this regard. It has provided out of committee funds a large type of evaporative cooler for one of the hottest class-rooms, and now the committee is somewhat concerned that this school is to be left out of the experimental stage because, perhaps, of the work that the committee itself has done.

I was approached on this matter as early as 9th June, 1964, when the committee first submitted a case to have some type of mechanical cooling provided in these hot classrooms. It is unfortunate that the Mildura South State School has Bristol type aluminium construction class-rooms which are particularly unsuited to the climate in the north-west part of the State.

Correspondence going back over a period of eighteen months has resulted in the committee of this school becoming concerned that it will be left out of consideration. In a letter dated 13th October, 1965, which I have received, the committee states that it wrote to the Education Department on the 12th July, 1965, to ascertain what action was being taken on the overheating problem, and the Department's reply, dated 9th August, stated that the matter was being investigated by an appointed committee, and that the claims of the school would not be overlooked. Apparently, however, they have been. After being refused last year, the committee reapplied on the 19th July, 1965, for a subsidy for the erection of aluminium awnings for one of the class-rooms, but the Education Department stated that a subsidy would not be granted for that purpose, while, according to the press, the Assistant Minister of Education stated that awnings would be installed. The letter from the committee goes on to say that the ceiling fans which had been in hand at the school had been just recently installed, but in the very hot type of Bristol-type of class-rooms they were not of great benefit. The letter concludes by saying—

> If you can help us in any way we would be most grateful and we can assure you we would not mind our school becoming a guinea pig for the testing of cooling systems.

I again refer this matter to the Assistant Minister of Education. I know he is interested in the problem, and that if anything can be done he will do it. I consider that a problem will arise because of various schools being left out while others get some benefit from the experimental work.

Referring to item 1 of the schedule, I forecast the making of an application for the construction of a boys' hostel at Mildura. A girls' hostel has been conducted very satisfactorily by the advisory council of the Mildura High School for many years. Recently a move for a similar provision to be made for boys was started. A survey being conducted at the moment indicates that fifteen to twenty boys from outlying areas attending the technical and high schools would make use of hostel accommodation if it were available.

The Education Department has some vacant blocks of land in the City of Mildura and there are also vacant blocks held under the Mildura College Lands Act, which could be suitable. In all probability they will not be used for private dwelling-houses, as some people consider them to be unsuitable for building purposes. The Department may well consider the use of one or two or more of these blocks for the purpose of the erection of a boys' hostel.

Item 3 of the schedule relates to research farms and stations. The Horticultural Research Station at Mildura has for a period of eighteen months been involved in the building of what is termed an insectary for research into the biological control of red scale on citrus trees and other problems dealing with dried vine fruits and citrus industries. A considerable amount of industry money has been poured into this project, but unfortunately the building of the insectary is well behind schedule and it is still not in use. It is a pity that, perhaps because of circumstances beyond the control of the Department of Agriculture, this building has not been completed. I trust that the Minister of Agriculture will make every effort to have this insectary in operation in the near future.

Item 37 concerns contributions to the National Parks Fund. In the electorate that I represent are situated the Hattah Lakes National Park and the Wyperfeld National Park, both of which, for the most part consist of large areas of virgin mallee scrub. Unfortunately, large numbers of kangaroos and emus are breeding there. This fact is not relished by the adjoining farmers because during periods of shortage of feed, young wheat crops and

pastures are particularly attractive to these native fauna. Unfortunately, they cause considerable losses of cereal production in the areas adjoining these parks; so much so that the farmers in the Wyperfeld district have offered to pay half the cost of the erection of a vermin-proof fence to keep off kangaroos—it would need to be a substantial fence—but as yet the National Parks Authority has not seen fit to consider the matter.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—The farmers are lucky that there are no wombats in the area.

Mr. WHITING. — They have enough trouble without those caused by wombats. Serious consideration must be given to this matter in the near future, because before long food production will be of paramount importance throughout the world. Although national parks are needed for recreational purposes, some effort should be made to confine the fauna that breed in these areas within the parks and not allow them to stray out and cause damage on adjoining farm properties.

Item 44 allocates the sum of £60,000 to art galleries towards the cost of approved works. Although there is a need for a great deal of money to be allocated for material items in our every-day living, I believe that assistance to country art galleries will be of great benefit in the years ahead. The Mildura project, to which the Government has generously donated a considerable amount of money, is well on the way to completion; I think March, 1966, is the estimated date of completion. However, the sum of £60,000 for all country art galleries tends to pale into insignificance when compared with the £1,000,000 applied to the National Gallery in Melbourne. Whilst we believe that the cultural centre project in Melbourne is extremely worth while, one wonders just how far the £60,000 to be split up among eight country art galleries will go. Members of the Country Party particularly look forward to a greater allocation to art galleries in the coming years.

Item 51 applies an amount of £250,000 for advances to the Agency Department of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission for special purposes pursuant to section 35 of the Rural Finance Act 1958. This money is allocated for claims against the Commission in respect of frost, hail, fire and damage of a similar nature. It is interesting to note that, over a period of years the allocated amount has remained fairly constant. In the Mildura electorate, a considerable amount of damage was caused recently by frost, and I have no doubt that early in the New Year claims will be made by settlers for money to enable them to produce their crops next year. Approaches have already been made to the Treasurer for consideration to be given to these claims when they are received. I trust that this agency money will be available to the applicants so that they may have sufficient finance to enable them to produce full crops in the 1967 season.

Item 58 provides for payments of compensation to settlers who, according to the schedule, surrendered to the Crown their interests in lands in the north-west Mallee pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Land Act 1958. "Surrendered" may not be a particularly suitable word to be used in respect of some of the settlers. However, that is past history. I am a little at a loss to understand the explanation given by the Minister in his second-reading speech. According to the notes relating to the Public Works Loan Application Bill 1964, the amount applied for was £221,250. The Minister then stated—

> The amount being sought under this item represents the total amount of the offers which have been made to the 87 parties concerned by the Board of Land and Works. To date 28 parties have accepted the Board's offers, totalling £66,494.

Mr. BALFOUR.—That is correct; that statement referred to the offers that were made.

Mr. WHITING.—According to the explanatory statement accompanying the Bill at present before the House, the amount under the heading "Expenditure during the year ended 30th June, 1965," is £199,618. I can well believe that this amount will satisfy the 87 parties, although I do not know. The amount proposed to be expended for the year ending 30th June, 1966, is £10,000, and the amount to be issued and applied under this Bill is £75,000. Unfortunately, all that the Minister of Lands stated in his second-reading explanatory speech was that this item makes provision for the payment of compensation to certain occupiers of land in the north-west Mallee who surrendered their interests in such land to the Crown pursuant to the provisions of the Land Act 1958.

Mr. STONEHAM.—How many refused to accept the offer?

Mr. WHITING.—I do not know.

Mr. BALFOUR.—They have all been satisfied.

Mr. WHITING.—I believe the explanation to item No. 58 is inadequate. Many people will be interested to know whether all the displaced settlers have received adequate compensation, or whether more claims are pending. If so, is the amount of £75,000 required to satisfy their demands?

Mr. BALFOUR.—Eighty-seven cases have been satisfied, and the cases outstanding concern only estates.

Mr. WHITING.—The Minister has now given a brief explanation.

Mr. ROSSITER.—He could not now give a long explanation.

Mr. WHITING.—I realize that. I hope that, in the course of this debate, he will tell us a little more about this difficult question. I am sure that honorable members will remember the considerable difficulty that was experienced in getting the then Board of Lands and Works to accede to this compensation. The proposed expenditure for this year is £10,000. Of the sum of £221,250 available in 1964, the Department spent only £199,000. Therefore it appears that the sum of £22,000 is available from last year's loan fund, plus £10,000 to be spent this year, and an amount to be issued and applied under this Bill of £75,000. It appears to me that a large sum is held for compensation purposes in anticipation of further claims. However, I should have thought that by now, the claims for compensation would be wound up and that this further expenditure of £75,000 from loan funds would not be required.

Mr. BALFOUR.—With the exception of the fourteen estates, all claims have now been wound up.

Mr. WHITING.—I hope the Minister will give full details of what is happening with respect to those claims, and that, in the near future, all claims will be satisfied, so that we can close what has been an unhappy chapter in the history of land settlement in Victoria.

Mr. CLAREY (Melbourne).—I shall not weary the House at this late hour, but I am impelled to rise to make one of my few "off-the-cuff" speeches, first, because I did not have the opportunity to speak to the Budget, and, secondly, to compliment the honorable member for St. Kilda—with whom I may disagree on many matters—for his understanding of the financial relations between the Commonwealth and the States. The Public Works Loan Application Bill proposes the expenditure of a total sum of £46,000,000 this year, which will saddle the State of Victoria with a further capital liability.

In his Budget speech, the Treasurer mentioned that the loan allocations for Victoria—excluding the Commonwealth-States Housing Agreement, which in the ultimate is self-financing—were to total £61,000,000. Unfortunately, the deliberations of the Loan Council are always held in secret;

nothing is ever revealed except the final decision. We are told, "This sum has been allocated to Victoria. That is all we are going to give you". We are not told how the total sum was arrived at.

No honorable member can point to any item in the schedule—with the possible exception of one—where the money should not have been spent. I pose the question: Should this money be spent out of loan funds, or should a large proportion of it be paid out of the ordinary income and expenditure apart from loan funds? The Auditor-General will retire within the next few days. Honorable members will recall that, over a period of years, he has directed attention to the fact that loan moneys were now being used for works and services which in previous years had been paid for out of revenue. I do not wish to go over that aspect in detail, but apparently, after pointing that out for several years, he got tired of reiterating it, and for the past two or three years, dropped it out of his report.

On the one hand, out of its loan funds, Victoria is financing works which used to be paid for out of revenue, and, on the other hand, it is using loan funds to supplement its ordinary revenue. On several occasions, the honorable member for Broadmeadows raised the question of overhead costs charged by the Public Works Department on its loan moneys. For instance, item No. 1 relates to schools, hostels and teachers' colleges, and concerns an expenditure of £13,000,000. The House should take cognizance of the fact that from memory, 11 per cent. of the money will go back into the Public Works Department. It raises the money from loan funds, some of which goes back to revenue.

I also direct attention to the fact that the Premier has said that great advances have been made in Victoria in the past ten years. However—and I am now speaking without notes—when he became Premier, the loan liability of Victoria was £411,000,000. The honorable member for St. Kilda can correct me if I am wrong, but, up to the 30th June last year, Victoria's loan liability had risen to £815,000,000. In other words, the loan liability of Victoria is increasing at the rate of more than £40,000,000 a year. One need look only at the Budget figures to see that the total debt charges, excluding railways, is just under £46,000,000 for the coming year and it was just under £43,000,000 for the past year. There is no doubt that Victoria is becoming almost bankrupt.

I agree with the statement made by the honorable member for St. Kilda in the Budget debate that Victoria is being charged something like £8,000,000 a year by the Commonwealth Government for money that it has advanced out of its own revenue. The honorable member's figures were correct. What is the position this year? Victoria's loan funds for this year total £61,000,000; the sum of £46,000,000 is covered by this Bill. The Federal Treasurer has stated that he does not think the loan market will provide all the money that will be required. Therefore the Commonwealth Government, out of its own revenue, will provide the balance and will charge interest on it. As the Treasurer said some years ago, the whole financial situation is ludicrous. Some years hence, the Commonwealth will not owe anyone any money, but the States will owe the Commonwealth hundreds of millions of pounds.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member is now straying from the subject-matter of the Bill, and I invite him to return to it.

Mr. CLAREY.—With due deference to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not endeavouring to get away from the subject-matter of the Bill. For instance, item No. 1 provides for a sum of £12,915,000 to be expended for schools, hostels and teachers' colleges

during the year ending 30th June, 1966. That has to be paid out of loan money. Victoria must get that money from the Federal Government. If the money is not raised on the loan market, the Commonwealth Government will lend it to Victoria. Also, new school buildings and many of the renovations to existing school buildings will be paid for out of loan moneys. The Commonwealth is lending Victoria that money, yet what is the Commonwealth doing itself? In the past year it has provided a total sum of £203,000,000 for capital works, and of that sum only £15,000,000 was paid out of loan money. In other words, an amount equivalent to nearly the whole of the ordinary revenue of Victoria is being paid by the Commonwealth out of its ordinary income while the States are charged interest on every capital item.

I could quote many items. I take as an illustration, item No. 52, concerning vermin and noxious weeds destruction, for which the proposed expenditure is £943,500, and the amount to be issued and applied under this Bill is £1,100,000. No one doubts that this is necessary work, but should Victoria be required to pay for it out of loan moneys? Cannot something be done about it? I cannot understand item No. 54 relating to the purchase and supply of wire netting, the proposed expenditure for which is £1,000. Why should such a paltry amount be included in this Bill? Could not this item have been provided for out of trust funds which the Treasury is authorized to use for various purposes.

Item No. 57 concerns road construction for the Australian Mutual Provident Society settlement in the shires of Kaniva and Lowan, for which an expenditure of £25,000 is proposed. If the Australian Mutual Provident Society is making a profitable proposition out of this, should not the company pay for the construction? Why should Victoria pay this money out of loan funds?

I question item No. 29, which provides an expenditure of £80,000 for the year ending 30th June, 1966, and which provided an expenditure for 1965 of £107,268 for residential colleges affiliated with the University of Melbourne and Monash University. Victoria has no interest in these residential colleges; they are not colleges for the education of poor people. We are told that the Victorian Government is doing this because the Commonwealth Government will provide a certain subsidy. However, that Government is providing the money out of ordinary revenue. I strongly protest that the amount of £150,000 is to be issued and applied under this Bill out of loan moneys for the residential colleges to which no ordinary working boys and girls can go.

Mr. BIRRELL (Geelong).—I should like to deal briefly with items Nos. 8, 9 and 10 of the schedule, concerning which I have been personally involved. Apart from a slowing up in school renovation work, I have no complaints to make concerning this Bill. In fact, my constituents have not fared too badly so far as public works are concerned. I do not think honorable members should always complain about the Government when debating a Bill of this type. I should like to thank the Government in connexion with item No. 8 for a major work which it has undertaken in providing a new mess hall for the prisoners at the Geelong Training Prison. For two or three years, I have been pressing the Government to undertake this work, which I understand, will cost in the vicinity of £26,000 or £27,000. In connexion with this work, a question has been raised concerning the architectural value of the old prison structure, which contained two old fashioned blue stone entrances, one on the north and the other on the south side of the prison. Some historically-minded people in the district have asked that the southern entrance should be incorporated with the new work, instead of its being

demolished. I hope the Public Works Department can see its way to retain this historical object in Geelong; it has stood for more than 100 years.

Earlier this evening, a petition was presented regarding the depredations of seals in Victorian waters. I wholeheartedly lend my moral support to this petition. Two or three years ago, I brought up from the various fishing resorts a fairly large deputation to the Chief Secretary concerning this problem which then existed. From that, there emerged the recently-announced five-year programme of investigation into the various habits of seals. Apparently, very few people know a great deal about this subject. In to-night's *Herald*, there is an article concerning the setting up on Seal Rocks off Phillip Island of an establishment by an investigation team to undertake research on the seals. I take it that the Fisheries and Wildilfe Department is authorized to expend money on this project.

Item No. 10—Police Department—makes provision for a new police station at Ocean Grove, and I thank the Government in this regard. Another police station has been established at Anglesea, which is not in my electorate. There has been a growing need during the past several years for police protection to be provided at Ocean Grove, which is a rapidly-growing town. The permanent population of Ocean Grove is about 3,000, but, of course, it is considerably augmented during the summer months.

Items Nos. 30 to 35 inclusive are important because they relate to various works connected with Port Phillip Bay, such as the entrance through the Rip, piers and wharves, and associated works. The proposed expenditure on these items totals £1,080,000. Included in the proposed expenditure is an amount of £600,000 for the purchase of a dredge. Anything that impinges on the seaways into Victoria's most heavily populated heart is important. Geelong has a vital interest in blasting and dredging operations in the Bay. In this regard, I should like to place on record information concerning a gesture by the Shell company in providing a large tanker to test the under-keel clearance which is necessary for ships passing through the Rip.

Mr. GAINEY.—Is the tanker operating on a full-time basis?

Mr. BIRRELL.—The tests which were undertaken by the Shell company extended over a period of 30 days during August and possibly September of this year. The tanker —the S.S. *Philine*—carried a good deal of electronic testing gear with which various tests were undertaken. Data was gathered by means of sounding apparatus and electronic gear, which will pin-point the minimum clearance that is necessary for such a ship to pass through the Rip. The channel in the Rip is at present 48 feet deep at low tide. Under the existing maritime practice, it is necessary for a vessel to have a clearance of 10 feet underneath its hull, which means that vessels entering the Rip can have a draught of not more than 38 feet. Experience overseas and the current broad beam designs of tankers suggest that the clearance which is required for ships passing through the Rip is somewhat excessive. The difference which 1 inch of clearance makes in relation to the cargo of a ship is surprisingly large. I have temporarily forgotten the relevant statistics, but honorable members would be surprised to hear them.

Mr. WILTON.—Does the Plimsoll line come into it?

Mr. BIRRELL.—No. I am dealing specifically with under-keel clearance. The testing, which is being undertaken by the Shell company, will probably enable the Ports and Harbors Branch to prescribe a lesser clearance between the hull of a vessel and the bottom of the channel for ships passing through the Rip. As ships become larger and larger,

the relative movement of them as they come through the Rip in all sorts of weather tends to diminish. A big, broad-beam vessel irons out most of the swell of the waves. When the results of the tests have been analyzed, it might be found that an additional 3 to 4 feet could be added to the draught of a ship passing through the Rip. This would enable the entry into Port Phillip Bay of much larger ships than is possible at present. This is a matter of vital interest to Victoria. It is gratifying that the Shell company, in co-operation with the Ports and Harbors Branch, should undertake this work on a *gratis* basis. Of course, the Shell company would like to bring larger tankers into Geelong to its refinery, but any benefits which would be derived by the company would also apply to tankers going to Melbourne.

Mr. PHELAN.—Would much dredging work be necessary on the main channels of the Bay?

Mr. BIRRELL.—Most of the main channels into Melbourne could take vessels with an additional 4 feet draught. Some dredging would be necessary in the vicinity of Rye and Portsea, in the south channel and elsewhere, and also in the Geelong channel. In fact, it is proposed in the near future to carry out work costing about £5,000,000 in connexion with deepening the channel into Geelong. This expenditure is not covered by this Bill.

Mr. FENNESSY.—An amount of £5,000,000 represents a good deal of money.

Mr. BIRRELL.—The Geelong Harbor Trust derives a good deal of revenue from tankers. The expenditure of £5,000,000 would not be a bad investment, and it could be financed within the financial structure of the Trust. I assure the House that this is not a bad, economic proposition. I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to supply this information to the House. It is comparatively important and yet little is known concerning the subject.

Item No. 61 relates to grants totalling £10,000 to young farmers' clubs towards the provision of meeting places. This money is made available on a £2 for £1 basis. The Geelong Young Farmers' Club, with which I work in close liaison, has taken advantage of this subsidy, and it is proceeding with a building extension programme which will prove of considerable benefit. I thank the Government for making this money available. I assure honorable members that the money will be wisely used.

Mr. McCABE (Lowan).—In referring to several items in the schedule to this Public Works Loan Application Bill, I should, on behalf of my constituents, like to thank the Government for various moneys which have been made available for certain public works projects in my electorate, although in some directions I consider that increased allocations should be made. The honorable member for Geelong referred to item No. 61, which relates to grants to young farmers' clubs. The people of the Warracknabeal district are grateful that this assistance is available to these clubs. The Warracknabeal Agricultural and Pastoral Society has been fortunate in obtaining a larger grant than usual because of three district young farmers' clubs meeting in Warracknabeal. The financial assistance which was gratefully accepted will enable a nice pavilion to be erected there.

Item No. 57 has aroused a good deal of attention in the shires of Kaniva and Lowan. Under this item, finance will be made available for the construction of roads to serve new settlements in the Australian Mutual Provident Society's settlement area in the shires to which I referred. The councils of the two shires are deeply concerned with the strain that is being placed on their finances for

future maintenance and reconstruction of these sandstone roads that are being constructed in this newly-developed area at no cost to the councils.

The material being used is of low grade. It is the only material available, and to construct a reasonable mileage with the amount of money available, it is necessary to put down only 4 inches of sandstone instead of 5 inches and to narrow the width of the road. As a result, the surface of the roads is not lasting, which means that the councils are responsible for added maintenance costs. The sealing of at least some of the more important roads would give these councils a chance to cover these maintenance costs. Heavy traffic to and from the rail heads consisting of superphosphate from and grain to the rail head, as well as large trucks carrying sheep and cattle and the material that goes to the Australian Mutual Provident Society development area traverses these roads.

According to the opinion of railway investigators who conducted a survey recently, there is no possibility of this area being served by rail in the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is essential that the roads to which I have referred should be built of a greater thickness of sandstone and should also be wider. This is possible only if more money is made available. The Kaniva shire consists of 1,100 square miles and has a rate revenue of £49,000. The rates received from the Australian Mutual Provident Society development area represent only 10.1 per cent. of the rates collected in the shire. But in 1964 some 45.3 per cent., and in 1965 some 55.9 per cent. of the unclassified road grants were spent on the roads in this area. This is all very nice for the people who live in the locality, and is very good for the development of the area, but the remainder of the residents of the shire are not very happy about the position, and rightly so. Half of the matching grants from rates for unclassified roads have been spent in one area. It is not fair to the council or to the ratepayers generally. If this grant is not increased in the future from the £25,000 which it has been for the past five or six years, the shire will be forced to leave the maintenance of these roads being built, and the roads will then deteriorate further. The burden will fall back on the Government in the finish to do something about these roads if it wishes to see the area continue to develop, and I am sure that all sane thinking persons realize the advantages attached to the development of this area.

Mr. WILKES.—How are the roads classified? Are there any tourist roads?

Mr. McCABE.—There are no tourist roads in this area. Items Nos. 39, 40 and 41 relate to expenditure by the Soil Conservation Authority. It is to the credit of the people concerned that large amounts of money are to be spent on soil conservation work. Suggestions were made recently in the area I represent that the Government was disinterested in soil conservation and was making inadequate grants. However, it is obvious that the person who made the suggestions was completely misinformed, as the amount to be spent on soil conservation work is almost treble the sum he mentioned. The extent of this expenditure by the Government is not generally known. An excellent job is being done in the areas where soil conservation work is needed.

Item No. 68 covers the expenditure of £10,000 to pay the fees of private architects and technical services in connexion with the construction of the Wheat Research Institute at Horsham. This expenditure has received no publicity, and few people realize that the Government is meeting it in order to hurry along the establishment of the Institute. I agree that the bulk of the money being spent on the establishment of the Wheat Research Institute is growers' money, but this expenditure by the Government shows that it appreciates the need for this Institute.

I am pleased to learn that tenders for the construction work will close on 17th December next and that the project should be under way in the immediate future.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—According to the notes submitted to this House at the second-reading stage, this Bill purports to cover the expenditure of £46,348,410. However, I point out that the total expenditure authorized for works is £36,000,000. The additional provision is to cover what is traditionally recognized as the period that may elapse before the next public works loan application Bill is passed. Therefore, the Government, as in previous years, has provided in this measure for fifteen months' expenditure. I think this should be recognized by honorable members.

It was interesting to hear the remarks of certain members about the total sum of £46,000,000 being related to the Commonwealth loan programme. Let me say that Commonwealth borrowings have no relationship to the specific amounts that are allocated under this Bill, nor are total borrowings or the total amounts appropriated and approved under this loan application Bill.

There has been a great deal of discussion about what has been done to increase the amount allocated for expenditure on education. I regret that the honorable member for St. Kilda is not present because I am a little at variance with him in regard to the percentages and so forth he quoted. When one examines what was actually allocated last year, and what is available this year, one finds there has been very little, if any, increase. In the over-all total for education, the sum of £14,850,000 was actually spent last year. The important thing is to go back year by year to examine the sum approved and compare it with the sum actually spent. As I have stated previously in this Chamber, we are not presented with documents which give a clear picture of what has happened. Honorable members should appreciate what is really happening.

I was interested to hear the honorable member for Mildura refer to the allocation for the compensation of North-West Mallee settlers. I agree with him in this regard. Last year, the sum of £221,000 was allocated for known and committed expenditure, and this year the allocation was £199,000. So, there is a deficiency of £22,000 on last year's commitment. Then there is another £10,000, which is £12,000 short of last year's allocation. In addition, a further sum of £65,000 is being provided this year, just in case it is needed. That does not make sense in any sort of financial management.

I was pleased to hear the honorable member for St. Kilda say that we have to establish priorities on the commitment of loan funds. To develop my argument on this matter, it is appropriate at this stage that I should refer to the horrifying item No. 50 which relates to Kings Bridge. We must be most discriminating in the channels into which we invest our loan funds, because interest has to be paid on them. I have never seen such a fallacy as putting into a loan application programme money which is to be expended on maintenance work, particularly on a job on which there has been a large capital expenditure and on which interest on the original borrowings is being paid. This year we are increasing the loan liability on Kings Bridge to the tune of a further £262,000. This is a maintenance problem; it is a day-to-day cost of operating this bridge after capitalization. It is the height of folly in financial management to use loan money on maintenance work. Perhaps this is where the honorable member for St. Kilda would be able to apply the theories of economics and get the same answers as I do.

At the expense of repetition, I say that I cannot agree with the honorable member for St. Kilda in regard

to the percentage allocations for education. I cannot make the percentage allocation for education any less than 33 per cent., which is much more than the 25 per cent. to which he referred. It is related not to the £46,000,000 of the total committed but to the amount approved, which is £12,195,000.

Mr. DIXON.—I took it for the total amount of funds and not for £46,000,000.

Mr. PHELAN.—I am taking the total amount committed under this Bill. If you take it the other way, your mathematics are still lousy.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member should address the Chair.

Mr. PHELAN.—The mathematics of the honorable member for St. Kilda are in error. When one takes £12,000,000 as a ratio of £61,000,000, the result is approximately 20 per cent. and not 25 per cent. Whichever way I look at the figures, I cannot get the same answer as the honorable member for St. Kilda.

Mr. DIXON.—The figure of 25 per cent. was quoted in the Minister's second-reading speech.

Mr. PHELAN.—That is the point to which I referred earlier. Honorable members should appreciate that the amount committed for education under this Bill is £15,500,000, which will be related to expenditure for fifteen months unless another Bill is passed, whereas the commitment for education for this financial year under this Bill is £12,195,000. We should make a close study of this so that we know precisely what is happening to State funds. Too many of these things are glossed over and accepted.

Mr. CLAREY.—It would have been better if the figures had been expressed in dollars.

Mr. PHELAN.—Yes, but it would not have been any easier to balance the Budget. It certainly would have shown a numerical increase, even if the pattern was not improved. I do not criticize the fact that the allocation for the Soil Conservation Authority has been increased by approximately £58,000, but I do criticize the manner in which these figures are presented to the House. Why should one have to look at items 24, 39, 40 and 41 in order to find the total allocation for soil conservation work? Moreover, I do not believe all of the items listed are for capital works of a nature that should be included in the schedule to the Bill. The document presented to honorable members should clearly set out the details. All items relating to soil conservation should be under the one heading. Then honorable members would be in a position to determine the total commitment. The same pattern applies throughout the schedule to other types of work.

I have been told that for the first time a supporting explanatory statement is attached to the Bill. I was under the impression that a similar statement was presented last year, but I am now prepared to accept that it was not. In this statement, there are three columns; they show the actual expenditure for 1965, the proposed expenditure for 1966, and the amount to be appropriated under the Bill. However, these columns are not totalled, so one can only take the Minister's second-reading speech and go through it item by item and make a cross comparison. I do not believe the average honorable member has the time to do this and, what is more, he should not be expected to do it. Surely someone could present a statement in which the columns are totalled, and which correspond with the amount allocated in the Budget. In addition, the total should tally with the amounts referred to by the Minister in his second-reading speech.

Mr. WILTON.—It is indicative of a slipshod Government.

Mr. PHELAN.—I have seen some signs of an endeavour to improve the situation. Because I always raise these points when I speak, I do not want honorable members to think I am harping on them. Something should be done to improve the presentation of what is proposed, because the sooner we achieve this objective, the easier it will be for honorable members to appreciate the serious financial predicament of this State and the sooner we will get co-operation and support from all sides of the House to assist the Treasurer in getting the finances of this State back on to an even keel. The situation has been mentioned by the honorable member for Melbourne.

I now refer to the vital question of the ratio of loan funds that are being committed and the fact that obviously a large proportion of the revenue raised in this State is being lent back to the State as loan money on which interest is charged. In turn, the interest is paid out of taxes raised in this State. I cannot imagine a more deplorable situation in any set of circumstances. A State Government, which is an administrative body, should not have to tolerate such a situation.

A good deal of criticism has been made of the oncost charges levied by the Public Works Department against various jobs. I believe the criticism is fair, and that these charges should not be made against loan funds. Surely the Public Works Department is a service Department of the administrative structure. I am aware that for the current year the revenue from the Public Works Department is estimated to be £7,627,000. The amount received last year was £7,324,712. That amount goes into general revenue; it does not directly offset the cost of the Public Works Department. If it were a revenue item of the Public Works Department, it would be a much saner basis of finance. As it comes back into general revenue and is then charged out against jobs, the oncost charge of 11 per cent. on loan moneys is ridiculous. It is only inflating the finances of the State. We are fooling ourselves. It is about as sensible as taking in one another's washing to keep ourselves busy. I urge the Government to examine this matter.

I agree with the accounting principle of including overheads, as well as charges for labour and material when costing a job, but it is ridiculous to take it in for loan raising. It is one of the contributing factors that would cause any organization to become bankrupt. The commercial world is full of examples of this sort of thing, where people have tried to trade on their own turnover. Inevitably, they have found themselves in difficulties.

Earlier, by way of interjection, I mentioned my concern that the Bill contains no provision relating to the La Trobe University. I agree and recognize that the money for this purpose is raised under a separate Bill, but I point out that this does not give the House the opportunity of discussing the implications of the financial commitments in their over-all context of the financial structure and the State's loan liability. One can refer only to items of expenditure that are being applied in the particular Bill, and not relate them to the over-all works programme, as in the present instance. An independent measure may have some merits that are unknown to me, but the important thing is the total loan liability. The honorable member for Melbourne stated that Victoria's loan liability had increased by some £40,000,000.

Mr. CLAREY.—Per year.

Mr. PHELAN.—It has been more than that over the ten years that this Government has been in office. The liability has been increasing at the rate of £1,750,000 a week. It has risen from £165,000,000 to £955,000,000 as at 1964, which is the latest figure I have. The interest and redemption liability increased by

£3,500,000 last year, which is alarming. As the honorable member for St. Kilda mentioned, we are a little better off in the ratio of expenditure —I think this is significant—because of the over-all increase in the amount of money available through tax reimbursements from Canberra. This trend is at least heartening.

Mr. FENNESSY.—How does the Country Party feel about the loan liability?

Mr. PHELAN.—We think it is a deplorable situation for the Government to have continually to increase its loan liability, to the stage where 60 per cent. of the total of tax reimbursement receipts is absorbed in interest and redemption charges. This is not only deplorable; it is alarming.

Mr. FENNESSY.—Well, do not beat about the bush.

Mr. PHELAN.—I regret that I have not been a little more direct; I shall endeavour to be so for the benefit of some honorable members. In conclusion, I urge the Minister to consider the inclusion of an additional column in the explanatory paper provided with future Bills of this type. Such a presentation would enable a full comparison to be made. The amounts allocated and actually committed in both years should be shown, as the honorable member for Melbourne will appreciate. Both factors of the equation must be available for honorable members to know precisely what was returned or cancelled, when the Bill comes into force and the unexpended balances of the previous year as listed under the various headings. I hope that in future an attempt will be made to improve the presentation for the benefit of honorable members, so that we can make a careful consideration of the priorities on which capital expenditure is being made.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). —I have listened to every other speaker who has contributed to the debate, and I intend to take my time on the points I wish to raise. In my view, this is one of the most important debates which have taken place in this House. The honorable member for Kara Kara should be commended on his crusade to have the explanatory statement on the Bill placed before the House in such a form as to make the items understandable to the average member. After all, we are not all versed in financial affairs.

I find some comfort in the fact that those members who are trained in the appreciation of financial statements find considerable difficulty in their interpretation on these matters. Therefore, to some degree I can excuse my own inability to follow the statements. I hope that, in due course, the efforts of the honorable member for Kara Kara will bear fruit and that the accounts will be presented in a form readily understandable to honorable members.

Mr. FENNESSY.—You and your colleagues still sit on the corner benches on the Government side of the House.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I appreciate that, by remaining on these benches, we are still supporting the Government. The alternative at this stage is rather too horrible to contemplate ; at some time in the future the position may be different.

Addressing myself to item 1 of the explanatory statement, I regret that once again I find it necessary to direct attention to the question of the provision of a school at Swift's Creek. I raised the matter in the Budget debate. I received answers to several questions I raised during that debate, but, significantly, this one was not answered. It distresses me to state that almost two years have elapsed since I received a letter from the Minister of Education indicating that it was anticipated that tenders would be called for a new class-room block at Swift's Creek within about six months of that time. Some eighteen months later, it is disheartening to everybody concerned to learn that

there is no prospect of tenders being called; no estimate is even given as to when it is likely they will be called.

This demonstrates that the Government is balancing its Budget because it is not carrying out its works programmes. In the speech that he has just made, the honorable member for Kara Kara has effectively substantiated this contention. If the Minister of Education two years ago believed that it was possible that tenders would be called within six months for a particular school, and now he does not know when tenders will be called, things must be going backwards somewhere. This is one of the ways by which the Government is balancing the Budget. It sets out a works programme, but does not carry it out; it does not spend money which, at the beginning of a financial year, it says it will spend. I make an earnest request to the Government to look at this matter of the provision of a school at Swift's Creek and see whether this item can be put on the list in the position where it belongs.

I refer to the proposed establishment of a hostel for secondary school children at Orbost. A difficult position applies regarding hostel accommodation in East Gippsland. A hostel for boys conducted by the St. John's Church of England in Bairnsdale is being closed at the end of this year, and as a result the parents of school children are in an uncertain position. The committee of management of the hostel and many people in East Gippsland have asked the Education Department to take over the running of this hostel pending the construction of the proposed hostel at Orbost, and they are anxious that a decision should be made in the matter at the earliest opportunity. If honorable members had children attending secondary school at this time of the year, they would like to have a firm idea of what they were to do with their children next year, and whether it would be necessary to make arrangements for accommodation in other towns, without leaving the matter until the last minute. I hope the Government will give earnest consideration to this matter, and that it will decide to take over the hostel at St. John's Church of England in Bairnsdale and conduct it pending the construction of the proposed hostel at Orbost.

Mr. RYLAH.—You have torn strips off the Government, and now you want the Government's help.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—It is rather difficult to follow the reasoning of the Chief Secretary. Apparently, because I have pointed out an inability to understand accounts presented to the House, I have torn strips off the Government. The Chief Secretary might have difficulty in trying to appreciate some things I could tell him. Nevertheless, his interjection does not worry me unduly.

At this stage, I want to offer a word of praise to the Government—perhaps it is a word of praise with a little bit of a back-hander. I refer to the question of public offices in Bairnsdale. It is pleasing to see that this structure is on the verge of commencement, and, when completed, doubtless it will overcome the difficulties experienced by many Government servants who work in offices there. It is two years since it was first intimated in the House that these offices were to be built. In the interim, the Commonwealth Government indicated its intention to build offices in Sale, and those offices are close to completion. I appreciate the fact that the Commonwealth Government holds the purse strings and therefore is able to get things done more quickly than the State can.

I refer now to Parliament House, for which provision is made under item 21. Several members have mentioned the unfortunate condition of the Legislative Assembly Chamber. It is my view that it is high time that a good look was taken at the facilities for members not only within the Chamber itself but also in other parts of the building. I would not go along with the honorable member for

Geelong West in his idea that a gymnasium is needed in this place. I think most of us find that we get a fair amount of exercise by racing up and down the stairs. It is much quicker to do that than to use the lift.

It is time that decent accommodation was provided for honorable members in this Chamber. At times, it is somewhat distressing to see back-bench members, when entering or leaving the Chamber, having almost to crawl over the top of other members. A much more convenient set-up could be arranged, and I believe honorable members are entitled to a little more comfort than the horse-hair cushions that are on the benches.

This building deserves better treatment than is being accorded to it. I believe that honorable members generally are proud of Parliament House. We like to bring visitors to show them this fine structure, and it is a bit of a shock to visitors to see that the upholstery on the Treasury bench is worn through and the inner lining showing. Some improvement should be made in this regard.

Mr. RYLAH.—But for the Country Party's opposition, this would have been done years ago.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I fully appreciate that in some quarters it is contended that anything that is wrong in this State can be sheeted home to the Country Party, while all the credit for anything that has been achieved goes to the Government. In some of the debates that will take place in the near future, we shall blow out a few of those arguments.

The next matters to which I wish to refer are ports and harbors and works of that nature. Many of my remarks in this connexion have been curtailed to a substantial degree owing to the fact that during the past few days the Acting Minister of Public Works paid a visit to East Gippsland and saw for himself many of the matters to which I would otherwise have directed attention. The Minister's knowledge of the dangers and difficulties experienced by the fishermen at Lakes Entrance was broadened rather too forcefully during a trip over the bar in the Public Works Department launch when several heavy waves struck the craft, breaking the window glass in the front of the vessel, injuring one of the passengers with flying glass, and considerably dampening some members of the party.

This matter is not to be treated lightly because there was no doubt that the craft was in a dangerous situation at the time, and I do not regret that I was not one of the passengers. We very much appreciate the Minister's visit, and I believe he now realizes even more than previously the danger of the bar at Lakes Entrance. We trust that the Public Works Department will be able to see its way clear in the near future to find a solution to this perennial problem.

During his visit, the Minister was also shown some work that had been done along the foreshore where seismic survey parties had bulldozed a track along the shoreline between the lake and the ocean beach. I believe there is a little too much freedom of enterprise in this direction. It seems that this particular clearing was done without permission of or consultation with anybody. I believe some method of control should be exercised over the activities of these people; they should not be allowed to clear scrub and operate bulldozers simply as they like. I trust that the Government will examine this situation to ascertain whether there is any need for further control.

The sum of £7,000 is proposed to be expended this year on the Tostaree Pilot Farm. As I understand the position, this farm has been handed over to the Orbost Reafforestation and Land Settlement Committee.

Mr. BALFOUR.—No; this is run by the Department.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I was under the impression that the Tostaree Pilot Farm was to be operated by somebody appointed by the Orbost Reafforestation and Land Settlement Committee, but the Minister advises me that that is not the case, that it is a separate area which that body is to take over. I thank the Minister for his explanation.

Finally, I wish to express the appreciation of residents in the Sale–Maffra–Heyfield area for the Government's assistance in the construction at Maffra of a centre known as "Kyndalyn" for mentally retarded children. The establishment of this centre is an example of co-operation between various municipalities and the Government, and I believe it is deserving of the highest commendation. I thank the Government for its interest in this particular work.

I trust that at some time in the future the Government may see its way clear to extend capital grants to such centres which have slightly fewer than seventeen children, which is the existing requirement. A good deal of assistance from teachers and others is required to run such centres. If the Government feels that it is fair enough to establish primary schools for ten or more children, it may think it fair to grant assistance, by way of capital grants, towards the construction of centres to cater for ten or more mentally retarded children. I could say much more on many items in this Bill, because it opens up a broad field, but I shall content myself with the remarks that I have made.

Mr. GAINEY (Elsternwick).—The honorable member for Kara Kara gave us a surfeit of figures, and it was obvious that a number of members suffered from mental dyspepsia. Therefore, I do not intend to quote figures. On the question of research farms and research stations, I wish to commend the marvellous work being done by the Tatura Research Farm in the Goulburn Valley. Some of the tomatoes which have been developed there have become world famous for their keeping qualities, appearance and productivity. The money spent in this direction will be returned many times over.

So far as the Fisheries and Wildlife Department is concerned, I have previously mentioned residues which operate against fish and animals. I read an American publication recently which bore out my contention. It stated that according to statistics one of the worst features of residues, which come from careless spraying or over-concentrated spraying, was that it caused sterility in fish. In one large lake that was famous for its sporting fish, no more fish were being spawned because the residues that had built up in their bodies had made them sterile. The Fisheries and Wildlife Department might explore this angle somewhat further.

Item No. 18 relates to the Cancer Institute. I strongly advise any member who has not done so to visit the Peter MacCallum clinic, which is carrying out wonderful work for the benefit of the people of Victoria. I was a member of the 100-man committee which endeavoured to raise money so that the Institute might carry on its fight against cancer. Through the work of the Institute, nine women in my district who suffered from cancer have been saved from having to undergo dangerous operations. On behalf of the women of Victoria, I wish to thank the Institute, because women are more prone to cancer than are men.

In relation to public offices and residences, the police station in my electorate was previously accommodated in a rented building. Following my representations to the Chief Secretary, I succeeded in obtaining for this area not only a new police station but also a court-house. This has proved of real benefit from the point of view of saving travelling time to other places when police are absent from duty. A new residence has almost been completed at Gardenvale. This will include a new

lock-up and offices for the police. When completed, the area will be fairly well covered for the prevention of crime. With the communication between the three districts, rapid detection of offenders can be achieved.

I shall now relate my remarks to foreshore protection works. Honorable members who are familiar with the camp at Somers will know how the creek has been prevented from washing away the foreshore and part of the camp. In 1956 at Elwood, just outside the electorate of St. Kilda, a storm washed away 210 feet of foreshore and endangered many homes. I contacted the then Minister of Public Works, Sir Thomas Maltby, on the matter, and he arranged for the diversion of some of the stone being taken from the roadworks along the Geelong-road, and this material enabled reclamation works to be proceeded with on the foreshore. The area is now grassed and its original beauty has been recaptured.

Many honorable members will not recall the beautification scheme along the Yarra Boulevard, which was undertaken 30 years ago to alleviate unemployment during the depression. I understand that work is now to be carried out to link the old road with a new section of the Boulevard.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed.

The clauses were agreed to.

Schedule, setting out amount issued and applied.

Mr. DIXON (St. Kilda).—I refer to the statement of the honorable member for Kara Kara that my arithmetic was "lousy." I quoted an allocation of £16,055,000 for education for the year 1965-66 out of loan funds. The calculation was obtained by adding £12,920,000 for school buildings &c.; £2,630,000 for universities, including teaching hospitals; £300,000 for the School of Ancillary Nursing; £145,000 for agricultural education; and £60,000 for "all other." This figure is obtained from the Budget accounts in relation to this Bill. It has nothing to do with the sum of £15,500,000, to which the honorable member for Kara Kara referred. I then worked out the percentages that the allocation of £16,000,000 was of the total provision for 1965-66, of £61,603,000, and this gave the figure which I originally quoted, namely 25.8 per cent. The same process, with which I will not bore the House, can be used to work out the percentage for 1962-63. If my logic and arithmetic are correct, I leave it to the Committee to say what is the position of the logic and arithmetic of the honorable member for Kara Kara.

The schedule was verbally amended, and, as amended, was adopted.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow, at Three o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.32 *p.m.*

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, November 17, 1965.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. R. W. Mack)** took the chair at 2.53 p.m., and read the prayer.

PUBLIC WORKS LOAN APPLICATION 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.

STATE RIVERS AND WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION.

IRRIGATION CHANNELS: USE OF WEEDICIDES.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Is it the practice of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to use special weedicides in irrigation channels during irrigation seasons to poison weeds in irrigation districts on the River Murray and other northern districts; if so—(i) are these weedicides dangerous to livestock and poisonous to fish, yabbies, and birds, as well as to pastures; (ii) is irrigation suspended during the period in which these weedicides are being used; (iii) are irrigators given notice, in writing, of intention to use these weedicides; (iv) have the Department of Agriculture and the Fisheries and Wildlife Department approved the use of these weedicides; (v) is it a fact that the water in these channels after treatment is run into the River Murray and to various lakes in the Kerang district; and (vi) is it a fact that the ibis rookeries in these lakes are drastically reduced in population and that the eggs in these hatcheries are proving sterile?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, in common with many farmers and other authorities such as the Postmaster-General's Department, the Railway Department and the Lands Department, has made wide use of weedicides in recent years.

Application of all chemicals by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is under strict control. This is essential to prevent indiscriminate use of these materials, and thus to prevent injury to operators or other persons, irrigated crops, home gardens and livestock and to minimize the risk to fish or aquatic life.

Weedicides are used only after extensive investigations have established that it is safe to do so. Where a particular weed problem exists, experiments are first conducted to determine which of the available weedicides can be used most effectively and economically. Only those weedicides which are relatively non-toxic are considered even for trial work and in fact there is no weedicide in use by the Commission which is both persistent in water and also toxic to humans or stock.

With respect to the specific questions asked, the answers are as follows:—

(i) The weedicides used are not dangerous to livestock and birds—one of them (aqualin) kills some fish and yabbies in the channel system.

(ii) With one weedicide, aqualin, irrigation may be suspended, but this is normally not necessary.

(iii) Notice in writing is given with the aqualin treatment which has a temporary effect on the water supply. The other treatments have no effect and no notice is necessary.

(iv) The Commission's weedicide programme is reviewed by the Inter-departmental Committee on Pesticides, which includes representatives of the Health, Agriculture, Fisheries and Wildlife, and Lands Departments and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

The complete programme has also been submitted to the Government Pesticides Inquiry Committee appointed by the Premier under the chairmanship of Mr. R. J. Downes of the Soil Conservation Authority. This inquiry committee includes representatives of the Health, Agriculture, Lands, and Fisheries and Wildlife Departments and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

(v) No aqualin is released to rivers and lakes until 48 hours has elapsed by which time the chemical has completely evaporated. Traces of the other chemicals used could reach rivers and lakes, but repeated analyses have never revealed any and also the theoretical amounts are controlled below limits established by the Inter-departmental Committee on Pesticides.

(vi) No connexion is known or could be anticipated between the Commission's weed control activities and the ibis population.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

ILLNESS OF PASSENGERS ON MILDURA TRAIN: INQUIRIES.

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

Did the Minister ask the Department of Health for a report on the case of sick marching girls aboard the Mildura train on 20th September, 1965; if so—(i) was an inquiry made by the Department; (ii) was a report made to the Minister; (iii) will the Minister make the report (if any) available to the House; and (iv) is the Minister or the Department aware that some of the girls are still affected from their experiences?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—The answer is—

(i) Yes. In circumstances such as this, action is automatically taken by the Department to initiate an inquiry and the Minister is advised of the action taken.

(ii) The Department's investigations have now been completed and a report has been submitted to me.

(iii) The report contains some confidential medical information unrelated to the incident, but I will make it available in confidence to any member who desires it.

(iv) No.

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

(*a*) Did the Minister of Transport call for a report by the Railways Commissioners on the case of the sick marching girls on the Mildura train on 20th September, 1965; if so, will the Minister make this report available to the House?

(*b*) Who ordered the sick girls to hospital, and to which hospital were they taken?

(*c*) Is the Minister aware that some of these girls are still affected by their illness?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) The incident was discussed between myself and the Railways Commissioners promptly and frequently, and I perused all reports submitted by the railway staff. It was, therefore, unnecessary to call for any formal report.

(*b*) Dr. Gray of Creswick ordered two girls to hospital at Creswick. Mrs. Godfrey, who we understand was with the party, and three girls left the train at Woomelang and were taken to the Hopetoun hospital. No doctor was in attendance. We are unaware of who decided that the girls should go to hospital. It is understood that girls were also taken to the Mildura hospital, but we do not know who decided that they should go there.

(*c*) No.

CONSTRUCTION OF ALUMINIUM HOPPER WAGONS: LETTING OF CONTRACTS.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Concerning the recent public announcement that contracts had been let to a private firm in New South Wales for the construction of 100 aluminium hopper wagons for the Victorian Railways—(i) were public tenders called for the construction of these wagons and, if so, when; (ii) to whom has the contract been let, and at what price; and (iii) was any tender submitted by the Victorian Railways own Newport workshops?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is:—

(i) Yes. On 28th May, 1965.

(ii) To Tulloch Limited, of Rhodes, New South Wales, at £5,148 per wagon, delivered free on rail Wodonga.

(iii) Because of the staff position, it was not practicable to undertake construction of these wagons in departmental workshops.

LAND VALUATION.

ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES: PROTECTION OF OWNERS' RIGHTS.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE (North-Eastern Province) asked the Minister for Local Government—

Has the Minister read the comments of His Honour Mr. Justice Else-Mitchell of the New South Wales Land and Valuation Court regarding the provisions of the Victorian land valuation legislation made at the second triennial congress of the Commonwealth Institute of Valuers; if so, will he delay the implementation of the provisions regarding costs to enable amendments to be made to protect the rights of owners whose lands have been or are to be acquired for public purposes?

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—The answer is—

Yes. His Honour's view was that the Victorian legislation might have given greater discretion to the court or board in the awarding of costs. The formula adopted was intended to give greater protection to property-owners than the ordinary rules on costs and was carefully framed with that object in view. If it works otherwise in practice, the Government will certainly seek to amend it.

WESTERNPORT BAY AREA.

DEVELOPMENT.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

In view of His Excellency the Governor's remarks at the Lord Mayor's dinner last week concerning the development of Westernport, what steps has the Government planned to implement the growth of a second Melbourne on Westernport Bay?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

The development of Westernport has been referred to the State Development Committee as a subject for investigation and report.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF: VISITING TEACHERS' STAFF.

The Hon. T. H. GRIGG (Bendigo Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) From where did the information come regarding the postings of the nineteen newly-trained teachers of the deaf in answer to question No. 10 asked in the House on the 16th instant?

(*b*) Have these vacancies been advertised in the *Education Gazette?*

(*c*) How many Victorian primary teachers will be taking special extension courses at Kew in 1966?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) The information regarding the postings of the nineteen newly-trained teachers was based on a survey of staffing needs for schools for deaf children for 1966. As is usual, this survey was conducted by the responsible officers of the Education Department.

(*b*) Vacancies in schools for deaf children for exit teachers completing the course for Trained Teacher of the Deaf are not advertized in the *Education Gazette.* Postings are made according to the needs of the schools.

(*c*) Twenty.

MALLACOOTA WATER SUPPLY.

PROGRESS OF WORK.

The Hon. R. W. MAY (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) Has the access track been completed at the Betka river at Mallacoota; if so, has the gauging station been set up on the river and in that case when was it set up?

(*b*) How long will it take before sufficient recordings have been made to establish certainty as to the flow of the river?

(*c*) Will the commencement of the water supply works have to await these results?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers are—

(*a*) Construction of the access track to the proposed gauging station on the Betka river is being arranged by the Orbost Shire Council. The work has not yet been completed.

(*b*) Gaugings of stream flows at or near the pumping site throughout one complete summer period will probably be sufficient to establish whether the Betka river and the proposed works could provide an adequate water supply to Mallacoota.

(*c*) Commencement of water supply works for Mallacoota would depend on the availability of funds following the constitution of a local waterworks trust which could not be recommended until it has been shown that the Betka river flows at the selected pumping site, together with the proposed works, would provide an adequate supply for Mallacoota—particularly during a series of dry years—and that the proposals are financially practicable.

EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES.

REPORT OF STATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

Has any action been taken by the Government on the recommendations of the State Development Committee following its inquiry into extractive industries; if so, what has been done?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answer is—

It is expected that a Bill will be introduced in the autumn session of Parliament.

COUNTRY ROADS (CADETSHIPS) BILL.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture), by leave, moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Country Roads Act 1958 by making provision with respect to the granting of cadetships to certain students, and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BILL.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I move—

That the proposals contained in the Abolition of Capital Punishment Bill be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination and report.

I consider that it would be well worth while if the Statute Law Revision Committee examined this matter. The first aspect which I think would be appropriate for its consideration would be whether or not the function of deciding that a man's life should

be forfeited should be left at an administrative level rather than at a judicial plane. I should have thought that if capital punishment is to be retained, the decision should be made by a court. It ought not to be left in the hands of the Government of the day. It seems to me that the present position is wrong. In other words, if we are to have capital punishment all Governments should be bound by it because it is the law of the land. That would be an appropriate matter for consideration.

It has been suggested to me by Sir Percy Byrnes that the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee would be the appropriate body to study this matter. I am anxious to get any properly-equipped body to study it, because I believe once it is studied by the House the verdict returned will be the same as that adopted by any other body that has had to give consideration to it—the Royal Commission in Great Britain and so on. Informed opinion all over the world realizes the utter futility—indeed, the barbarity—of capital punishment. I believe it is more appropriate that this matter should be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee on which there will be some members of this House and some members of another place. The advantage of adopting that course would be that the presentation of informed opinion by other bodies would not be excluded. The Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee would be a valuable adjunct to the Statute Law Revision Committee.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—The Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee does not take evidence.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—No, but Sir John Barry is one of the greatest criminologists of the modern world. He has spent a lifetime in studying criminal law, and he is a member of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee. Probably that body would be asked by the Attorney-General to make a report to or to give evidence before the Statute Law Revision Committee. I do not know whether it is appropriate to ask that representatives of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee should give evidence, but I am sure the Statute Law Revision Committee would get valued advice from them.

There may be other bodies and other people in the community to which the Statute Law Revision Committee could refer. It has the advantage of being a Parliamentary committee, and in the last word Parliament must make up its mind on this matter. Considering the number of times this House has debated the subject of capital punishment, it might be thought all honorable members should be in a position to make up their minds in regard to capital punishment, and there is a lot to be said for that point of view. However, to be very trivial about the matter, I do not want the Bill I have sponsored to be defeated on this occasion in this way, and I am prepared to go to great lengths to get the House really to grips with this problem. In the circumstances, I think the House might well favour the idea of the Statute Law Revision Committee examining the matter, and I am hopeful that my motion meets all the requirements of Sir Percy Byrnes. I am sure the Statute Law Revision Committee would be prepared to take advice and help from the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—I did not have the opportunity of debating Mr. Galbally's Bill on the last occasion on which it was before the House because I thought certain other members wished to speak and I gave way. I am well aware that things change as the world becomes more Christian or whatever attitude of mind one might take, so I do not say for one minute that the Country Party is completely adamant and hidebound in regard to changes in the law. However, it has never supported the abolition of capital punishment and at the present time it is maintaining that attitude.

Without going into great depths of argument, I inform the House that members of the Country Party would like to preserve to a large extent what is a reserve power, but at the moment the question being debated is whether or not the Bill should be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. The reserve power of capital punishment is in the law, and members of the Country Party believe that, before any change is made, it should be deeply and carefully examined by skilled people who have adequate knowledge to deal with it. We are not satisfied that the proposal envisaged in the Bill should be examined by the Statute Law Revision Committee, even though we have the highest regard for that committee. As a matter of fact, I served on it for a number of years, and I know that it has given great service to this Parliament and to the State. However, we would not be wise to refer this matter to that committee, because in my opinion it is not capable of performing the function of examining the question of whether or not capital punishment should be abolished. I should point out, however, that we are not averse to a complete examination being made of the whole position. That was undertaken once before, and the offences for which the punishment was the death penalty were somewhat modified.

If an inquiry is to be held, it should be at the instigation of the Government, and the personnel of a committe of inquiry should be men of great capacity and knowledge. I know that it is the custom of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee to direct attention to anomalies in the law and to give advice from time to time—even to the Statute Law Revision Committee. Is any body more capable of giving a decision on the law or on the need for punishment than the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee? I am aware that the members of that committee do not give evidence; possibly it is a vague committee in that it does not call evidence, but its members do know the law and understand what is happening in the community. In addition, they are trained in interpreting the law. At this stage—I want to say this without hurting Mr. Galbally's feelings—we could not support a Bill to abolish capital punishment and, by the same token, we could not support Mr. Galbally's motion that the matter be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. However, we think it would be a good idea if the debate on the Bill was adjourned and the Government consulted the Chief Justice with a view to determining whether or not it should set up a committee capable of giving this matter thorough investigation and reporting on it to Parliament some time early next year. That is the correct way to go about the matter. It is the prerogative of the Government to introduce legislation. The Council could pass the Bill, but this would amount only to a mere gesture, as the measure would be lost in the Assembly. Although sometimes gestures are valuable, I do not think that would be so in this instance.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—If the House of Commons had taken that attitude, capital punishment would never have been abolished in Britain. The House of Lords was against the reform for centuries, but suddenly it changed its view.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—That is so, but that change was initiated by the Government. In any case, I understand that capital punishment has not been abolished in Britain; for example, I think it is retained for treason. I do not wish to debate the question of capital punishment under this motion. Other members of my party and I would not change our opinion unless the strongest evidence was placed before us that what is proposed is advisable and necessary, and then only after due inquiry and after the proposal had been submitted to Parliament by the Government in a proper manner. Some years ago, the Statute Law Revision Committee made an inquiry into this question, and certain changes were made in the law.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Does it matter how it gets to the Statute Law Revision Committee?

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—Perhaps I am not making myself clear. I submit that the Government should discuss the question with the Chief Justice, and that it should be considered by the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee. The Government should be advised by the Chief Justice on the best form of inquiry and on the personnel of a committee that would hold such an inquiry into the whole of the law in this regard. If capital punishment is to be abolished, the whole question of punishment should be considered.

Honorable members are aware of the present procedure. When a person is convicted of murder, the transcript of evidence and all the relevant papers are studied by all members of Cabinet. It may be that a recommendation or a strong recommendation for mercy is made. The trial Judge appears before Cabinet to answer any questions, and, after a long discussion and inquiry into all aspects of the case and the person concerned, all members of Cabinet appear before the Governor and advice is tendered to the Executive Council. The full Executive Council then decides whether or not the death penalty shall be carried out.

My party believes that no change should be made unless a full examination of the matter is made by the best available brains and the most skilled persons in the community, who could advise the Government on whatever changes may be necessary. It may be that when the Executive Council considers a case the sentence is commuted. The period of imprisonment then imposed varies in accordance with the advice given by the trial Judge and what has taken place at the trial. It is the prerogative of the Executive Council to make the decision, and that system is working reasonably well at the present time. If the present system is to be abolished, the whole question of punishment under the law must be thoroughly examined.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—That is getting around to Stanley Johnston's point of view, that we ought to establish a criminal code.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—That may be so. All honorable members are aware that a full-scale revision of the criminal code of this State is long overdue. The Statute Law Revision Committee or some other committee could be well employed examining the Police Offences Act, in which numerous anomalies exist.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—The Statute Law Revision Committee has drawn the attention of the Government to Johnston's views.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—Any honorable member who has served on the committee knows that there is an urgent necessity to revise the whole penal code of this State. We would be wise to do that instead of frittering away time, as we do in this Chamber, dealing with small amendments to the law, which do not matter. The penal code of this State should be brought into line with modern requirements.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—I think the honorable member should return to his original argument.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—My party urges the Government to take some action to institute an inquiry under the aegis of the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee, so that the committee which undertakes the inquiry will have the confidence of every member of the community as well as of this Parliament.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agricuture).—The House is considering a motion by Mr. Galbally to refer the Bill to the Statute Law Revision Committee. As I understand the position, the Statute Law Revision Committee would

be an appropriate body to handle this proposal, even if it was desired by some members that it should do so. Of course, this Parliament can refer measures to the committee for its consideration, but a matter of this nature is really a question of Government policy and party policy. Sir Percy Byrnes has indicated that, in his view, the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee should be consulted. I cannot give any guarantee whatever on the matter at this stage, but I point out that this angle has never been considered by Cabinet.

If Sir Percy Byrnes intends to persist with his point of view, I do not think it would be unreasonable to adjourn the debate for a week to give Cabinet an opportunity to examine the proposals made in this House. I agree that the question of the abolition of capital punishment has been ventilated in this Chamber over a number of years. It was discussed in a period when great feeling on the subject was engendered, and it became a very lively issue.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—We have had the heat, and we have had the cold. This matter has been brought forward from time to time since 1956.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I realize that fact. At one stage, a Gallup poll taken on the subject indicated that only 25 per cent. of the community supported Mr. Galbally's point of view, and he should not forget that expression of opinion.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—The result often depends upon the manner in which the questions are framed.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—The question of public polls does not enter into the debate. The only question to be decided is whether this Bill should be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee or not, and members are entitled to give reasons as to why it should, or should not, be so referred. I do not want the debate to be marred by the introduction of extraneous matters.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I think I have made quite clear my position as Leader of the Government in this House. I contend that Mr. Galbally's motion and the matter raised by Sir Percy Byrnes should be considered by Cabinet. Ample time exists for this to be done, because the sessional period will last for at least three more weeks. Members have an assurance that consideration of private members' Bills will not be jeopardised in any way because of the alteration in the sitting hours of the House. Cabinet should have the opportunity to consider what has been proposed, and next week I can indicate the Government's policy on the matter. Then, in the light of that decision, the House can vote on the issue.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I am trying to save the face of the Premier.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—The Premier can look after himself.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province).—Although Mr. Galbally's motion is a simple one, after listening to Sir Percy Byrnes and the Minister of Agriculture one might have thought that it was a most unusual matter to present to the House. Bills are regularly referred by both Houses of Parliament to the Statute Law Revision Committee and other issues which are not the subject of Bills are referred to it by the Executive. The Bill brought in by Mr. Galbally can be remitted to the Statute Law Revision Committee only by the House; it cannot be remitted by the Executive. I emphasize that there is nothing unusual in the course proposed in the motion. In this session, Mr. Todd has handled two or three Bills which have been considered by the Statute Law Revision Committee. It is true that they have been Government measures, but that is the only distinction. The fact that the Bill under discussion is a private member's Bill is the only feature that distinguishes it from others.

I am disappointed at the attitude adopted by the Government. The issue at the moment is not whether hanging should be abolished; it is merely whether there is to be an investigation of the possibility of capital punishment being abolished and whether a well-founded and well-considered report is to be presented to the House to assist members fully to consider the subject. That is the issue—whether Parliament shall have presented to it a full report on the subject by a committee after taking evidence and carefully investigating all phases of the subject. I should have thought that members generally would welcome the opportunity to get more information on the subject, and the adoption of Mr. Galbally's proposal would enable a report on the subject to be prepared for the consideration of Parliament.

Sir Percy Byrnes referred to the English Bill as the Bill of the Labor Government. That is not the case. It was brought in by a private member, Mr. Silverman, who has long taken the lead in Britain in this matter. In the consideration of that Bill, there was no direction by any party as to voting; all members were allowed a free vote. Without entering into the merits——

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—I ask Mr. Merrifield not to enter into the argument.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD.—I am making the point that it was a private member's Bill that was introduced into the British Parliament. It has been suggested that the Statute Law Revision Committee would be the wrong body to consider this proposal; that, in some way or other, it is incompetent or unqualified to deal with the issue fully. I point out that the Crimes Bill of 1949 was referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee by a Government of the same political complexion as that now in office. I happened to be one of the lay members of the committee at that time, and I consider that to be good luck on my part because the inquiry was extremely interesting and one feels better qualified to discuss various subjects after being a member of a committee such as that. Surely, it cannot be argued that the Statute Law Revision Committee is not qualified to deal with this matter. In reporting on the Crimes Bill in 1949, it made recommendations about the abolition of the death penalty for certain crimes.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—It did not recommend the abolition of capital punishment.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (to Sir Percy Byrnes).—It recommended the abolition of the death penalty for rape.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD.—Sir Percy Byrnes has stated that the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee is in some way better qualified to report on this issue than the Statute Law Revision Committee. Many famous old Parliamentarians of far greater experience and ability than I possess have said that in the final essence Parliament is a body of lay members which moves cautiously, considers all the viewpoints, and does not look at things in a narrow light. The question of the abolition of capital punishment is not, as Sir Percy Byrnes suggested, purely a matter of law. It entails a consideration of social conditions and outlooks. The Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee is not necessarily the best body to deal with a matter that is not purely one of law. The lay members of the Statute Law Revision Committee may well be qualified to consider the wider aspects involved so that a proper report can be submitted to Parliament for the consideration of members.

What is wrong with the Statute Law Revision Committee being appointed to conduct this inquiry? In 1949, the committee heard representations from the Chief Justice's

Law Reform Committee on the subject then under discussion. A report was submitted on the Crimes Act and the abolition or mitigation of various punishments. If I remember rightly, the Chief Justice himself gave evidence on behalf of that body. But the inquiry did not begin and end with evidence from the Chief Justice, qualified though he might have been and I do not want in any respect to be derogatory of the consideration which Judges of the Supreme Court give to these matters. However, I believe that the considerations which ought to be given to the subject go beyond those matters which the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee is qualified to deal with.

I put it to Sir Percy Byrnes that if he and his colleagues support Mr. Galbally's motion, they will not be preventing the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee from expressing a viewpoint on the matter. I cannot imagine any Statute Law Revision Committee dealing with a topic of this importance without hearing the views of the Judges.

The last point I want to make is that if the motion is agreed to, that will not affect the power of interference of the Executive. The Attorney-General has power to originate inquiries, and he would be the Minister to arrange for a report to be prepared by the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee. It would be possible for the Attorney-General to inform the Statute Law Revision Committee that he wanted it to hear the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee on the issue. Members of the Statute Law Revision Committee represent different political parties. In dealing with this subject, they could call evidence not only from the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee but also from other well-informed sources. I do not think Sir Percy Byrnes and the other members of his party are doing justice to themselves in the attitude they have adopted. The adoption of Mr. Galbally's proposal would mean the holding of a wide inquiry which would assist members to determine their attitude. The referring of this Bill to the Statute Law Revision Committee would not involve the Government in any lengthy consideration. I appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to persuade the Government to change its mind and to make a decision which will enable Mr. Galbally's Bill to be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—It is unfortunate that this difference of opinion has arisen as to whether the Abolition of Capital Punishment Bill should be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. Mr. Merrifield has suggested that there is nothing unusual in the House sending a measure to that body, and that statement is true. However, this particular proposal is unusual in the sense that the present Government and previous Administrations have been careful not to send to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination matters on which definite party policies exist. If the Statute Law Revision Committee is to examine questions impartially, it is important that it should not be trammelled by declarations of party policy which bind members. That is the position here.

At the moment, the policy of the Liberal Party is opposed to the abolition of capital punishment, and any member of the Liberal Party on the committee would have no option but to adhere to that view. I believe that the Country Party has made a somewhat similar declaration of policy. Therefore, with those obstacles in the path, to send to the Statute Law Revision Committee a question like this would not be doing justice to the work of the committee, nor to the powers of impartial and untrammelled judgment which it ought to be able to exercise.

The second point is this: The capital punishment issue would be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee by the House sending to it for consideration Mr. Galbally's Bill. All that the Bill provides for is the abolition of capital punishment. I should have thought that if it had been admissible and proper to send the proposal to the Statute Law Revision Committee along those general lines, reference ought to be made in a different form. What is the committee to do in considering a Bill like this? Should it say, "We support abolition" or, "We do not support abolition"? If the matter were placed before the Statute Law Revision Committee, it would be more satisfactory to formulate set terms of reference so that the various possibilities could be examined. It is not fair simply to put to the committee the bald proposition, and ask "What is your report?"

For those reasons, the Leader of the House and Sir Percy Byrnes were correct in saying that the course proposed by Mr. Galbally is not the proper course to adopt. The Leader of the Government has given an assurance to the House that the proposal of Sir Percy Byrnes will be examined —as any responsible proposal would be examined. I cannot tell what the result will be. At least, it is a suggestion as to the way in which an inquiry may be started. I agree with the Leader of the House that the proposed reference to the Statute Law Revision Committee is not an acceptable course to adopt. In the circumstances, the committee is not a proper body to examine this matter, as the question could not be referred to it in a sensible and productive way.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—This matter has aroused widespread controversy throughout the community, and there is a growing band of advocates in favour of the abolition of capital punishment. Therefore, it is regrettable that the Bill is again faced with the pigeon-hole. Despite the suggestion of the Minister for Local Government that party policies might intervene, if the matter were referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee, the question of the abolition of capital punishment is of interest to the representatives of all parties represented in this House.

The proposal of Mr. Galbally is reasonable, because he realizes that, if the measure is put to the House in its present form, it will suffer the same fate as other measures on the same subject which he has introduced on previous occasions. Despite the logic of his arguments, those Bills did not get past the second-reading stage in this House. Being imbued with the desire to have the matter fully investigated, he now proposes that this Bill be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee, and again obstacles have been put in his way by the specious argument that the committee is not a proper body to look into matters of this nature.

During the six years of my membership of the Statute Law Revision Committee, it has investigated matters of great importance and has brought down many reports, most of which have been implemented in full by the Government. The witnesses who have appeared before the committee have been of the highest calibre. Mr. Justice Smith appeared before the committee on many occasions, and he is the equal of any legal man in Australia today. Representatives from the Bar Council, the Law Institute, and various other organizations in the community have also appeared before the committee and have put their views on particular questions. I have no doubt that, if this matter were put before that committee for inquiry, people who have a wide knowledge and the desire to see some change in the law on this subject would accept the opportunity of putting their views before it. Arising from those views, a report could be submitted to the Government.

I do not accept the view of the Minister for Local Government that the terms of the Bill are too narrow to go before the Statute Law Revision Committee. The committee would have the right to make a report, whether it was adverse to the Bill or whether it contained other recommendations not included in the Bill as to the procedure to be followed. Capital punishment has been abolished in many countries and in several States of the United States of America. It has been practically abolished in the Mother Country. We wish this matter to be brought into the open and be examined from the aspect of whether capital punishment is or is not worth while. It is regrettable that negative attitudes have been adopted to matters of such high principle as the abolition of capital punishment.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER (Higinbotham Province).—I am surprised at the turn this debate has taken. I do not suggest that it is other than an oversight, and that it was deliberately done. I remind honorable members that, on the last occasion this Bill was debated, Mr. Merrifield foreshadowed this motion. I directed his attention to the fact that a number of Government members might wish to participate in the debate on the main Bill, and that if the Bill was later referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee for examination and report, the committee might benefit from the views expressed on the subject in this House. Mr. Galbally then said—and I am sure he was sincere—"We would not be a party to stifling any member speaking on this Bill. I assure honorable members who wish to participate in the debate on this Bill that they will be able to do so". I have had an experience in the past week of this type of motion which shuts out honorable members from debate. In the rush of legislation at this time of the year, Mr. Galbally's undertaking might have been overlooked. The effect of agreeing to this motion would be to exclude other honorable members who might want to participate in the main debate.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—Order! The motion is clearly stated, and it is that the matter be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. It is open to all honorable members to give reasons why it should or should not be referred to the committee. That is as far as the debate can proceed on the motion at present before the Chair.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province) (*By leave*).—In reply to Mr. Snider, it is not my intention, nor that of my party, to exclude debate on this most important matter; we welcome it.

The Hon. A. J. HUNT.—On the main Bill.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—That is so. If this motion is agreed to, no honorable member will be prevented from speaking to the Bill. If any honorable member wishes to speak before this Bill is referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee, with the will of the House I shall be prepared to withdraw my motion, to provide that opportunity.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER.—That is what my Leader has proposed.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—I am so anxious to make progress with this Bill that, if there is any problem, I shall be prepared to withdraw the motion. After debate by this House, the Bill could be considered by the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee. Of course, I would prefer the Bill to be referred to the Statute Law Revision Committee. I assure Mr. Snider that I do not wish to stifle debate.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER.—I accept that assurance.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—If there is no formal problem involved, I shall withdraw this motion to allow that course to be adopted.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—Order! That can be done only by leave.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—That is so. In the meantime, I accept the suggestion of the Country Party that the Bill should be referred to the Chief Justice's Law Reform Committee, and the undertaking of the Leader of the House that Cabinet will consider this matter next Monday so that the Government will be in a position on Tuesday of next week to state its views on the question of the subject matter of this Bill being referred either to the Statute Law Revision Committee or to some other body.

By leave, the motion was withdrawn.

VALUATION OF LAND (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Order of the Day for the resumption of the debate on the motion for the second reading of this Bill was read.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province).—I understand that Sir Percy Byrnes is prepared to have his Bill stood aside for the time being until the Government Bill is dealt with later. Therefore, I ask that the resumption of the debate be postponed.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—I am in agreement with the proposal.

The Order of the Day was postponed until the next day of meeting.

ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. J. W. Galbally (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province).—I do not desire to make any further remarks during the second reading debate as I have covered all that I wished to say. I sought the adjournment of the debate only because it was desired to refer the Bill to the Statute Law Revision Committee. I am prepared to give way to Mr. Snider.

The Hon. G. W. THOM (South-Western Province).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I took the course I adopted because I understood that Mr. Snider was anxious to make a speech on my Bill.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER (Higinbotham Province).—I would be prepared to speak on the Bill at an appropriate time, and I appreciate Mr. Galbally's reason for adopting the course he has.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Perhaps we should ask Mr. Thom to withdraw his motion.

The Hon. B. D. SNIDER.—No. I am speaking on the motion, but I think Mr. Galbally may appreciate what is troubling me at the moment. An issue has been raised which would, as I understand it, afford the Government an opportunity to consider a further move for the referral of the Bill to a committee for consideration. It is possible that certain of my remarks might have been governed to some extent by that possibility. As I listened to what was being said, I thought that, with the approval of the House, this course might be adopted. I appreciate the fact that when Mr. Galbally graciously withdrew his earlier motion, he knew that it would be followed by a proposal that would enable consideration of the question to refer the Bill to be further examined.

Mr. Galbally and other honorable members appreciate that the Bill relates to a subject on which there are many different views. I assure the honorable member that we are all trying to be helpful with regard to the over-all topic, and if Mr. Thom's motion is agreed to, it may indeed be more productive than any of us may imagine at the moment.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 24.

MOTOR CAR (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. J. W. Galbally (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—As I stated last week, if certain steps are taken, consideration of another measure may not be possible. This position applies in this House because of the democratic manner in which business is handled. The right to introduce private members' Bills on important subjects has been freely availed of over the years by members of the Council, and this Bill covers a very important subject. However, the Government has introduced a Motor Car Bill which goes even a little further than Mr. Galbally's measure and includes the proposal contained in his Bill. Therefore, if this measure were debated at this stage, a deadlock could be reached, and I should not like to see that occur.

The Motor Car Bill introduced by the Government ranges over a wide field, and only the final part of it covers Mr. Galbally's proposal, which I do not want to see lost because we are definitely in favour of it. So far as I can see, the only course we can adopt to ensure that it is not lost will be to adjourn the debate on this Bill until such time as the Government Bill is debated and passed. If it did not embrace Mr. Galbally's proposal, the House would then be under an obligation to pass this Bill. I do not want to take any kudos away from Mr. Galbally, but I feel that we must ask for the adjournment of the debate on his Bill, and I suggest the period be for seven days. Therefore, I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I am agreeable to the adjournment of the debate, and I regret that I was not in the House last night to acknowledge the gracious compliment paid to me by the Government when its Motor Car Bill was introduced.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—The honorable member will have opportunity to do so when the Bill is before the House.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—In case I overlook the matter then, I wish to thank members of the Government for the nice things said about me. In agreeing to the adjournment of the debate, I do so on the basis that if the Government Bill is enacted with my proposal in it the measure will be proclaimed as quickly as possible. I am not asking for any undertaking, but I believe it would not be in accordance with the will of the House if the Government measure providing for the abolition of the £2,000 limit for passengers in a motor car were passed and then simply not proclaimed. We are anxious to ensure that my proposal becomes law as soon as possible. The Minister for Local Government will have an opportunity to consider that. Honorable members may recall that the original third-party legislation was enacted in 1939, but did not come into operation until 1941. My Bill is a simple little measure and its purpose is to abolish the £2,000 limit. We do not want to have a repetition of the delay to which I have referred.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 24.

INDECENT PUBLICATIONS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 20) on the motion of the Hon. P. V. Feltham (Northern Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

With the approval of the progenitor of the measure, I suggest that the debate be adjourned for seven days, and I take this step in view of certain occurrences in Sydney last Monday which substantially affect the subject-matter of the measure.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM (Northern Province).—Private members' wickets seem to be tumbling at a great rate, and I think it proper to say that the Government will win by an innings and a number of runs. I understand from the Attorney-General that a conference was held with the Attorneys-General of the other States and of the Commonwealth and that something was agreed to. I am not certain what it was. It appears that the Attorney-General wishes to obtain the minutes of the proceedings of this conference and study the matter further himself, or possibly discuss it with some of his Cabinet colleagues. For that reason, the Government has sought the adjournment of the debate on this Bill. I am happy to agree to an adjournment, and at the same time I wish to state that it will be a great pity if the House should rise this year without any debate taking place on this Bill or that we try to squeeze the debate into some narrow compass on the last day of sitting this year.

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

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, 24th November.

SCIENTOLOGY RESTRICTION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. J. W. Galbally (Melbourne North Province) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—When I sought the adjournment of the debate on this Bill four weeks ago, it was on the basis that the Anderson report, in which certain recommendations were made, had been presented to Parliament, and that the Government intended during this session to act on these recommendations and introduce legislation accordingly. The feeling of the House was that it was only a presumption at that stage that the Government would, in that short period, present a measure, but honorable members were prepared to agree to the adjournment of the debate to ascertain what would in fact transpire. Unfortunately, I was ill last week when this Bill was called on. However, the Government has introduced a Bill along the lines recommended by Mr. Anderson, and it has been explained in another place.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—That was curious, was it not?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—The Government fully considered Mr. Anderson's report, and it agreed with Mr. Anderson's statement, at page 169, that—

An attempt to suppress or prescribe scientology and scientologists specifically by name would probably be ineffective, and, in any event, would be undesirable.

Clause 2 of Mr. Galbally's Bill provides—

In this Act "scientology" means the system or purported system of the study of knowledge and psychotherapy advocated in the writings of Lafayette Ronald Hubbard and disseminated by the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International, a company incorporated in the State of Arizona in the United States of America, and includes any system or purported system associated with or derived from the same.

About two years' ago, prior to the setting up of the Anderson inquiry, Mr. Galbally brought forward a measure identical to this Bill. I think Mr. Galbally will be aware of the fact —the file indicates it—that at that time the Government had asked the Parliamentary Draftsman to draft a Bill to bring about control of scientology in some form or other.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—When was this?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I have the file with me; it was on 29th November, 1963.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Then why was an inquiry set up?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—Having examined the draft proposal, the Government thought it did not go far enough. I think the House will accept the statement that Ronald Hubbard is a clever individual, but undoubtedly his cleverness has been channelled along the wrong lines. There have been many men in history whose brain-power has been channelled in such a way that they have done untold harm. In my opinion, Adolph Hitler was such a man. However, when these men are put into a corner, it is remarkable how they can find ways and means of getting out of it. I put Ronald Hubbard in the same class.

The Government thought that under Mr. Galbally's Bill avenues would be open by which scientology and like sciences could possibly operate. In his report, Mr. Anderson referred to the fact that steps have already been taken to have Hubbard's organization re-registered under the terms of applied psychology. In its Bill, the Government has implemented Mr. Anderson's report in full and it has also included the three clauses of the measure introduced by Mr. Galbally. It has followed this course because it thought the extra safeguards would be worth while. The Government does not wish in any way to detract from the contributions that Mr. Galbally and Mr. Walton, who first referred to this matter, have made towards revealing the scourge scientology is in the community. The wording of the Government's Bill may be slightly different from that used by Mr. Galbally, but the purpose is identical. In addition, it is proposed to establish a Psychologists Registration Board, to make provision for the files held by the Hubbard organization in Spring-street to be seized under order of the Attorney-General, and to do many other things. I believe that when the House sees the Government's Bill it will approve of the way in which the problem has been approached.

For the reasons I have stated, I do not at this stage intend to debate Mr. Galbally's Bill further. In addition, it is expected that the Government's Bill will be before this House within the next fortnight.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—Perhaps Mr. Galbally may sue the Government for infringement of copyright. I am in a similar position to that in which I was in a few minutes ago. However, the position is not quite the same, because in this case there is before the Legislative Assembly a Bill whose purpose is similar to that of this measure. Although we are not allowed to debate it at this stage, we can presume, from the information given to the House, that the Bill will achieve the objective sought by Mr. Galbally and even goes further.

Members of the Country Party are determined to ensure that some measure to outlaw scientology will be passed before Christmas. We would have taken such a step two years ago had there not been an inquiry.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—If that had been done two years ago, a great deal of money would have been saved. The Government has now acknowledged that my Bill is warranted.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—It is reinforced by the judgment of a highly competent Board of Inquiry, which made strong recommendations which are now being adopted by the Government. We expect the Government to have its Bill passed and proclaimed before Christmas. Of course, the proclamation of a Bill is in the hands of the Government; all Parliament can do is pass a measure and assume that it will be proclaimed. The Minister of Health has given an assurance that the Government's Bill will be before this House within a fortnight and that it incorporates clauses contained in Mr. Galbally's Bill. However, we

want to keep Mr. Galbally's Bill in suspended animation. Therefore, I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—At the rate at which the Government continues to steal my clothes, there will come a day when I will not be respectable.

The Hon. W. R. GARRETT.—You will be an indecent publication.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—Yes, I may have to have recourse to Mr. Feltham's measure. It strikes me that the Government spends a good deal of its time trying to catch up with private members' Bills introduced into this House. It has all the resources in the world and we have none, but it keeps stealing our ideas, with acknowledgments. I do not want to say unkind things about the Government, but every honorable member must acknowledge that it has behaved in a shabby fashion from start to finish in regard to scientology. I have no doubt it was not the fault of the Minister of Health that the Government's Bill was introduced in another place, but was that a deliberate rebuke to the Minister or to this House?

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—Order! I do not think this is germane to the question of the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY.—This question originated in this House, and honorable members were given all kinds of assurances that it would be dealt with here. Nobody suggested that the Bill would be introduced in another place first. I am agreeable to the debate being adjourned.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 24.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

ALTERATION OF SESSIONAL ORDERS.

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

That so much of the Sessional Orders as provides that on Wednesday in each week private members' business shall take precedence of Government business, and that no new business be taken after half-past Ten o'clock, be suspended until the end of December next, and until the end of December next Government business shall take precedence of all other business, and new business may be taken at any hour.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—I protest at the manner in which the Government conducts its business. The same spectacle is seen session after session. At the opening of Parliament, various legislation is promised, and week after week this House meets for one day a week and some weeks not at all. Then at the end of the session honorable members are confronted with important Bills and we are given no real margin of time in which to debate them properly. It is time that the Government examined the methods used in the presentation of legislation to this Chamber. Every session, many departmental Bills on which there is very little debate are passed in this House. I am sure that those Bills could be prepared and disposed of early in the session, thus allowing more time for debate of important legislation which always seems to be introduced in the late stage of the session. I ask the Government to remedy the practice which has been followed for many years. Probably it will be said that previous Governments adopted the same practice, but that is no reason why there should not be a change.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture) (*By leave*).—I shall convey Mr. Todd's protests to the appropriate quarter. I appreciate what he has said, because I have made the same protests when I have been in a similar position, and similar comments have been made by the Leader of every Opposition party since I have been a member of this House. It seems to me to be a human problem, but over the past two or three years the position has been much better than it was for the 30 years prior to that.

The motion was agreed to.

HOURS OF MEETING.

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

That so much of the Sessional Orders as provides that the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be half-past Four o'clock and on Wednesdays Four o'clock be suspended until the end of December next, and that until the end of December next the hour of meeting on Tuesdays shall be Four o'clock, and on Wednesdays half-past Two o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

MILK AND DAIRY SUPERVISION (CHEESE FACTORY LICENCES) BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Its purpose is to amend the Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1958 with respect to the granting of licences for the manufacture of cheese and for other purposes. Section 31 of the Milk and Dairy Supervision Act 1958 (No. 6317) provides that—

(1) Notwithstanding anything in this Act a licence for a factory may on the report of the Dairy Produce Board be issued pursuant to this Part subject to a condition that only cheese or only any specified varieties or types of cheese shall be manufactured thereat; and in particular and without affecting the generality of the foregoing such a licence may on the report of the Dairy Produce Board be issued for a factory in a part of Victoria in respect of which a direction which remains unrevoked has been given under section twenty-nine of this Act or the corresponding previous enactment.

(2) If the owner of a factory for which such a licence has been issued manufactures at the factory any dairy produce other than cheese or (in the case of a licence to manufacture only specified varieties or types of cheese) any dairy produce other than cheese of any such variety or type the Minister may cancel such licence.

The significance of section 31 becomes clearer when section 29 of the Act is taken into consideration. It reads as follows :—

If in the opinion of the Governor in Council there are in any part of Victoria sufficient factories to deal with the milk and cream produced in that part of Victoria, the Minister on the report of the Dairy Produce Board may direct that a licence shall not be issued pursuant to this Part for any factory situate in that part of Victoria for which such a licence has not previously been issued or is no longer held, and no such licence shall be issued for such factory while such direction remains unrevoked.

After section 29 had been in operation for some years, it became obvious that there were few, if any, parts remaining in Victoria where there were not already sufficient factories to deal with the milk and cream produced in those parts, and it was therefore considered that the granting of further factory licences was, in general, unwarranted. It should be noted, however, that for many years the great majority of factories in Victoria were simply butter factories, and when a strong demand for cheese arose on the British market in the mid-thirties there was not enough cheese manufacturing capacity available to permit cheese production to be expanded rapidly.

The Act was therefore amended by the insertion of section 31, the object being to permit the granting of further factory licences notwithstanding the provisions of section 29, but the new licences were to be granted subject to a condition that only cheese could be manufactured by the holders of these licences. This amendment to the legislation allowed a number of cheese factories to be established without endangering the stability of previously established factories to the same extent as would have been the case if licences had not been restricted to the manufacture of cheese only.

With very few exceptions, factories producing cheese in Victoria confined their cheese production to Cheddar cheese only and, even when the influx of migrants to this country after the war led to a growing demand for Continental types of cheese, this conservative outlook on the part of most of the established factories persisted.

The growth of imports of Continental varieties of cheese into Australia continued unabated and, as the

following figures will show, it is still increasing :—

Value of Cheese Imported into Australia.

Year.	*Value.*
1957-58	£296,014
1958-59	£374,620
1959-60	£484,020
1960-61	£686,681
1961-62	£804,037
1962-63	£972,618
1963-64	£1,199,542

I understand that about 3,000 tons of cheese is imported into Australia annually at present.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Does that include cheese from New Zealand?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I take it that it does. In an endeavour to encourage the local manufacture of varieties other than Cheddar, it was felt that provision should be made in the legislation for the granting of factory licences to persons who were prepared to manufacture such varieties only, and effect was given to this proposal in 1955, when Parliament amended section 31 of the Act to permit the granting of licences for the manufacture of cheese only or only any specified varieties or types of cheese. Since this amendment came into effect, a number of factory licences have been issued subject to a condition that only the varieties specified in the licence are to be manufactured, but this action has recently brought strong protests from existing factory owners, who claim that the greater competition for farm milk supplies will reduce the profitability of their factories. Furthermore, as the manufacturers of the new varieties are, as a rule, reluctant to join the Commonwealth equalization scheme for dairy products, fears have been voiced in the industry that the granting of more fancy cheese licences may endanger the voluntary equalization scheme.

Consequently, it becomes necessary to consider whether this conflict of interests can be satisfactorily resolved by some further amendment to the legislation. Because of the mounting cost of importations of Continental varieties of cheese into Australia, it is not desired to suspend the issue of licences to persons desirous of establishing factories to produce such varieties locally, but it is desired to issue the licences under such conditions that a minimum of disturbance will be caused to the business operations of existing factories and also to the equalization scheme. It is considered that this objective can be achieved by amending section 31 as proposed in the Bill to empower the Minister to attach a further condition to any new restricted cheese factory licences making it obligatory for the holders of the licences to purchase all the milk to be used in the factory, not from farmers but from established factories. Increased competition between factories for farm milk supplies would thereby be avoided, but enterprise in the production of new cheese varieties would not be stifled.

At first sight, it might appear that a person taking up a licence with such a condition attached to it would be leaving himself open to exploitation by the owners of the factories from whom he would purchase milk, but this need not be the case. It is not uncommon in the dairying industry for the owner of a factory to purchase milk from another factory on the basis of a long-term contract which will normally contain a formula for the making of price adjustments during the currency of the contract. Presumably, no person would enter into such a contract unless he was satisfied that the terms were satisfactory and the safeguards adequate. If an applicant for a cheese factory licence was willing, able and satisfied to secure a milk supply in this manner, then he could be granted a licence subject to such a condition without placing him at the mercy of any other factory owner and without giving any factory owner grounds for grievance on the score that his business operations were being rendered uneconomic by increased competition for farm milk supplies.

With regard to the Bill itself, it should be explained that clause 2 is purely a technical alteration to the wording of section 29 to rectify an existing defect. Clause 3 of the Bill amends section 31 of the Act by introducing two new provisions. The first of these new provisions appears in paragraph (b) of sub-section (1) of proposed new section 31 which empowers the Minister on the recommendation of the Board to attach to a cheese factory licence the further condition that milk to be used for the purposes of the factory shall be purchased only from the holder of a factory licence. The reason for this provision has already been explained.

The second provision is contained in sub-section (4) of proposed new section 31 which allows the holder of a licence to apply to the Minister for a variation of the conditions attached to his licence and the Minister, after considering a report from the Dairy Produce Board, to grant such variation. This provision is purely in the nature of a safeguard to enable a licence holder to seek redress if changing circumstances should render his position as a manufacturer of cheese untenable under the conditions attached to his licence.

This measure has been given considerable thought. It will probably not meet with all of the support that one might expect from the existing cheese factories, but a number of applications for cheese licences have been received. These applications are considered by the Dairy Produce Board, and, naturally, many of the existing licence holders oppose the granting of new licences; they are already in the business, and I suppose it is natural that they should not want any more competition. The Act provides that the Dairy Produce Board shall consider all aspects of an application and shall make a recommendation to the Minister. There has been a tremendous increase in the importation of cheese, and the demand for fancy cheeses, which are purchased by migrants to a large extent, is increasing. Consequently, some people are prepared to manufacture a specific type of cheese.

The Act was amended previously so that applications for licences to manufacture specific types of cheese could be granted. This Bill goes a step further and provides that, in the granting of such licences, a further condition may be imposed on a licence holder—it will not be mandatory—to purchase the milk for the purpose of manufacturing cheese through an existing milk depot. This plan is supported by some but not all sections of the industry. I now have before me two applications which have been recommended for approval subject to some condition being inserted in the licences if the amendment proposed by this Bill is carried.

The Hon. M. A. CLARKE.—Will existing licences be varied?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I do not think there is provision for that in this Bill. I will have that question examined. However, as I understand the position, licences already operating will not be subject to revision. The provisions will apply only to future licences. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture), for the Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

LICENSING BILL.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of State Development).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is undoubtedly one of the most significant Bills in relation to the sale, supply and consumption of liquor

in Victoria ever introduced into this House. As all honorable members know, the Bill has been preceded by three reports from Mr. P. D. Phillips, Q.C., the distinguished Royal Commissioner, who has made a most thorough examination into all aspects of the law relating to liquor. The Government appointed the Royal Commission to inquire into the sale, supply, disposal and consumption of liquor in the State of Victoria. The appointment was supported by all interested parties, in particular, the churches and organizations associated with the problem. The terms of reference were extremely wide and were settled after consultation with both the temperance interests and the liquor interests. The terms of reference covered many sociological problems associated with liquor, and the more direct matters relating to the hours and conditions for the sale and consumption of liquor. All interested parties had the opportunity to be represented and to present their points of view.

One of the most satisfactory features of the Royal Commission was that it was conducted, not as a narrow inquiry into a particular topic, but as one into every aspect of the social question of the supply and consumption of intoxicating liquor. I believe that we have all been impressed by the generally calm and logical approach by all interested parties to the controversial issues which were the subject of the inquiry. There seems to have been a determined effort by all concerned to ensure that the findings of the Commission would be based on fact rather than prejudice and that every relevant consideration should be taken into account. Before the appointment of the Royal Commission, sectional interests were continually putting forward their controversial theories to show that intoxicating liquor was good or bad for the community. On the one hand, it was said that liquor was an amenity which should be freely available in our present-day society, whilst, on the other hand, it was contended that it was a social evil. Following the release of the report of the Royal Commission, Parliament is now in a position to understand and examine the real issues involved and to make balanced decisions on the many facets of the problem. The ordinarily emotional subject can be debated in the light of the findings of fact rather than theory.

Some members of this House believe that this matter should not be determined by Parliament without a referendum. I believe, however, that the majority of members are convinced, after having carefully studied Mr. Phillips's reports, that this is not a matter which should be dealt with by a referendum. It is not simply a question of "yes" or "no" to 6 o'clock or 10 o'clock trading. The issues involved are many and highly complex and give rise to dozens of questions to which answers must be given. They are such questions as: The effect of extended trading hours on safety on the roads. The impact of the consumption of liquor in relation to family life. Will the consumption of liquor increase or decrease? Will the problem of delinquency be aggravated? These and dozens of other similar questions, all of which have been carefully investigated by the Royal Commissioner, would be hotly debated in an atmosphere charged with emotion and prejudice. The Government believes that the holding of a referendum would wreck the present atmosphere of tolerance and understanding which has been brought about by the careful, patient and tactful handling of this difficult problem by the Royal Commissioner. The answers to these many questions must be given by this Parliament in the light of the investigation and report of the Royal Commissioner, and Parliament should not shrink from discharging its duty. Incidentally, the cost of conducting a referendum has been estimated to be in the vicinity of £150,000.

As I see it, consideration of legislation arising out of the report of Mr. Phillips presents itself under two headings—

(1) legislation concerning trading hours and other matters associated with the sale and disposal of liquor dealt with by the Commissioner; and

(2) consolidating legislation to modernize the Licensing Act. This will depend substantially on the recommendations which are contained in Part III of the Commissioner's report.

Legislation under the first heading is contained in the provisions of the Bill before the House which are based on the recommendations of the Commissioner. The Bill also contains a number of consequential and procedural amendments which will facilitate the administration of the Licensing Act. In addition, my colleague, the Minister of Housing, has introduced a separate measure in relation to the consumption of intoxicating liquor and the driving of a motor car.

I refer now to the second point, the re-enactment of the legislation controlling licensing in this State. I think all honorable members will agree that most of the present Licensing Act is archaic and obsolete. Our licensing law was introduced on separation from New South Wales and was based on the complex English law which, whatever its merits, was not really suitable to our conditions. Since then, the Act has been amended more than 60 times, but the amendments have generally been restrictive and directed towards making the policing provisions more effective.

No Government in the history of Parliament has dared to grasp the nettle and introduce a completely new and revitalized Licensing Act. For a long time, the Government has wanted to see the licensing law restated in a short modern form with the deadwood of the past 100 years swept away. Such a task will be difficult, but the Government first asks this Parliament to determine the main questions of policy which are contained in the Bill before it.

I can assure the House that this Bill will eventually be followed by another which will be based upon the recommendations of the Commissioner as to the measures necessary to give Victoria a complete modern licensing statute. All the matters brought forward by Mr. Phillips in his next report will be considered and dealt with in the preparation of the new legislation and, indeed, the Chief Secretary has arranged with Mr. Phillips to assist the Parliamentary draftsmen in producing a new consolidated Licensing Bill. It is expected that the new Bill will be ready sometime in 1966.

Before briefly discussing the many clauses of the Bill, I wish to make it clear to the House that, although its provisions are based upon the recommendations and findings of the Royal Commissioner and reference is frequently made to those recommendations and findings, the responsibility for the measures contained in the Bill is, of course, that of the Government. We have carefully considered the recommendations and findings of the Royal Commissioner, and we have seen fit generally to endorse them and to give effect to them. The Bill, therefore, reflects the views of the Government.

I refer now to the detailed provisions of the Bill, and I will deal first with the amendments which are based on the recommendations and findings of the Royal Commission. The major recommendation of the Commissioner, of course, is the variation in trading hours. Clause 2 of the Bill enables a licensed victualler to sell or dispose of liquor from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. on any day except Sunday or Good Friday, or for any other period of twelve consecutive hours not later than 10 p.m., specifically approved by the court. This is in accordance with the views expressed by the Commissioner at pages 10 and 27 of his report. The new section 8, as inserted by this clause, also enables

the court to fix hours for the sale or disposal of liquor in any particular premises for the whole or any period of a year and may fix different hours for different periods of the year, and in making such determinations the court shall have regard to the circumstances existing in a neighbourhood and to the needs of the public.

The Commissioner also expresses his view, at page 24, that, if trading is extended to 10 p.m., it will also be reasonable to provide for a period of fifteen minutes after that hour "for consumption". This has been provided for in sub-section (5) of section 198 as re-enacted by paragraph (*f*) of clause 9 of this Bill. Under the present law, a licensed victualler may obtain a permit to sell liquor with meals until 10 p.m. on every night of the week. Liquor sold up until 10 p.m. may be consumed until 10.30 p.m. The licensee may also obtain an extended permit for a special occasion on a stated date to serve liquor beyond 10 p.m. In the fourth paragraph of page 29 of his report, the Commissioner states—

> In my opinion, then, provision should be made for the sale and consumption of liquor "with substantial refreshments" on week days and Saturdays up to 11.30 p.m. I think also that a further 30 minutes should be allowed for the consumption of liquor supplied or disposed of before 11.30 p.m.

The new section 8 enables the court, on the application of the licensee, to grant a permit subject to such terms and conditions as it thinks fit to sell and dispose of liquor for consumption with or ancillary to a bona fide meal or substantial refreshments, between the hours of 10 p.m. and 11.30 a.m. on any day other than Sunday or Good Friday. The section also allows 30 minutes in each case for the consumption of liquor as suggested by the Commissioner.

Consequent upon 10 p.m. closing for hotels, the principle has been extended to temporary victuallers' licences, packet licences and temporary packet licences, railway refreshment room licences and substituted packet licences. At paragraph 2 of page 33 of his report, the Commissioner suggests that the extended hours of trading relating to hotel dining-rooms should be applied to licensed restaurants. The Commissioner is of the opinion that the licence for a restaurant should permit liquor to be supplied with meals from noon until 11.30 p.m., and that there be a 30-minute period of grace, as proposed in the case of hotels, on every week day and on Saturday. He also expresses the view that there appears to be no reason why the right to serve liquor with food between 12 noon and 2.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on Sunday and Good Friday and between 12 noon and 1 p.m. on Anzac Day should not be authorized by a restaurant licence without a permit. At the moment, it can be done only with a permit. At present, liquor, other than beer, ale and porter, may be sold "for consumption with a bona fide meal" in a licensed restaurant. The Commissioner says that, in his opinion, it would be advisable to alter the statutory expression to read "with or ancillary to a 'bona fide meal' up to 10 p.m. and 'with substantial refreshments' until 11.30 p.m.".

At page 34, the Commissioner says that, in his opinion, there is no sound reason for the retaining of a prohibition on the serving of beer, ale or porter in a licensed restaurant. Section 9A of the principal Act is re-enacted by clause 3 of this Bill, to give effect to the recommendations of the Commissioner. At pages 36 and 50 respectively of his report, the Commissioner recommends the creation of two new forms of licences —a cabaret licence and a theatre licence.

Clause 4 of the Bill inserts two new sections in the principal Act to give effect to these recommendations. The new section 9B enables the court, subject to such terms and conditions as it specifies therein, to grant a cabaret licence to enable the licensee to sell and dispose of liquor for consumption with or ancillary to the

supply of refreshments and entertainment between 8.30 p.m. in the evening and 3 o'clock in the morning.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Is there a definition of a cabaret in the Bill?

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I shall check on that point. The section specifically prohibits the sale of liquor between 8.30 p.m. on a Sunday and 3 a.m. on a Monday or at any time on Good Friday. The section does not permit the court to grant a cabaret licence in respect of premises for which a victualler's licence or a restaurant licence is in force.

The new section 9c proposed in paragraph (*b*) of clause 4 enables the court to grant a theatre licence to enable the licensee, when the theatre is being used to provide entertainment in which all performers constituting the entertainment are physically present in the theatre and perform, to sell and dispose of liquor on a specified part of the premises between the hours of 7 p.m. and 11 p.m. or by permit to a later hour on special occasions. The court may not grant a theatre licence unless it is satisfied that the premises are regularly used for theatrical performances by live performers and that proper facilities for the sale and disposal of liquor are or will be available on the premises. The portion of the theatre premises specified in the licence must be that which is not readily accessible to persons who are not attending the performance.

Section 39 of the principal Act enables persons to bring their own liquor to cafés and restaurants which are referred to in the Act as "unlicensed" premises and to consume it there with a meal between the hours of 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. on week days and Saturdays and between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Anzac Day.

Clause 5 of the Bill substitutes a new section 39. The new section enables liquor to be consumed on "unlicensed" premises up until 6 p.m. and, by permit granted by the Licensing Court, between the hours of 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on days other than Sunday and Good Friday.

The court is empowered to grant the permit, which shall remain in force until the 31st December of the year in which it is granted, subject to such conditions as it sees fit. This will enable the court to ensure that a minimum standard of hygiene and facilities are provided and maintained in premises on which meals, including dining and alcoholic liquor, are consumed by the public. The court is also empowered to revoke the permit, on the application of the licensing inspector or a supervisor of licensed premises, if it is satisfied that the provisions of the Act or the permit have not been complied with. The Commissioner made extensive inquiries into the question of "unlicensed" premises, and his remarks on the subject may be seen on page 40 of his report.

One of the problems under the present law is that a host is unable to arrange a dinner at "unlicensed" premises at which liquor may be supplied for one fee including a bona fide meal and liquor. It was held in the case of *Abley* v. *Crosaro* that when a meal is supplied for a fee and liquor which is made available may be consumed or not consumed with that meal at the wish of the customer without further charge, the inclusive fee amounts to the sale of the liquor. Many organizations desire to arrange dinners at which liquor will be supplied with the meal for the one inclusive fee, but, because of the present law, they are unable to do so. The Licensing Bill introduced by the Government in 1963 sought to overcome that problem.

Sub-section (7) of the new section 39, as contained in clause 5, enables the court to authorize, subject to such terms and conditions as it sees fit, the supply of liquor for consumption with a bona fide meal at an inclusive charge. The Commissioner refers to this matter at page 47 of his report. This same

principle is extended by paragraph (*b*) of clause 8 of the Bill to the consumption of liquor in a public hall under a permit granted by the Licensing Court in accordance with the provisions of section 184. The present provisions of section 184 prohibit the consumption, supply or possession of liquor in a public hall, but sub-section (5) of that section empowers the court to permit the consumption of liquor in a public hall on a "special occasion". This Bill enables the court, in the same way as it does under sub-section (7) of section 39, as amended by this Bill, to authorize the supply of liquor for consumption with a bona fide meal, at an inclusive charge.

Applications for permits to consume liquor in public halls under the new provisions of section 184 may be made by the person arranging the function at which the liquor is to be consumed or by a person who regularly caters for functions and who has been approved by the Registrar as the occupier of the public hall in question for the purpose of the section. These matters are also referred to by the Commissioner at page 47.

Section 154 of the principal Act provides penalties for persons who sell liquor without a licence. Paragraph (*a*) of clause 8 of the Bill also amends section 154 to exempt from its provisions persons who obtain a permit with respect to unlicensed premises pursuant to section 39 or with respect to public halls pursuant to section 184. At page 32 of his report, the Commissioner is critical of what he terms "the institution known as a lodger's cupboard". He considers this to be a legislative device "designed merely to facilitate policing of after-hour trading which results in expense, inconvenience and probably unhygienic conditions". The Commissioner considers that if sales of liquor for consumption with food are permitted after 10 p.m. it is desirable to facilitate this service by the licensee without compelling the establishment of physical provisions for service completely independent of those available for general retail sale or supply. The Commissioner has suggested that the ordinary bar facilities could be made available for this service without any dangerous weakening of the policing provisions. He also directs attention to the provisions embodied in the New South Wales legislation.

Paragraph (*a*) of clause 9 repeals the present definition of a bar-room, and paragraph (*b*) inserts a new section 44A defining a bar-room in terms suggested by the Commissioner. The court is given discretion to decide which rooms are bar-rooms and also to grant permission for the use of a bar-room for the consumption of liquor by persons to whom liquor may lawfully be sold or supplied after 10 p.m.

Section 196 of the principal Act is amended by paragraph (*c*) of clause 9 in order to impose heavy penalties on unauthorized persons who are present in bar-rooms during prohibited hours. Sub-sections (1) and (4) of section 198 are repealed by paragraphs (*d*) and (*e*) of clause 9, and new subsections are substituted to implement the Commissioner's recommendations that the bar-room shall be kept secure from unauthorized persons during prohibited hours but available for the service of liquor to persons who are lawfully entitled to be served and to impose much heavier penalties on any licensee who permits unauthorized persons to be in the bar-room during prohibited hours.

The substitution of sub-section (5) of section 198 of the principal Act, as proposed by paragraph (*f*) of clause 9, is consequential on the creation of the new section 44A defining a bar-room. It provides a period of fifteen minutes in which to consume liquor which has been served before 10 p.m. and in which to remove bottles which have been sold before 10 p.m.

I turn now to the procedural and consequential amendments which will facilitate the administration of the Act and assist in the enforcement of its provisions.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—Would it not be easier to have an "open go?"

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I should not think so. I might mention here that it is also proposed to replace the provisions relating to registration of billiard tables as it is considered to be no longer necessary in these days to continue to control billiard table premises by the Licensing Court.

Section 82 of the principal Act sets down the mode of applying for a licence and, among other things, requires the applicant to fix to the outer side of the front or principal entrance door of the premises which it is desired to have licensed or on a notice board on the land if no building is erected thereon, a notice setting forth the applicant's name, abode and the fact that it is his intention to apply for the licence indicated thereon. Such notice must, in accordance with the section, be maintained in position until the hearing of the application is held by the court.

Section 83 of the principal Act sets down further details in the mode of applying for similar licences for new premises to be erected or for existing premises which it is proposed to alter, repair or extend. Sections 85 and 85A require the applicant of certain types of licences, in addition to the matters referred to in sections 82 and 83, to furnish testimonials as to the character and suitability of the applicant.

Clause 6 re-enacts section 82 to provide a standard requirement for all applications for licences under the Act, except for railway refreshment room licences, packet licences and spirit merchants' licences. The new section 82 provides a more satisfactory method of posting a notice of intention to apply for a licence, and enables the notice to be posted anywhere in the premises, or on an area near the site, provided that it is displayed in such a manner as to invite public attention to the application. It also clarifies the period during which the notice must be kept posted and gives an applicant some protection where the notice so posted has been destroyed or defaced.

Certain of the standard requirements are specified by section 84 as re-enacted by sub-clause (3) of clause 6 to apply to applicants for railway refreshment room licences and packet licences. Sections 85 and 85A are repealed and consequential amendments are made to the remainder of section 83. Clause 7 simplifies the procedure relating to objections which may be taken by way of memorial or petition on application for new licences. Section 91 of the principal Act provides that objections can be taken to the granting or renewal of licences by two methods, by notice of objection to the court or by way of memorial or petition.

It has been represented to the Government on various occasions that persons interested in obtaining signatures opposing the issue of licences for a particular area have had difficulty in getting access to the municipal rolls and, when they did obtain access, there was considerable difficulty in tracing the ratepayers shown thereon. It was stated in one particular case that the organizers were able to trace only two-thirds of the ratepayers and that, after obtaining the signatures of 60 per cent. of those ratepayers, they still did not have a majority. Another factor which was alleged to have caused considerable difficulty was the insufficient time the court granted the objectors to obtain signatures to the petition in the neighbourhood fixed by the court.

Clause 7 deletes sub-sections (6), (7) and (8) from section 91, and enacts a new section 91A, setting out the precise procedure to be followed in the case of objections by way of memorials and petitions in relation to applications for victuallers' and restaurant licences and renewals of Australian wine licences. The new section 91A provides that where three

or more electors desire to lodge a memorial or objection in relation to an application for a victualler's licence or restaurant licence or for renewal of an Australian wine licence, they shall notify the court in writing before the date specified for the application or the renewal. If, on the date fixed by the court for the hearing of the application, a memorial or petition containing not less than 50 signatures of electors in the relevant subdivision is produced to the court, the court shall fix the area in the neighbourhood of the premises or site which is the subject of the application and then adjourn the application for a period of not less than 28 days.

When the court resumes the hearing, it shall consider the memorial or petition and satisfy itself as to the authenticity of the signatures appearing thereon. If it appears to the court that the majority of the electors in the neighbourhood object to the granting of the application or renewal, it will be mandatory on the court to refuse the application. If it appears to the court that the majority of the electors in the neighbourhood do not object to the application, the court will disregard the petition, but nothing in the section shall prevent any person appearing on the application under the provisions of section 91.

In addition to containing a number of consequential amendments, clause 10 amends the law in the following respects:—

(1) It repeals from the Licensing Act all provisions relating to the registration of billiard tables.

(2) It amends section 70 of the principal Act. Sub-section (3) of this section empowers the Registrar, as clerk of the Licensing Court, to grant certain unopposed permits and extensions in the name of the court during periods authorized by the chairman. The sub-section is amended by paragraph (g) of clause 10 to remove the limited delegation of the Registrar. This amendment will be of great assistance to the court as it will be necessary for it to deal only with opposed applications. Unopposed applications number many thousands each year.

(3) It extends the duties of the Supervisor of Licensed Premises to report to the court on the state, nature and extent of accommodation for the public and the provision made for the supply of meals and refreshments to the public in all licensed premises. At the present time, these duties extend only to the premises of a licensed victualler, the holder of an Australian wine licence or a restaurant licence. Under the amendment, the supervisor will also be required to report on the plan of any proposed new licensed premises or proposed registered club and on additions, extensions or alterations to or rebuilding or reinstatement of club premises. The supervisor will also have to report on unlicensed premises where liquor may be consumed with a meal by virtue of a permit issued by the court pursuant to section 39.

(4) It extends the provisions requiring testimonials to be produced by proposed transferees for some licences to every type of licence.

(5) It extends the provisions of the Act relating to sanitary conditions and repair of premises, at present only applicable to licensed victuallers, to all licensed premises.

(6) Section 140 of the principal Act places obligations on licensed victuallers and Australian wine licence holders as regards attendance, management and maintenance of their premises. Paragraphs (o) and (p) of clause 10 extend those provisions to all licensees other than holders of spirit merchants' licences and grocers' licences.

(7) It extends to all licensed premises the provisions of section 197 of the principal Act, which prohibits unlawful games and the presence of drunken or disorderly persons on the premises of licensed victuallers, licensed restaurants and Australian wine licences.

(8) Section 199 of the principal Act requires a licensed victualler to keep a bar-room open during authorized hours and not to sell liquor on other parts of licensed premises unless it is also available in the bar-room. The proviso to be inserted at the end of section 199 by paragraph (*r*) of clause 11 will overcome the necessity of keeping a bar-room open during hours when it is uneconomic to do so. However, to avail himself of the provisions of the section, the licensee must show that liquor was available in another part of the premises readily accessible to the public and at the same price at which similar liquor was available in the bar-room.

(9) Section 201 authorizes licensed victuallers or holders of restaurant licences or Australian wine licences to refuse admission or to turn out of the premises any person who is drunk, violent, quarrelsome or disorderly, and persons whose presence in the premises would render the licensee subject to a penalty under the Act. Such licensee may demand the assistance of a member of the Police Force to expel or assist in expelling any person from the premises. Paragraph (*s*) of clause 10 extends that power to any licensee. I commend the Bill to the House.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—At the Committee stage, will the Minister supply honorable members with definitions of "cabaret" and "theatre?"

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE.—I shall do so.

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I suggest that the period of adjournment be seven days.

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

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 24.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—Would it be convenient to Mr. Galbally if the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, 30th November?

The Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province).—That would suit my personal convenience, if it suits the Government.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—By leave, I suggest that the debate be adjourned for a week, and that if the Country Party is not then ready to proceed a further week could be allowed.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I have not had the opportunity to discuss this matter with my colleague. I understand that some members of the Country Party will not be able to be present next week because of a country visit by His Excellency the Governor.

Sir PERCY BYRNES.—That is so.

The Hon. V. O. DICKIE (Minister of Health).—I am agreeable to the debate being adjourned until Tuesday week. Therefore, I seek leave to withdraw my motion.

By leave, the motion was withdrawn.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 30.

PUBLIC WORKS LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

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

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Public Works Loan Application Bill seeks the approval of the House for the expenditure of up to £46,348,410 from the Loan Fund on a wide range of public works and services which are not covered by the specific and separate loan application Bills in the fields of water supply, railways and forests or by other standing loan appropriations. In a

large measure, it relates to the particular fields of activity which are the responsibility, directly and indirectly of the Public Works Department, but it also includes many other important items of expenditure in the approved loan works programme.

The amount proposed to be issued and applied from the Loan Fund under the Bill will cover expenditure on the various items contained in the schedule from the passing of the Act until a similar measure is introduced and passed about this time next year. The Bill is not, therefore, a financial year measure, but it relates to most of the loan works expenditure which will be incurred on these items during the current financial year and also during the early part of the 1966-67 financial year.

In accordance with the practice adopted during recent years, a printed explanatory statement has been circulated, setting out in respect to each of the 79 items of the schedule to the Bill, the actual expenditure incurred during 1964-65, the estimated expenditure in the current financial year, and the amounts to be issued and applied under this Bill. Honorable members will also be provided with a copy of detailed notes elaborating on each of the items in the schedule.

The four clauses of the Bill are standard provisions and are in line with existing legislation. The first two clauses give the short title of the Act, and authorize expenditure from the Loan Fund on the public works and services enumerated in the schedule up to the total figure of £46,348,410. Clause 3 is the standard provision, which provides that, upon the passing of the new Act, all unexpended appropriations under the current Public Works Loan Application Act will be cancelled, and that all future expenditure for the works and services involved will be charged against the appropriation being provided in this Bill.

Clause 4 is again included in the Bill, in accordance with the advice of the Crown Solicitor, to put beyond doubt the power of the Minister of Public Works to acquire and otherwise deal with dredges for use by the Ports and Harbors Branch of the Public Works Department. The relevant item is No. 35 in the schedule.

As the items are explained in detail in the notes on the measure which I have provided for the information of honorable members, I do not propose at this stage to elaborate any further on the Bill. If any honorable members would like to ask questions on the items, I think it would be appropriate for this to be done when the Bill is in Committee. I shall then endeavour to deal with the points raised. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

ALBERT PARK LANDS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 26) on the motion of the Hon. R. J. Hamer (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—The title of this Bill is somewhat misleading as to the real nature of the problem that is involved in it. Although the measure merely deals with the acquisition of a certain portion of Albert Park, I think the focal point is the problem that is attached to the need for the acquisition of parkland.

A consideration of the methods of passenger and goods transport used half a century ago reveals that the planners of that time had no idea of the developments that would take place in the next 50 years. One of the greatest existing problems is that

of solving traffic congestion and finding ways and means to enable traffic to flow smoothly in and out of Melbourne.

I do not drive a motor car, but I have frequently ridden with gentlemen who do, and, in view of the number of cars on the road, I have often been amazed at the manner in which some motorists negotiate their journeys. Masses of vehicles pass over the Spencer-street bridge between 7.30 a.m. and 9 a.m. any week day, traffic chokes other highways leading to the city, and I wonder how the drivers sort themselves out. At Fisherman's Bend, Port Melbourne, dense traffic converges at Salmon-street *en route* to the various factories conducted by General Motors-Holden's, the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, the Department of Aircraft Production, Kraft Foods Limited and other organizations situated there, and when traffic disgorges out of those areas between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 p.m., one wonders how the drivers sort themselves out to go to their various destinations.

In other sections of Melbourne, traffic problems have caused concern over the years, and I suppose that in an assessment of difficult traffic spots St. Kilda junction is well to the forefront. Some drivers have no regard for the safety of others so long as they can make their selfish passage to the particular street they want to enter. It must be conceded that some action must be taken to alleviate the traffic problem. The Government sponsored legislation to enable it to take from the pockets of the motorists sufficient money to inaugurate a programme of road building, construction of over-passes and other measures to facilitate traffic movement. The Government has in hand a plan to solve the St. Kilda junction problem.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—I am interested to know how Mr. Todd relates his remarks to the Bill.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I shall come to that, Mr. President, if you will be a little patient with me. The solving of the St. Kilda junction problem commences with the reconstruction of Queens-road, Albert Park. It is necessary for that thoroughfare to be widened, and it has been decided that it can be widened only in the direction of the park and not in the direction of the residential side—that would not lend itself to the project. Already, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has accepted tenders for the reconstruction of Queens-road as the beginning of the St. Kilda junction scheme.

Whenever plans are made for the solving of traffic problems and it is proposed to take any parkland, there is an immediate outcry, and much criticism is levelled at the planners. Voices are raised in protest, and it is argued that the parkland should be left untouched. I suppose it is the policy of every political party that parkland shall be preserved, but there must come a time when, unfortunately, it is necessary to surrender to the demands of modern needs. In this case, parts of Albert Park have to be taken at certain points along the edge of Queens-road. Discussions have taken place between representatives of the Minister and the committee of management of Albert Park, and that committee has condescended to agree to the areas needed being taken, although it must be conceded that the final authority in this regard is Parliament.

The Labor Party has considered this matter, and it is on the horns of a dilemma. It believes in the preservation of parklands, but it realizes also that certain roads must be developed and certain other measures taken, and that in the carrying out of these jobs sometimes there is no alternative but to take a small portion of parkland.

Albert Park covers an area of approximately 550 acres, and under the Bill it is proposed to slice 3 acres off the edge. I hope the

promises that there will be no interference with certain usages of parkland, and that provision will be made at the cost of the Board for the relocation of specified facilities, will be carried out promptly. The Labor Party has considered this matter and, in the light of the needs of the community, it reluctantly has to agree to the use for road purposes of certain parts of Albert Park.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (North-Eastern Province).—This is a simple measure, small in size but by no means small in importance. I am sure every member of the House is well acquainted with the traffic snarls that develop at St. Kilda junction, and the passing of this measure will help in the reconstruction of roads in that locality. The measure will authorize the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, as the constructing authority, to enter upon some of the land under the control of the committee of management of Albert Park. The area of land to be taken has not been precisely determined, and I think that is a wise procedure, because an undertaking has been given by the Board of Works, the trustees of Albert Park and the Lands Department that only the land required for the reconstruction of Queens-road will be excised from the park. It is proposed that when the road is completed a survey will be made of the portion of the park incorporated in the road works, and that portion will be excised from the park.

Members of the Country Party support the Bill because we realize that, with the growth of Melbourne, the problems of traffic snarls and congested intersections must be solved. I suggest to Mr. Todd and to the Government that many problems could be overcome by an exodus of people from the metropolitan area to country districts. I believe we are starting a long way behind scratch, if I may use that expression, as regards meeting the requirements of the rapidly developing population, which leads to the creation of traffic problems, and in my view it will be many years before they will be solved. According to the statisticians, by the year 2000 the population of Melbourne will be approximately 5,000,000, and, if that prediction is accurate, traffic problems will be accentuated unless they are tackled in a realistic way by the provision of freeways and overpasses.

The Country Party is conscious, too, of the fact that country highways need to be widened. A tender has been let for the duplication of a further section of the Hume Highway, and in his second-reading speech the Minister stated that work was to be carried out along a stretch of about 4½ miles from Campbellfield north towards Wallan. I wonder whether the Minister is right in that statement, because already there is a four-lane highway from Melbourne to Craigieburn.

The Hon. R. J. HAMER.—I stand corrected; I should have said from Craigieburn.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—I wonder whether the 4½-mile section referred to will embrace what I and many of my colleagues consider to be the worst part of the Hume Highway, namely, the section at Beveridge.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—That seems to be some miles away from Albert Park and the cities of South Melbourne and St. Kilda.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—I appreciate your ruling, Mr. President, but the Minister mentioned this matter in his second-reading speech, and for that reason I felt that I might be allowed a little latitude.

The PRESIDENT.—I do not want to stop the honorable member, but I do not think he should elaborate on this matter.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—All I am asking is for information as to whether the extension of the four-lane section of the Hume Highway

will take in the steep climb at Beveridge, which is at present the worst section of the highway. The Country Party supports the Bill because it realizes that unless busy intersections are tackled with realism, chaos will be created in Melbourne.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Power to Board to enter upon and use reserved lands).

The Hon. R. J. HAMER (Minister for Local Government).—If you will permit me a brief reference to a matter which is slightly out of order, Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank Mr. Bradbury for correcting me in the statement I made regarding the Hume Highway. It is at Craigieburn where the work on the new divided highway will begin, and the distance to be covered by the first contract is 4½ miles. I am not able to say immediately of my own knowledge whether it will go as far as Beveridge, but I shall find out and let Mr. Bradbury know. If this contract does not extend that far, certainly the next one will. It is intended to proceed progressively with the construction of a divided highway to Seymour.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—In referring to the need for land at Albert Park to be taken to alleviate a traffic problem, I neglected to do something which I feel duty bound to do, and that is to pay a compliment to the Victoria Police for the manner in which they control traffic in Melbourne. At times, they may be criticized on other issues, but whenever a policeman appears on point duty, even if traffic lights are in existence, he brings order out of chaos. I believe the police do a splendid job, and they ought to be commended on that account.

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.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (SERVICE OF NOTICES) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

PRESBYTERIAN TRUSTS (COMMON FUND) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Housing) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE (South-Eastern Province).—My party does not oppose this Bill, which is a machinery measure to allow greater freedom in the use of trust funds by the Trusts Corporation of the Presbyterian Church. The Bill seeks to enable the trust funds, whether large or small, to be treated as a common fund, to permit the Church to conduct its business far more efficiently. I suspect that other churches and organizations in the community will want to take similar action.

Trusts such as these enable the Presbyterian Church, like other churches, to play its part to the best of its ability in social welfare and education. They enable the Church to play an important role in social welfare through the subsidized voluntary agencies such as homes for elderly persons. It is the task of the State carefully to examine the overall structure of such voluntary agencies to ensure an imaginative and comprehensive plan for social security, maintenance of self-respect and respect for others.

The Church also undertakes an important role in the field of education. The original Act which relates specifically to schools administered by the Presbyterian Church, such at Scotch College and the Presbyterian Ladies' College, was passed in 1890. I compliment the people who framed that legislation, because it has not previously been amended.

I believe it is important for the State to examine the over-all educational structure. My party is particularly concerned that there is growing up in the community a small but privileged section. However, apart from that brief comment, I commend the Bill to the House, I wish it a speedy passage and wish the Presbyterian Church success in the operation of its funds.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—The Bill is simple; it seeks to enable the Presbyterian Church to modernize and administer its trust funds in a business-like way. The principal Act was drafted in 1890, and a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. Mr. Cathie has stated that he has no objection to the measure. I go further and say that it is not a question of having no objection; the Presbyterian Church is alive to the fact that it must administer its affairs in a business-like way. As honorable members know, it is not easy to run the affairs of the Church. People to-day are not more generous than they were in the past. This is a matter for the Church; I commend it for its action, and I wish it well.

The motion was agreed to.

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

DRIED FRUITS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—This Bill is complementary to Commonwealth legislation and also follows a request from the Dried Fruits Board. Clause 2 amends section 3 of the principal Act by substituting the words "three per centum" for the words "five per centum" and also alters the interpretations of "dried fruits" and "dried vine fruits". The Government has also taken the opportunity of making minor amendments requested by the Dried Fruits Board.

Victoria produces far in excess of the Australian consumption of dried fruits. The latest available statistics indicate that for the year 1962-63 Australia produced 63,677 tons of raisins and 6,831 tons of currants. The Australian market cannot cope with that volume of production, consequently we are heavily dependent on overseas for the placement of the surplus. Victoria's share of the Australian production is 44,059 tons of raisins and 2,536 tons of currants, which is 70 per cent. and 37 per cent. respectively of the total production. Approximately 40,000 acres of vines are planted in the Mildura, Robinvale and Swan Hill areas, so we are vitally concerned with the orderly marketing of dried fruits.

I derived some humour out of the fact that overseas markets of our dried fruits are becoming prejudiced because of the stones in the currants, and practically an ultimatum has been issued by Canadian and British buyers. It has been stated that if the percentage of stones in the currants is not reduced we will lose our markets. I understand that Canadian and British customers are breaking false teeth when biting these currants.

The Commonwealth Dried Fruits Board has taken up the matter, and I understand that the principal problem remains with the Western Australian growers whose currants contain a much higher percentage of stones than is the case with Victorian currants. At present, the requirement is not more than 5 per cent., and it is claimed that it is impossible to reduce this immediately to 2 per cent., so a compromise has been reached to reduce the stone content from 5 per cent. to 3 per cent. at the present time, and ultimately further legislation will come forward when

there are better methods evolved of dealing with this problem to require it to be reduced to 2 per cent.

Paragraph (*b*) of clause 2 seeks to substitute the word " raisins " for the word " lexias " in the interpretation of " dried fruits " and " dried vine fruits ". The House might be interested to know that only in Australia are the dried fruits of the Waltham Cross grapes referred to as lexias. Consequently, people overseas do not know what we are talking about when we use this description. Action has rightly been taken to substitute the word " raisins " to bring our description in line with overseas practices.

Clause 3 of the amending Bill increases penalties. It is proposed that the penalties imposed on growers using unregistered packing houses shall be increased from £100 and £10 per day to £200 and £20 per day, and the penalty for marketing in excess of their quota from £50 to £100. There has been great controversy in this House and in another place on the question of limiting primary production, but orderly marketing is now being accepted by all political parties, particularly the orderly marketing of dried fruits. It is considered essential not only to provide for orderly marketing, but also to provide penalties to ensure that people do not destroy the system that has been established.

At the close of the Minister's explanation of the Bill, he paid a tribute to Mr. Woodward, the chairman of the Victorian Board. I endorse everything the Minister said, and I point out that before his appointment Mr. Woodward had not been associated with the dried fruits industry. Nevertheless he has done a very fine job, and I think the principle thus established can be commended for other appointments that may be made by this Government or by the Labor Party when it is in power. Mr. Woodward devoted himself to his task and has done an excellent job. We commend the Bill and express to Mr. Mansell, Sir Percy Byrnes and others associated with the dried fruits industry our hope that every success will be achieved with its orderly marketing system.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL (North-Western Province).—As a grower of currants, sultanas, raisins and lexias, I wonder whether I should speak on the measure. However, I appreciate the good wishes that have been expressed by both the Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Tripovich. The growing of dried fruits is a very important industry for Australia, as 80 per cent. of the production is exported, the biggest part going, fittingly enough, to countries within the British Commonwealth.

This short Bill brings into line State participation in the control of the marketing and processing of dried fruits. In the establishment of this industry, Alfred Deakin was belted from pillar to post by his colleagues and had to fight very hard for its survival. The Chaffey brothers introduced it to Australia in 1888 and commenced at a small settlement along the Murray near Renmark, which they called Chaffey. They paid a visit to Victoria and, after inspecting the land around Mildura, decided to establish vines in that locality. As has been stated, the bulk of our dried fruits production is now based on Victoria, and the best of the fruit, with the exception of currants, is produced in this State.

In the early days, difficulty was experienced in getting the currants to set on the vines. After flowering, there is a period during which the fruit either sets or drops off the tree or vine. The vines bore a great number of flowers but when the berries formed they dropped off. My father often told the tale of how nobody in the Mildura district knew how to get the fruit to set until a water bailiff visited Greece, and observed how they cinctured the buds. He set growers to work grouting or cincturing, and a very good setting was

obtained. That placed the industry on its feet so far as the growing of currants was concerned.

The cambium layer of vine is cut around the butt which checks the flow of the sap. This brings about the setting of the fruit. When the currants set, a fair sized berry is obtained. At the same time, frequently there appears on a bunch one berry larger than the others. In the industry this berry is known as the buck or the boy. They can be sorted out to some extent by screening, and separated from the fruit, but it is very difficult to get them all out. They also have the effect of forming a blob or moist berry and this also causes trouble. In the past, top quality currants have not been grown in Victoria. Western Australia has produced the good currants. Theirs are bigger and better than ours and compare favourably with currants grown in other countries.

The Dried Fruits Board, which handles the export section of the market, feels that something more needs to be done to improve our pack by cutting out more than 5 per cent. of the large berries or boys. Instead of allowing 5 per cent., regulations require the amount to be reduced to 3 per cent., which gives a far better pack, in appearance and also, as Mr. Tripovich stated, avoids criticism from people who do not think of these berries as seeds but as dust or some foreign matter in the fruit.

So far as Victoria is concerned, the industry itself voluntarily went under the control of the Australian Dried Fruits Association and asked the Government of the day to set up a Board with a Government nominee as chairman. This Board, which is still operating, is comprised of growers' representatives as well as Government representatives. It is responsible for controlling the fruit marketed in Victoria and the method of marketing so far as cleanliness of the fruit and its presentation to the public are concerned.

It may be of interest that one prominent chairman of the Board was the late Mr. Balfour, the father of our present Minister of Lands. He played a big part in promoting the industry, particularly the dried vine fruits section.

The berries that are taken out are also marketed. They are put through a crusher or press, and the crushed seeds are made into paste for use by confectionery manufacturers and others, so there is no actual loss.

Sultanas are our main production and comprise a big part of the export trade. Big problems had to be overcome concerning moisture, colour and the size of berries. There are also problems concerning grit, dust and so forth. These will continue to be with us but all the time the industry is going ahead overcoming one problem after another. It will continue to do so, and ultimately a first-class product will be put on the market. Whilst overseas, I saw dried fruits from other countries marketed, and I say with a good deal of pride that no overseas dried vine fruits looked better than ours, nor did they taste any better. Overseas fruits do not have the same body in them as ours. One can get one of our samples and rub it between two fingers and thus feel the flesh under the skin. With the fruits from most other countries, there is just a dry, hard shell. With our marketing system improving and being properly controlled, we are selling more, and because of the stabilization scheme the growers feel that they are more secure in the industry. The result is that they are spending more money on improving their equipment with a view to producing a better product for overseas and local consumption.

In clause 2 of the Bill, there is reference to lexias. The original lexias go back to the Gordo Blanco or Muscat, which is a round berry and is the most flavoursome fruit we have. These berries do not carry as well as they might, but a good deal of

them are sold to-day. They were dried first by being put on trays in the sun. There was no need to put them through an emulsion. The result was a dried Gordo, which is the Rolls Royce of dried fruits. They are bought as Muscats in the shops. When they are dipped, they are classified as a different fruit altogether, and when they are dried after dipping they are called lexias. However, they are, in fact, dried Gordos or Muscats.

Another white grape is called the Malaga in South Australia, but in Victoria it is called the Waltham Cross. It is a large berry with a firm skin, and it packs, and keeps well. At one time it was called an Elema, but because of the confusion the name was changed. By this Bill the name will be changed again and they will become raisins. Both forms of Muscats will be dried by dipping, and the Victorian Dried Fruits Act covers not only dipped fruits but also dried fruits, so in future both will go under the one name, and when someone buys a dried Waltham Cross it will be called a raisin.

Whilst I think this is a wise move, I do not think it goes far enough, because there will still be some confusion overseas where what we term a sultana is known as a raisin. The American raisins are known as the Thompson Seedless and they are treated by a different method in that they are not dipped before drying. They are put out on a small sheet of sisalcraft and left to dry in the sun. It is of interest to note that in America, in order to forecast the size of the crop for the year, aerial photographs are taken of the vineyards, and it is possible to determine from the number of sisalcraft boards that are in between the rows how large the crop will be. This is of great assistance when determining a policy for marketing the fruit.

The Bill has three small clauses, one of which deals with currants, another with raisins, and the third with increased penalties for certain offences. I am pleased to know that all parties support the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2, providing, *inter alia*—

Section 3 of the Principal Act is amended as follows:—

(*a*) In the interpretation of "Dried currants" for the words "five per centum" there shall be substituted the words "three per centum";

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture). — Mr. Tripovich and Mr. Mansell both indicated what the dried fruits industry means to Victoria and to Australia, and as I referred to this aspect in my second-reading speech I shall say nothing further about it. However, I agree with what Mr. Tripovich said regarding people such as Mr. Woodward being associated with marketing and similar boards. I have not the slightest doubt that his appointment was a good selection. His name was mentioned to me as a person who might be interested in the job. I contacted him and introduced him to the parties concerned in the area, and Mr. Mansell will recall that everybody was impressed with his personality and his ability. I think he has contributed a great deal to the Board. I agree that men of his calibre can be of immense value to marketing boards of all descriptions.

Nobody has a greater knowledge of this subject than Mr. Mansell, who has spent a lifetime in the industry. He has seen the industry grow in Australia and seen it in operation overseas. I propose to move one small amendment, the purpose of which is to clarify the position that exists so that there will be no doubt about what is meant. The amendment has the support of all parties concerned. Therefore, I move—

That, in paragraph (*a*), after the words "per centum," where second occurring, the words "by number" be inserted.

The Hon. A. R. MANSELL (North-Western Province).—I intended to refer to Mr. Woodward and to link his name with Mr. Eugene Gorman, both of whom came into the industry with no prior knowledge of it. Yet, they have had an important influence on the industry. Mr. Gorman is held in particularly high regard by our competitors overseas. Mr. Woodward came into the industry as a young man and took over a job on the State Board. He has done excellent work for the growers, and we give him full credit for what he has done.

In regard to the amendment, I point out that the words "by number" appear in the regulations to the Act; the amendment will simply clarify the position and bring the Act into line with the regulations.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—Mr. Mansell has rightly pointed out that the words "by number" appear in the regulations and not in the Act. Therefore we have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 3 was consequentially amended and, as amended, adopted.

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

The sitting was suspended at 6.29 *p.m. until* 7.48 *p.m.*

GAS REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 13) on the motion of the Hon. V. O. Dickie (Minister of State Development) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. G. J. O'CONNELL (Melbourne Province).—The purpose of this measure is to amend the Gas Regulation Act 1958. The Bill has been described as containing a number of technical details, relating to the definitions of the terms used. The amendment contained in paragraph (*a*) of clause 2 is to section 3 of the principal Act and provides for the substitution of the interpretation of "British thermal unit". The new interpretation is—

> "British thermal unit" means the unit which when multiplied by 3.967 equals one water kilocalorie.

The term "water kilocalorie" is derived from the Commonwealth Weights and Measures (National Standards) Act as cited in regulations of this Act's Statutory Rules 1961, No. 142 (*a*). The Minister's explanation of the term "water kilocalorie" in his explanatory second-reading speech was as clear as mud. Perhaps the honorable gentleman was under the impression that the member handling the Bill for our party would know more about names of racehorses than about the technical terms used in this measure. I assure the honorable gentleman that that is not so.

The definition of a water kilocalorie is as follows:—

> The water kilocalorie is the work done or the energy expended in heating 1 kilogramme of pure water from 14.5 Celsius degrees (which is Centigrade) to 15.5 Celsius degrees at an invariable pressure of 1 atmosphere. (One atmosphere is 14.7 pounds per square inch.)

The water calorie is 0.001 of a water kilocalorie. The water British thermal unit is the work done or the energy expended in heating 1 lb. of pure water from 60 Fahrenheit degrees to 61 Fahrenheit degrees at an invariable pressure of 1 atmosphere. The joule is the work done or the energy expended when a force of 1 newton moves the point of application a distance of 1 meter in the direction of that force. For all legal purposes:—

(*a*) One foot poundal shall be deemed to be equal to 0.0421407 joule.

(*b*) One water kilocalorie shall be deemed to be equal to 4,185.5 joules.

(c) One water British thermal unit shall be deemed to be equal to 1,054.54 joules.

At present, the terms used in the Gas Regulation Act 1958 are not the same as those used by the Commonwealth, and it is proposed, by these amendments, to bring about some uniformity with the Commonwealth Weights and Measures (National Standards) Acts.

The provisions contained in clause 3 will bring the Colac and Wodonga gas undertakings under the Gas Regulation Act. Both of these undertakings are now selling a sufficient quantity of gas to make them eligible to be brought under this legislation. Our party has no objection to this proposal. Paragraph (*d*) of clause 3 provides that in paragraph (*b*) of sub-section (1) of the Act for the expression "more than twenty-five million cubic feet of gas" there shall be substituted the expression "an amount of gas capable of yielding more than 125,000 therms". If my memory serves me correctly, about two years ago the word "therm" was first used in the regulations. Victoria is somewhat behind England in this connexion because the word "therm" was substituted for the expression "cubic feet" in 1930 in the English Gas Undertakings Act. That Act states—

> Every undertaker, which means every local authority, company, body or person supplying gas under statutory powers, not already authorized to sell by therm, who supplied more than 20,000,000 cubic-feet of gas in the year 1928, must sell gas by therm from a date on or before April 1, 1930.

Despite the great progress made in Victoria, we are more than 30 years behind the Old Country so far as the use of the word "therm" is concerned. It is interesting to note that 125,000 therms is the exact equivalent of 25,000,000 cubic-feet of gas having a calorific value of 500 British thermal units.

The reason why refinery gas is excepted from the operation of the Gas Regulation Act is that refinery gas varies in its British thermal units. Lurgi gas will give 450 British thermal units from brown coal. Natural gas will give 500 to 525 British thermal units per cubic foot. Liquid petroleum gas will give 600 to 650 British thermal units per cubic foot and sometimes more; it depends a great deal on the type of crude oil. Clause 4 deals with a technical change. Ten therms are equivalent to 2,000 cubic feet of gas. At present, the undertakers make a contribution of ¾d. for every 2,000 cubic feet of gas sold. The Act provides that the contribution shall not exceed 1d. for every 2,000 cubic feet. Clause 4 of the Bill substitutes the term "ten therms" for 2,000 cubic feet of gas. If the people of our State receive a little concession, honorable members will be happy about it.

Clause 5 provides that if, in the twelve months immediately preceding the 30th June of any year, the undertaker has sold an amount of gas capable of yielding more than 1,250,000 therms, registration shall be mandatory. Previously, the registration was with the consent of the Minister. The Opposition offers no objection to this change because it believes that the Minister should have this control. Paragraph (*b*) of clause 5 provides that the gas shall have a distinctive and unpleasant odour. It is right and proper that, with danger to human life arising from leakage of gas, such leakages should readily be detected.

Clause 6 refers to the methods of making gas meters. Gas meters made by new methods are just as safe and reliable as the old type of meters. Valves in modern meters are of plastic and do not have the same wear as the old brass valves. They are lighter to operate and the cost of maintenance is less. Normally there was a seven-year period between inspections of gas meters. With the new meters, the period will be ten years, but normal repairs and change-overs will be effected during this period if meters become faulty. I hope that some benefit derived from the reduced cost of maintenance will

be passed to the consumers. The users of liquid petroleum gas are protected under the terms of the Liquified Petroleum Gas Act. With large commercial users there is a tendency to pay for gas as prescribed by British thermal units or kilocalories. In effect they are billed for a certain amount of gas at so many British thermal units per cubic foot. Because of the variable rate of British thermal units in refinery gas, they get more or less value for their money. As the Minister said, the measure is highly technical. The Labor Party offers no opposition to it. The Bill has been held over for some time because of the illness of the Minister. We now wish it a speedy passage.

The Hon. R. W. MAY (Gippsland Province).—The Minister told the House that this was a very technical Bill, and this statement has been endorsed by Mr. O'Connell. I believe that the *Hansard* reports of their speeches will further confirm the statement. The Country Party supports the Bill which it believes to be a progressive measure necessary to meet an inevitable development resulting from the discovery of natural gas in Australia. No doubt it was the discovery of natural gas which led up to the introduction of this measure. It is of interest to note that the Queensland Government engaged the services of a world authority on natural gas, Dr. Hetherington of Alberta, and that Imperial Chemical Industries and a consortium of companies interested in piping the gas also engaged Dr. Hetherington.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—Are they interested in it, too?

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—Presumably they are. In the *Age* of 29th January of this year, there is a report that the consortium had engaged Dr. Hetherington. The consortium consisted of Imperial Chemical Industries, the Australian Gaslight Company Limited, Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company Limited, the people associated with H. G. Palmer, and T. J. Thompson and Partners and various other people. The consortium was interested in piping natural gas throughout Australia. They would pipe the gas from its source to the outskirts of the city where its distribution would be taken over by the undertaking.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—Does it say anything about pall bearers?

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—I am not an authority on pall bearers. I refer the honorable member to the Minister in charge of the Bill as perhaps the greatest authority on pall bearers. I only hope that no pall bearers will be required in connexion with the subject-matter of this Bill. As I said, the consortium engaged Dr. Hetherington to advise it. This is interesting because the Gas and Fuel Corporation also engaged Dr. Hetherington and, more recently, Dr. Hetherington was asked to carry out a survey for the Government.

The Country Party sounds a note of warning. We hope that these circumstances do not produce another "Kings Bridge". We would have thought that the Government would engage the services of an additional authority. There must be authorities other than Dr. Hetherington, although we do not detract from the doctor's ability. It would have been of assistance if another independent authority had been engaged to confirm the advice tendered to Imperial Chemical Industries and other companies.

Dr. Hetherington described a £94,000,000 36-in. pipe-line from the fields at Mereenie through Broken Hill to take gas round Australia. From a point north of Echuca, there would be a 24-in. pipe-line to Melbourne and a 26-in. pipe-line to Sydney, and from Sydney, a 24-in. pipe-line to serve Brisbane. The Country Party hopes that some great financial institution is not given the contract for this great work if it is to be used as a means of exploiting the people who

will use the gas. The pipe-line will have to be of adequate size to carry sufficient volume of gas in future years. It does not take much imagination to realize that in the first couple of years, before appliances are converted to use natural gas, the interest charges on the cost of building the pipe-line will be very great while not a great deal of the gas is being used but, as time goes on and appliances are converted to use natural gas, the need for a large diameter pipe-line will be evident.

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. R. W. Mack).—The honorable member is now straying from the subject-matter of the Bill. The Bill deals with changes of terms and so on, and I do not see how the honorable member can connect with this measure the question of the piping of gas from natural resources and the question of the cost involved to take it to various capital cities and so on.

The Hon. R. W. MAY.—In his speech, the Minister said that gas would be made available and delivered to a point where the undertakers would take over its distribution. I relate my remarks to the reference to where the undertakers would take over. Presumably, it will require a pipe-line to bring it to this point. I also refer to the Minister's remarks about the varying of standards previously employed to measure gas as being adapted to natural gas. At present, the definition of British thermal units in the Gas Regulation Act is related to heat, so there is to be a complete modification and change to modern methods of measuring gas. One realizes that there must be a change when it is appreciated that at present the composition of the gas being distributed by the Gas and Fuel Corporation and the various other undertakers has been changed. Previously, the gas they distributed was largely produced by the Lurgi plant in the Latrobe Valley. More recently, because of the cost factor, approximately 30 per cent. of the gas sold by the undertakers in this State has been produced from residual oil.

There has been a complete change in the processing of this gas and, in consequence, a change in the method of measurement. The Country Party hopes that when the conversion takes place, a close watch will be kept on the cost structure to ensure that the price of gas will not be beyond the reach of the ordinary citizens. It has been estimated by the Minister of State Development that it will cost approximately £25 for each household to convert to the use of this gas. The passage of this measure will bring about uniformity and ensure that gas is distributed to the community on an equitable basis. The Country Party wishes the Bill a speedy passage.

The motion was agreed to.

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

LAND SETTLEMENT AND RURAL FINANCE BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

VALUATION OF LAND (GENERAL AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 27) on the motion of the Hon. R. J. Hamer (Minister for Local Government) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. SAMUEL MERRIFIELD (Doutta Galla Province).—This is a Bill to amend the Valuation of Land Act 1960. It is one of a series of land valuation measures which have been handled in this House during the past four or five years, more particularly since the enactment of the general valuation legislation in 1960. The principal reasons for this measure arose out of a private member's Bill introduced in this Chamber

in 1963 by Sir Percy Byrnes, and a similar Bill also introduced by Sir Percy during the last session of Parliament. The last Bill introduced by Sir Percy Byrnes was amended by this House. Sir Percy's Bill proposed that, in valuing land, productivity in respect of rural lands and profit in regard to other lands should be taken into consideration. However, the amendment which was proposed by the Minister for Local Government and adopted by this House deleted this provision and proposed certain matters which the Valuer-General and the courts should take into consideration when determining valuations.

Clause 3 of the Bill now under consideration is similar to the measure which was debated by this House during the last session of Parliament; apart from minor alterations in its phraseology, it is almost identical with the Valuation of Land (Amendment) Bill which was introduced by Sir Percy Byrnes during the current session and which is still listed on the Notice Paper. Clause 3, which inserts a new section 5A in the principal Act, prescribes certain matters which are to be taken into account in determining the value of any land. It will not necessarily supersede, but it conflicts with, the criteria which have been laid down by superior courts—both the High Court and the Privy Council—concerning land valuations almost since the hearing of the first big appeal case in 1903. In other words, it conflicts with all the bases which have been laid down by the courts over the years. To say the least, my party is not particularly happy about this proposal, although we admit that there is some justification for it.

When explaining his original Bill in this House, Sir Percy Byrnes referred to a case in which a stipendiary magistrate had decided that he did not wish to hear evidence in respect of productivity or the value of production and, as a result of his ruling, the evidence was not proceeded with. Sir Percy felt that there was need for a direction to the court to take these matters into account. Since the establishment of the valuation appeals court by the Government and the machinery by which this legislation will be administered, the court has virtually been directed to take these matters into consideration.

Sub-section (1) of proposed new section 5A, as contained in clause 3, is not arguable in any way, nor is sub-section (2) of the proposed new section. However, my party feels that the detailed instruction which is set out in sub-section (3) could be construed in two ways: First, it could be construed as being in conflict with the directions to the courts down the years; and secondly, it could be construed as an invitation to conduct a detailed cross-examination of a valuer concerning the aspects which he considered in arriving at a valuation. By enumerating the six factors which should be taken into account in determining the value of land, it is felt that this measure opens up an avenue for cross-examination of a valuer to an unlimited degree. So far as I can tell, the inclusion of this provision in the legislation will differentiate between the two principles of valuation. One relates to taxation and the other to compensation. Capital improved, unimproved and net annual valuations are defined in the Water Act, the Local Government Act, the Land Act, and so on. They remain the basic definitions, but the Bill will qualify them to a degree. In the case of compensation, the word used is not " valuation " but " compensation ", and it is arrived at solely from the consideration of sale values. In our view, if the amendment has any meaning, this will introduce two elements of valuation which may conflict. We are not very happy about this situation, to say the least.

The question of assessment for valuation purposes has been canvassed for a long time. Sir Percy Byrnes has strong views on what he terms " the productivity factor ". He believes that, in most instances,

valuations based on productivity would be lower than those based on sales. This assumes that there is a speculative element in the price, but in many instances the reverse could apply. The sales value may be below the productivity value for a number of reasons. An obvious one is the length of time over which a valuer may decide that productivity should be averaged in order to strike a mean to capitalize the earning power. In Western Australia, the Land Tax Branch of the Commonwealth used to have what it termed an assessment section which, to a large degree, valued on the productivity factor. However, the lands concerned were of a common type with little individual variation, so that an average could be applied to large tracts of country without much variation. Even if there was some margin of error in the actual value, with a rate of 1d. in the £1, this would not make very much difference. Consequently, the Branch was satisfied to assess land largely on a productivity basis.

A similar system operated in the Province of Saskatchewan, in Canada. It is significant that that Province consists of plain country, except for some areas which are inundated by the lake system. On these types of land a productivity system of valuation can be applied. However, in Victoria there is a large variation in types of soil, rainfall, farm or agricultural use, and distance from transport. The latter factor can make a difference in use of land with the same type of soil and similar rainfall. The factors in this State are so variable that I do not think it is possible to lay down baldly and boldly what might be termed a productivity factor. However, I agree with Sir Percy Byrnes that one can go a long way towards assessing what might be termed the inherent or natural qualities of a farm, so long as it is done over similar type areas and regard is paid to other small limitations.

If the land tax authorities in particular wanted to adopt such machinery—I think the time has passed for it—the rate of taxation is so small that possibly errors up or down should average out. There might be a small penalty on one farmer and a small benefit to another, but, when the use is so diverse, the large factor of determining the inherent quality of areas of land based on a comparison of economic use must be overcome. This would make it difficult to relate the values to prices, which vary from day to day. A long range view must be taken, and long range comparisons made between different types of farms.

A long time ago, I had a similar view to that held by Sir Percy Byrnes; I felt that sales were not necessarily the best guide to values. I investigated the question of inherent productive values and plagued many of the valuers' offices around Melbourne for advice. Long before valuations became a public question, I found I could get no support for this idea. This confirmed the opinion of the New South Wales special committee which investigated the matter and recommended against that type of system. Some of the troubles over valuations have arisen because we have sought the millenium in standard valuations too quickly. We sought to achieve this out of past values, which were "crook" and gerrymandered sales values.

I recommend any honorable member who is interested in sale values to study an interesting report on compensation and betterment produced in England in 1941, when that country was worried about the use of its agricultural lands and their submergence by urban areas. First the Scott committee was set up to investigate the problem, and it recommended the appointment of a Royal Commission under Lord Justice Uthwatt. He brought down a most valuable report, one significant portion of which applies to the problem I am discussing. The report pointed out that in those areas where sales values were above what Sir Percy Byrnes might term productive value, this was due to speculative influences.

Hope springs eternal in the mind of all purchasers. Thus each purchaser expects to have the speculative value returned to him. Land is being sold around the perimeter of Melbourne at a speculative value which can never be realized. It could be realized only in the fullness of time after the interest on the investment has been lost, rates and land taxes have been paid, and possibly a depreciation in money values has occurred. In effect, everyone who pays the speculative value can never realize on it, so that the gross value of all land is always less than the total speculative prices which are paid for it. That is of great significance in relation to what is happening to-day. Unfortunately, top sales prices are always taken as the basis of our valuation system.

The Government has proudly boasted about the high rate of home ownership in the community, but this affects the problem I am considering by causing a smaller number of properties to come on the market, certainly less speculative properties, and it is only when circumstances force them to do so—such as a change of job or pattern of life—that people living in the premises seek to dispose of them and to purchase another property. Thus the section of the community which is forced to buy property under the present shortage of homes has to pay more for it. That position could never apply to all properties, because if one attempted to capitalize on the situation and to unload properties on to the market faster than circumstances would permit, inevitably values would depreciate. This means that because of relatively limited sales to-day, high prices are being paid, which are not the true values of the property concerned.

Therefore, I repeat what I have said on other occasions, that land is being valued at too high a figure in relation to sales. Some proportion—say, 80 or 85 per cent.—of the current level should be chosen, and this would be a fairer figure on which to operate. This would avoid all the conflict that arises over high valuations and a diminution in the number of appeals. It is really not worth while valuing on the basis of 100 per cent. of sales, because to drop it to 80 or 85 per cent. would reduce the revenue of any taxing authority only by a small amount. In any case, the rate could be adjusted accordingly. For example, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rate of 2s. 6d. has been reduced to about 1s. 10d. If valuations were reduced to about 85 per cent., the Board would only have to fix its rate at about 2s. to receive the same amount of revenue. This task has been approached too quickly and drastically, resulting in a good deal of argument in the House on various Bills. It is significant that Sir Percy Byrnes, possibly against his better judgment, has accepted the Minister's proposal to amend this Bill and introduce it on another occasion. The Government Bill is on similar lines. We are not happy about it. We should prefer retention of the system of guidance to valuers as provided for in past procedures.

The next amendment proposed in the Bill relates to supplementary valuations. I opposed the action of the Government in withdrawing a similar provision previously, because I thought it was beneficial; it has been reinserted in this Bill.

Another proposal relates to the making of annual valuations for certain purposes, and the Labor Party is not opposed to this. It is unfortunate that most people do not know as much about the law as they should, and when they receive their municipal valuation notices they do not always exercise their rights. In the case of metropolitan municipalities which have been rated in accordance with the unimproved value system, the unimproved valuations have been used for municipal purposes and net annual valuations kept at low figures. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works rates on net annual values. Under the new system, the net annual values will be higher in some municipalities than in others,

and in the higher rated areas the ratepayers will pay more than formerly. In Essendon, the Board of Works rates have nearly doubled, and complaints have been made. Probably the ratepayers have not realized the necessity of testing the valuations placed on their properties until they have received notices from the Board of Works based on net annual values; when they received notices from the municipalities based on unimproved values they did not realize the need to appeal. The Labor Party does not intend to argue greatly in opposition to this.

The last amendment proposed by the Bill provides that a municipal clerk may prepare and certify a return with respect to valuations which have been made and recorded by the valuer but not included in his return under the Eighteenth Schedule. A valuer might have done the necessary field work and recorded the information in the field books, but they must be entered in an Eighteenth Schedule form and be signed. The proposed amendment will enable a town clerk to certify that valuations were, in fact, made by the valuer. Many difficulties may be encountered in this matter. If the valuer is not available for the purpose of appeals, I wonder who will go to court to certify to the valuation. It may be necessary in certain cases to engage a fresh valuer, and he may be unable to support the municipal valuation which is the subject of appeal.

Difficulties can be experienced with regard to subdivided land. In some streets, land that was originally subdivided may be resubdivided as to various parts perhaps three times. There may be a hotch-potch of subdivision and lot numbers, and it may not be possible to follow them in a field book. A field plan must be used in a systematic valuation. Valuers of necessity often value on plans. Are we to assume that a plan will be accepted as evidence of the valuation made by a valuer? Will it contain descriptions of the improvements made? Normally, this would not be done. Probably a valuer would describe a weatherboard house as "W.B." and write "B" to refer to a brick house, and rely on his memory as to the details. If all the information is not contained in a field book, how can a challenge to a valuation be resisted in court? In the event of a challenge, it may be necessary to have a fresh valuation made and to submit that to the court as evidence. The Labor Party is not enthusiastic about clause 3, otherwise we have no objection to the Bill.

Sir PERCY BYRNES (North-Western Province).—I move—

That the debate be now adjourned.

I ask the Minister in charge of the Bill to agree to an adjournment for one week. I have listened to Mr. Merrifield with the greatest of interest, and before I make my speech I should like to discuss one or two of the clauses with the Minister.

The motion for the adjournment of the debate was agreed to, and it was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

MELBOURNE HARBOR TRUST (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. G. L. Chandler (Minister of Agriculture) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—This Bill contains only three clauses, but clause 2 is a form of omnibus provision in which a number of completely unrelated matters are dealt with. In recent years, several amendments have been made to the Melbourne Harbor Trust Act, which is very old. The Melbourne Harbor Trust was set up many years ago, and it may well be that, in view of the changes which have taken place since the Trust was originally constituted, the Act under which it functions should be completely overhauled.

Most of the matters dealt with in clause 2 are of a machinery nature, and the Labor Party offers no objection to them. Some of them relate to a wide variety of provisions of the Act and are merely routine, but one or two important matters are worthy of special reference. The first paragraph in the clause merely broadens the interpretation of the expressions "goods" and "cargo" and extends the width of the interpretation of "owner" of a vessel.

I welcome the amendment proposed in paragraph (*b*) of clause 2 because it introduces into the legislation the four words "Subject to the Minister". In the past, the Melbourne Harbor Trust has been an autonomous body, subject to no direct control by a Minister, and this measure proposes to bring the Trust under the same degree of Ministerial authority as the State Electricity Commission, the Gas and Fuel Corporation and other public authorities. I believe that is an excellent move. In my opinion, it is not wise for a public authority not to be subject to Ministerial control. Behind such authority is the Parliament and, when necessary, it can exercise some control. When this provision is made, members will be able to criticize the Minister concerned and the authority when they consider that such action is warranted and, when changes are deemed to be desirable, they can put a case to the Minister and ask him to take necessary action.

Paragraph (*c*) of clause 2 amends section 36A of the principal Act, which provides for six months' long service leave for officers and employees of the Trust after 20 years' service. The amendment is a machinery alteration to bring the principal Act into conformity with the recently passed legislation which provides for four and a half months' long service leave in Government Departments after fifteen years' service.

One somewhat nostalgic provision of the legislation, if I may use that expression, is section 61, and paragraph (*d*) of clause 2 provides that the word "steam" in it shall be repealed. This section deals with the control by the Trust over certain machinery on the waterfront in the shape of cranes, barges and other equipment used in the working of the port. I suppose the use of the word "steam" would date back to the period when donkey boilers were in operation on the wharves and timber ships were unloaded with the aid of power from the old donkey engines. They disappeared many years ago, and the word "steam" in the provision has become redundant. Rather sorrowfully, we see this alteration made.

Paragraph (*e*) of clause 2 relates to the power of the Commissioners to order the removal of wrecks and other obstructions in the port. It is proposed that in sub-section (1) of section 87 after the words "Commissioners may" there shall be inserted the words "after taking any immediate remedial action which they consider necessary or proper". In the event of some untoward incident occurring, it may be necessary for the Commissioners, without notifying the owner, to remove a vessel causing an obstruction. It may be that urgent steps must be taken to clear it out of the way to enable the port to function properly. I suppose this amendment has been proposed as a result of representations made to the Government by the Melbourne Harbor Trust.

Paragraph (*f*) of clause 2 inserts a new section 90B in the Act, and it relates to the power of the Commissioners to tow away derelict vehicles left within the curtilage of the port. Apparently the Trust made regulations to deal with this type of problem, but it ran foul of the Subordinate Legislation Committee and, as the regulations were found to contain weaknesses, they were disallowed. Therefore, proposed new section 90B, as contained in paragraph (*f*) of clause 2, gives the Commissioners power to tow away vehicles which have been left standing in any street, road, parking area, wharf, pier, or

any other place whatsoever within the port. There are some safeguards to protect the Commissioners, who are required to abide by certain rules. It is proper that when power is given to certain authorities to carry out work concerning other people's property, safeguards should be provided.

Paragraph (*g*) of this clause substitutes a new section for section 107 of the principal Act, and it is worthy of note that there is an interesting omission. Sub-section (1) of section 107 of the principal Act states, *inter alia*—

> In this sub-section the expression "Her Majesty's Government" includes and shall be deemed always to have included the Victorian Railways Commissioners, the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, the Board of Land and Works, the Country Roads Board, the Forests Commission and the Trustees of the Public Library Museums and National Gallery of Victoria.

In effect, the Commissioner could not collect rates and charges from those authorities. The new provision will ensure that they will pay the same as an ordinary individual. The Trust claims that, as it has to pay other authorities for services within the port, these other authorities should pay for services rendered by the Trust.

Paragraph (*i*) of clause 2 amends section 136, and gives power to the Commissioners to do certain things by regulation. In paragraph (*i*) of section 136, it is proposed that after the word "port" should be inserted the words "the conduct and behaviour of persons within the port and the condition upon which persons may be admitted to or excluded from any part of the port". This power is necessary. Honorable members will recall the scenes at Port Melbourne when a migrant ship arrives, particularly one carrying a number of southern Europeans. To say the least, the behaviour of the crowd on the pier has been rather excited. One can understand the wish of the authorities to have the power to control such crowds. These people sometimes get out of hand, and it is necessary for the Trust to be able to curb foolish acts.

The *Age* of 10th November, contains an article under the heading of "Security Force for Port", which reads—

> The Victorian Harbor Trust last night announced setting up of a security force responsible for policing the State's waterfront.
>
> An initial force of nine men has already been assigned to duties and the Trust has authorized an increase in the squad to seventeen as soon as possible.
>
> Last night, customers, police and shipping officials estimated the squad would increase to at least 50 in the next six months.
>
> The new force will work hand in hand with police and customs personnel.
>
> Its members will be able to exercise identical authority within the Harbor Trust boundaries.

I shall not read all of the article, but I am concerned at the statement, "Its members will be able to exercise identical authority within the Harbor Trust boundaries". In other words, does the Harbor Trust propose to establish a security force within the port which will have the same powers as members of the Police Force? From where does the Harbor Trust derive authority to confer on anyone the rights held by members of the Police Force to detain persons, search them or arrest them within the port? Has this security force been established at the request of the Police Force to enable the Force to transfer police officers from the port for duties elsewhere? Perhaps the authority is contained in section 90 of the principal Act, which states—

> The commissioners may appoint a sufficient number of persons to preserve order on or at such wharfs, piers, jetties or landings stages or platforms and avenues and approaches thereto.

That section gives the Commissioners power to appoint a number of people to preserve order. I hope the Minister of Agriculture will enlighten me on this aspect.

In the past, the problem of entry in and out of the port by waterside workers has caused considerable friction between members of the Police

Force and the Waterside Workers Federation. On occasions, there have been complaints that men leaving work at night have been detained for an inordinate period because of the desire of the Police Force or the Harbor Trust authorities to exercise some supervision. In recent months, this problem has been somewhat resolved, and there has not been so much friction as has occurred in the past. I hope that the setting up of this security force will not provoke more trouble between members of the Federation and the Harbor Trust on the waterfront. Normally, relations between the Trust and members of the Federation are peaceful, but there have been occasions when someone has been at "outs" with another person and the result has not always been as good as could be expected.

I have no strong objection to the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners setting up a security force to look after the interests of the Trust within the port. However, I wish to know from where the Commissioners derive the authority to clothe these people with almost the same powers as a member of the Police Force. Parliament never intended any public authority to go so far without some control.

Clause 3 proposes amendments to sections 118 and 119 of the principal Act with regard to the keeping and auditing of accounts. I pay tribute to the Committee of Public Accounts, which has been responsible for these amendments. I shall quote from pages 3 and 4 of the report of that committee which was tabled on 22nd December, 1964, where it is stated, *inter alia*—

5. Evidence indicates that other comparable authorities such as the Gas and Fuel Corporation, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board and the State Electricity Commission, are also required to submit audited balance-sheets and revenue accounts.

The fact that all these authorities, which were established after 1876, are required to submit more detailed audited accounts than the Melbourne Harbor Trust, indicates the modern trend of Parliament towards a greater degree of accountability by various authorities.

6. On 19th March, 1948, the then Auditor-General in a letter to the Secretary of the Melbourne Harbor Trust suggested that "when opportunity offers, the sections relating to 'audited account' and 'particular statements' should be amended to accord with current accounting terminology and present day requirements by parliament".

The Trust has ignored this suggestion.

By this Bill, the Trust is being brought more directly under the control of the Minister of Public Works.

7. The Trust's resistance to any alteration to the audit of its accounts seems to stem from two particular sources.

Firstly, it considered that the intrusion of the Auditor-General would be unwarranted interference with its autonomy and it was feared that if Audit Act Regulations were to be applied to the Trust, its day-to-day activities could be unduly hampered.

Secondly, since 1933 the Trust has produced annually, without any statutory requirement a revenue account and balance-sheet which has been presented to Parliament. These statements which are prepared by private auditors for a fee of approximately £4,000 are not subject to audit by the Auditor-General and are not necessarily in the form which he would require. The Trust was of the opinion that any complete audit by the Auditor-General would have to be paid for, thus increasing audit costs.

8. The committee are not prepared to accept the Trust's objections on either of the above grounds. There has never been any suggestion to this committee by any authority that its activities were hampered by the Auditor-General. In addition, the statement contained in the letter dated 30th April, 1964, from the Trust's Chairman to the committee that "the form of presentation of accounts . . . can be achieved by agreement between the Commissioners and the Auditor General without amendment of the Act" gave the committee the impression that the Trust's objection arose from the feeling that any necessary amendments to the Act would give the impression that its autonomy was being reduced rather than from any other cause. In relation to the objection to the charging for an audit by the Auditor-General, the committee understand that this is a matter for direction by the Treasurer. It could well be that, having regard to the substantial annual contribution to Consolidated Revenue by the Trust, the charging of a fee would not be considered to be desirable.

The report went on to make many other points, and the committee inserted an Appendix "A" which proposed certain amendments, at the

suggestion of the Auditor-General, to the Melbourne Harbor Trust Act. The Auditor-General's proposals have not been followed faithfully in this amending Bill, but, broadly speaking, the Bill encompasses what the Auditor-General desires.

By its objections from 1948 onwards to coming under the control of the Auditor-General, the Trust showed that it did not desire to be interfered with to any great extent. I repeat that it is proper that public authorities should be brought under the direct control of Parliament; it is not wise to give any public authority too much autonomy. I do not want it to be thought that I believe that the Harbor Trust has exceeded its authority. It has worked well in the interests of the Port of Melbourne, and many good officers have served the Trust well. The late Mr. Mackenzie rendered valuable service for many years as chairman, and Mr. Swanson, the present chairman, is also proving himself a very capable man. Nevertheless, Parliament needs control over the Harbor Trust which has very wide regulation-making powers. He would be a very smart man indeed who could carry in his head knowledge of all the regulations made by the Melbourne Harbor Trust in controlling our port.

In regard to regulation-making powers, I well remember an honoured member of another House, the late Sir George Knox, during the period I was a member of the Assembly on many occasions warning Parliament against giving too many regulation-making powers to the bureaucrats, as he termed them. I hope we will turn our thoughts in the opposite direction and ensure that controls are more strongly vested in Parliament. I do not say that the Trust has abused its powers, but Parliament should not too freely transfer its authority to governmental organizations to enable them to lay down rules and regulations.

Of course, the Labor Party realizes that this amending Bill is a common-sense measure which will effect changes that will enable the Trust to operate more efficiently.

In closing, I again wish to protest —I have made many similar protests in the past—at the Melbourne Harbor Trust being directed to pay into Consolidated Revenue each year 20 per cent. of its receipts. Perhaps in 1867 the amount required from the Harbor Trust was not very great, and it might have been required to pay for some of the wharves and other assets the Trust had inherited. But to-day 20 per cent. of the Trust's revenue represents an amount of £500,000. It is time that this burden was taken from the Trust. I am sure that if the Geelong Harbor Trust were called upon to make similar payments, Mr. Thom would endeavour to get this injustice corrected. The Melbourne Harbor Trust desires that this burden should be removed. If the Government feels that it cannot relieve the Trust of this imposition in one fell swoop, it should systematically reduce the payments. If it was not required to make this payment to Consolidated Revenue, the Trust would have more money available to develop the port. Many of our facilities cannot bear comparison with those provided at other ports, and if the Government returns to the Trust its rightful dues, it will be able to proceed with capital works which will bring about very necessary improvements.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE (North-Eastern Province).—As Mr. Todd has pointed out, this Bill seeks to amend many sections of the Melbourne Harbor Trust Act. I do not intend to examine all of them, as Mr. Todd has covered the measure very thoroughly and effectively, and in the main I agree with his views.

Over the years, the Melbourne Harbor Trust has given great service to the community. Possibly, it is not well known just how wide a field its activities cover in managing the port

of Melbourne. Those who have had the opportunity to inspect the port must pay a great tribute to a long line of Commissioners who have given great service to the State. The present chairman of Commissioners, Mr. Swanson, is continuing this fine service.

As Mr. Todd has rightly stated, there has been some criticism of the facilities provided for passengers in our port. Members who travel outside the State are not very proud of our passenger port facilities. The handling of goods seems to be managed very well, but the same cannot be said for the handling of the passenger traffic. I agree with Mr. Todd that the Government should give serious consideration to the early removal of the need for the Trust to pay large sums annually into Consolidated Revenue. This would overcome the Trust's financial problems and enable it to carry out necessary improvements. I wish to pay a tribute to the work that the Commissioners have done over the years. Some of them are part-time members, and they have made a great contribution on behalf of the various industries they represent on the Trust.

One of the chief objects of this Bill is to bring the Melbourne Harbor Trust Commissioners more directly under the control of the Minister of Public Works. The Country Party has long contended that all governmental organizations should be under the control and direction of a Minister of the Crown.

In its reports of 3rd December, 1963, and 28th April, 1964, the Subordinate Legislation Committee dealt with actions of the Melbourne Harbor Trust in relation to the removal of vehicles from the wharves. As Mr. Todd pointed out, the Committee of Public Accounts also reported on the Trust's activities. These three reports reveal that if an organization is given sufficient power outside of Parliamentary control it is likely to go beyond the authority it has under its legislation. With Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Byrne, I was fortunate enough to be a member of the Subordinate Legislation Committee when the question of the framing of regulations concerning the removal of vehicles, the sale of the vehicles and the goods within the vehicles was brought under review. It was found that the Trust had transgressed the powers given to it under legislation.

In its first report, the Subordinate Legislation Committee pointed out the problem and stated that the regulations made were not in accordance with the Act. The Trust thought the committee had shown impudence in directing their attention to this fact, because its chairman thought he had the right to make a public statement about the position. He said that he was not concerned about what Parliament thought as he was conducting the affairs of the Trust. When the committee's attention was drawn to this, it treated him with the severity he deserved. The committee again reported on the regulations, but went further than it did on the first occasion by asking Parliament to disallow the regulations so as to make the Trust realize that it had to act in conformity with the law. The Minister of Public Works was informed of the position, and he took the necessary steps. The results of all this are now seen in this Bill.

If Parliament agrees to give to the Trust the power it requires regarding the removal of vehicles, the Subordinate Legislation Committee can have no objection. But it did take strong exception to the Trust attempting to clothe itself with power outside the terms of its legislation. It was an illustration of how a Trust built itself into a position where it thought it was a power unto itself and was not responsible to the Act from which it derived its authority. This example indicates that it is necessary for committees to watch the activities of governmental authorities and to ensure that they carry out their functions properly. Some Departments have taken strong

exception to the committee examining their regulations. They thought they had power outside of this Parliament, but they were quickly brought into line and now show great respect for the committee. I believe that over the years the committee has shown that it is a power within this Parliament concerning regulations in the same way as the Committee of Public Accounts has demonstrated its authority in regard to accounts.

Proposed new section 90B gives the Commissioners certain powers in relation to abandoned vehicles. It gives them authority to sell not only the vehicles, whether they be registered or not, but also goods which might be on those vehicles. It could be that a driver of a semi-trailer might park his vehicle on the wharf while he went for a meal. On his way to the café, he could be knocked over by a car and taken to hospital or even killed. If the vehicle was from interstate, it is possible for a delay to occur in discovering the owner and so forth, and I do not think the fourteen days proposed is sufficient for this purpose. I direct the attention of the Minister to the fact that the Subordinate Legislation Committee discussed a similar matter previously when the time limit was 28 days, and now it is to be reduced to fourteen days. If the vehicle is registered, the period is to be extended to fourteen days after the service of a notice on the owner or proprietor. The Trust will send the notice to the last known address of the owner, but the person concerned might not get it. The period of fourteen days seems to be a bit short to me. The position in regard to an abandoned vehicle is different because no one is greatly concerned what happens to it. If it is not registered, it is assumed to be abandoned, and I do not think there will be any worries in relation to its disposal.

I do not want to traverse the ground so adequately covered by Mr. Todd, but I believe the examples I have quoted give an indication that the Trust has endeavoured to exceed its powers and the position has been reached where the Minister has to take control of it. In addition, the Minister has to ensure that where the Trust exceeds its powers it must be made to realize that it is at fault. With those comments, I support the measure.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6312).

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—Mr. Todd and Mr. Swinburne referred to a number of matters dealt with in clause 2. Mr. Todd asserted that what was proposed in relation to the appointment of a security force could lead to the establishment of a type of police force. I am sure the legally-qualified members of this Chamber would know the difference between a security force set up by an authority and a police force. As I understand the position, all the provision does is to strengthen the regulatory powers of the port authority in connexion with the handling of people within the port area. I envisage a position whereby if somebody had to be dealt with, the security officers would contact the police, who would take control.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH.—They would not search the person concerned?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I do not think they would have the power to do so because that power remains with the Police Force. I cannot see any power in the Act or in the amending Bill which would make it possible for these security officers to do the things that Mr. Todd envisaged.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—That is the kind of assurance we want.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—The powers to which Mr. Todd refers appeared in a press statement.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—I thought there was power to appoint persons to control the port area.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Yes, but they are not additional powers other than in relation to the direction of traffic. When it is necessary for sterner action to be taken, the police will be called in.

Mr. Swinburne referred to the reduction in the period of notice in regard to the sale of vehicles from 28 days to fourteen days. I do not know whether this is an important matter, but I should think fourteen days would be a reasonable period. If there are any real reasons why Mr. Swinburne thinks the passage of the Bill should be delayed, I shall be happy for progress to be reported.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—I merely pointed out that it seems to be a short period of time. The Subordinate Legislation Committee commented on this matter when the period was 28 days, and it is now to be reduced to fourteen days I suppose with proper care and attention a period of fourteen days will be sufficient.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—As I see the position, both points are reasonable.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—One or two points in relation to the term "within the port" have been brought to my notice by Mr. Knight. On previous occasions, Parliament has dealt with legislation fixing the port boundaries, some of which extend well outside the areas of the wharves. There are areas in Port Melbourne which are under Trust control but which are well away from the river and from the seafront. There are also similar areas in Mr. Knight's province. We hope that the power given to the Commissioners to remove and sell unregistered vehicles and to control parking within their own boundaries will not be used to the extent that they will interfere with individuals who park their cars for a few minutes in the areas which are well away from where port operations are being carried on but are within the Trust's boundaries.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT (Melbourne West Province).—I agree with what Mr. Todd has said. I am particularly interested in areas in Williamstown, Newport and Footscray. One particular area in Williamstown is held under licence by the Williamstown City Council from the Melbourne Harbor Trust, and the council has converted it into a recreational area. Recently, the Trust asked the pony club of Williamstown to remove a building from the area. I fear that the Trust will go beyond its powers, particularly in regard to the large reclamation area which was referred to in this Chamber some twelve months ago. Last Sunday many cars were parked in this area whilst their owners were at the beach, and I am wondering whether the Trust will have authority to remove these vehicles. Sometimes people who want to show their authority exceed their powers.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—What do you propose should be done? Do you think the powers are too great?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I do, and the position should be clarified before the Bill is passed. Siddeley-street is an example. It is closed at one end but cars can be parked in it. There are large transport depots in the area, and the Department of Agriculture has established a fruit inspection station there. It would be possible for a semi-trailer loaded with fruit to be parked in the area. The instance quoted by Mr. Swinburne is a good example of what can happen. I believe the situation needs clarification.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Do you think the Trust should not have this power?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—It should have certain powers, but at times one encounters over-zealous people. It should be made clear

whether the Trust's power in this connexion extends outside the wharf area. I believe it should have this power inside the compounds and the area of the wharves, but I do not think it should be given control over vehicles in, say, Siddeley-street, parts of Maribyrnong-street, in Footscray, and certain streets in Newport and Williamstown. In fact, the Trust informed the Williamstown council that it had no right to name Benson-place, which was named after the Federal member for Batman, who is a former mayor of the City of Williamstown.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—A vehicle must be left standing unattended for seven days before the Trust can take action.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—Whether that is so or not, at times people in uniform become over-zealous.

The Hon. G. W. THOM.—I thought you referred to people who left their cars unattended on a Sunday afternoon.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—I was referring to vehicles which broke down. Not so long ago, a complaint was received by the Williamstown council about a vehicle breaking down. If a vehicle is registered, the traffic officers of a municipality are not empowered to tow it away. All that can be done is to refer the matter to the police, who contact the owner and ask him to remove it. As Mr. Swinburne pointed out, the owner of a truck might live interstate or in the country, and in some circumstances by the time he got down to Melbourne the period of seven days could have elapsed. I believe the Trust should have the power to remove vehicles which are left within the compounds or on the wharves, but this power should be confined to those areas which are referred to as the port area. I should like some clarification to be supplied by the Minister.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I take it that Mr. Knight wishes to be informed whether an area which is controlled under licence by a council can be interfered with by this legislation, and also what is the port area.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—That is so.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Does Mr. Knight contend that an area which is under licence to a council or held under a licence system should not be brought under the control of this legislation?

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—Yes.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I should not think it would be. As to what is the port area and what is not, and how far the Trust's powers should extend, Mr. Knight contends that the power of the Trust should not extend over the area in which it has legal jurisdiction. The position is as simple as that.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—Having practical experience in this matter, I differ from the Minister.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—If that is so, I invite Mr. Knight to state to what portion of the area over which the Trust has jurisdiction this legislation should be applicable.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—The area outside the compounds of the wharves.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—Does the principal Act contain a definition of a compound area? I believe the Trust should be given this power within the areas over which it has jurisdiction, and if it does not exercise that power in the proper manner it should be dealt with. If it were proposed to limit the operation of this legislation to a certain area, the area would have to be defined, and I think that would be difficult. I have no intention of forcing this measure through. If honorable members are not satisfied with the Bill or with my explanation, I shall report progress and obtain further information.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE (North-Eastern Province). — Mr. Thom pointed out by interjection

that a vehicle had to be left for seven days. Sub-section (1) of new section 90B provides—

> Where a vehicle left standing in any street road parking area wharf pier or any other place whatsoever within the port is unregistered or has been so left standing for at least seven consecutive days and in the opinion of the Commissioners has been abandoned, the Commissioners may, whether or not any goods are in or on the vehicle, cause it to be removed and taken to such place as the Commissioners generally or in any particular case appoint to be retained there subject to this section.

However, paragraph (*i*) of clause 2 contains an amendment to section 136, which is the regulation-making section, as follows:—

> (i) In paragraph (*i*) after the word "port" there shall be inserted the words "the conduct and behaviour of persons within the port and the conditions upon which persons may be admitted to or excluded from any part of the port".
>
> (ii) For paragraph (*qa*) there shall be substituted the following paragraphs:—
>
> (*qa*) The prohibition or regulation of the leaving standing of vehicles in any street road wharf pier or any other place within the port, except a parking area provided by the Commissioners;
>
> (*qb*) The removal and custody of vehicles (including vehicles with goods in or on them) left standing contrary to any regulation made under paragraph (*qa*) of this section and the imposition and recovery of charges for the removal and custody;
>
> (*qc*) The application of the provisions of section 90B of this Act to or in relation to any vehicle removed pursuant to any regulation made under paragraph (*qb*) of this section which in the opinion of the Commissioners is abandoned;
>
> (*qd*) The sale or disposal of unclaimed goods: "

This is a very wide power. I do not share Mr. Knight's views as to the danger of the Trust being given this power. I do not think the Trust has any intention of going outside the ambit of the port area where it carries on its work. The trouble occurred on the wharves where people left cars and the Trust had no power to remove them. As I said earlier, if the driver of a semi-trailer parked his truck in front of a shed, locked his cabin and went off to have tea, the Trust has no power to remove it. It is proposed under this Bill, or under the regulations, that the Trust shall be empowered to shift such a vehicle from the wharf into the yard where unclaimed vehicles are held for the period prescribed in the Act. I do not think the Trust has any intention of going beyond the ambit of the port area, although the land which surrounds the port area is owned by the Trust for future development. I appreciate the point that has been raised and the feeling of the people in the area, but I do not think the Trust would abuse the power which is provided in this Bill.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—As I see the position, either the Trust is given power over the area in which it has legal jurisdiction, or an attempt must be made to define the areas over which the Trust shall not have this power. I point out that the railways and other authorities have power over the areas in which they have legal jurisdiction to do certain things. It is a wonder to me that the Melbourne Harbor Trust was not given similar power years ago.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—It acted under an old regulation. This fact was not discovered until the Trust attempted to cover the goods on the vehicles concerned.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER.—I am in the hands of the Committee. If Mr. Knight or Mr. Todd wishes to persist in his attitude, I shall not mind progress being reported, but I believe the Trust should have this power as has every other authority.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD (Melbourne West Province).—I think we agree that some form of power must be given to the Trust to control parking and the leaving of vehicles within this area in the same manner as the power is given to municipal councils and others. I appreciate the point raised by Mr. Knight, but I also

appreciate the difficulty of framing a hotch-potch clause which would provide that the Trust could do something in a street which is alongside the wharf but that it could not act in that manner in the next street.

If the Trust wanted to use these regulations on the outskirts of the port, it would be compelled, as are councils, to make the necessary regulations and to post signs that parking in those areas was prohibited under certain conditions. The Trust could not merely go to a street and remove a car without any notice being posted there to the effect that cars should not be parked in that street. If a person went to fish in the Yarra river and left his car behind for some reason, a notice would have to be posted before the Trust could seize it. I appreciate the difficulty of solving the problem raised by Mr. Knight, and probably the only solution is the common sense application of the powers by the Trust itself.

The Hon. A. W. KNIGHT.—And the Trust should take heed of what has been said by Parliament.

The Hon. ARCHIBALD TODD.—That is so. The attention of the Trust should be directed to the fact that Parliament desires that these powers shall be used with common sense and also to the queries regarding the outskirts of the area over which the Trust has control, which has no direct connexion with the operations on the wharves or around the piers.

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—I shall be happy to direct the Minister's attention to the debate in this House and to ask him to take up with the Trust the question how, in view of the thoughts that have been expressed to-night, it intends to handle this power.

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

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

RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Assembly and, on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing), was read a first time.

MOTOR CAR (DRIVING OFFENCE) BILL.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON (Minister of Housing).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to implement another aspect of the Phillips report recently presented to the Government and distributed to honorable members of this House. Earlier, my colleague, the Minister of Health introduced a measure to amend sections of the Licensing Act. This Bill, if passed, will amend sections of the Crimes Act and the Motor Car Act. Honorable members are perhaps only too well aware of the great problem posed by the toll of the road. It is a problem faced by all advanced countries. Some of them have combated it more effectively than others. It is our aim to be one of the parts of the world which have combated it to a greater degree than some others.

In the past three years, the average number of lives lost on the roads in Victoria has been 830. During the same period, the average number of people injured on the roads has exceeded 18,000. The Australian picture shows that last year nearly 3,000 people were killed on the roads. In addition, another 74,000 people were injured—a football final crowd. This is indeed hard to conceive but they are cold hard facts. It is also true that our road casualties this century are more than double those incurred by Australian forces fighting in the four wars in which this country has been engaged. Again, this century more Australians have been killed on the roads than were killed in the second world war. Obviously, the problem is one of the first magnitude and is one which no Government can afford to ignore.

One of the tasks given to Mr. Phillips was to investigate the relationship between the consumption of alcohol and road accidents. I compliment Mr. Phillips on the constructive, objective and logical approach he adopted, not only in relation to this problem but also in relation to all the aspects he was asked to investigate. He was prepared to accept nothing at its face value, but asked for statistical or other first-class proof of what people have tended to regard as accepted facts, in many cases without adequate proof. For example, concerning the consumption of liquor, it was perhaps assumed that later hours automatically led to increased consumption. Statistics relating to this show that such is not the case. It was also perhaps believed that later hours would lead to increased drunkenness, but statistics in this field do not uphold this view.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—You leave out statistics of places where it did show.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—I have spent a considerable time studying the Queensland figures where late closing is in operation and they disclose that there is a lower consumption per capita there than in Victoria. Tasmania, also a late closing State, shows a far lower rate of drunkenness than Victoria. However, Mr. Phillips proved beyond all doubt that there was a clear-cut relationship between the consumption of liquor and road accidents. Five or six years ago, when I was Assistant Chief Secretary, I made a practice of attending accidents in company with the Accident Appreciation Squad. Those nights were some of the most gruesome and horrifying I have ever spent. I gained the impression that in every two out of three accidents we visited—these were serious, including fatal accidents—the consumption of liquor was, to some degree, a contributory factor. But, of course, they were Saturday nights only and the accidents were not a random selection, and perhaps, to some degree, a false impression might have been gained.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY.—That is substantiated by quite a few other authorities.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—That is substantiated by Mr. Phillips's report. He cited the investigation of Mr. G. D. Thorpe into 13,000 accidents which occurred in 1963. This study indicated a particularly high peak in the occurrence of accidents during the early hours of Sunday morning. The Commissioner commented—

> A consideration of the graph for Sunday showed an astonishing peak in accident occurrence between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the figures are related to a tendency to enjoy hospitality and festivity until late on Saturday night and early on Sunday morning and a tendency of the drivers of motor cars to forget the demands made on their physical and mental skills by the control of modern motor vehicles.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—And you are going to leave the cabarets open till 3 a.m.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—The aim is to encourage people to consume liquor more leisurely, and with food. Dr. McCallum's figures clearly show that these factors are important.

The Hon. I. A. SWINBURNE.—I did not think they would ever convert you.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—Having regard to the high accident rate at about 6 p.m., one must think carefully about the wisdom of encouraging people to swill beer quickly.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—Have you figures to show how much liquor it takes to produce .05 per cent. blood alcohol content?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—As the figures have been asked for, I will give them now. If a person drinks at the rate of one 7-oz. glass of beer every five minutes then, in 20 minutes, after having drunk five beers, he will have a blood alcohol content of .05 per cent. If he drinks at the rate of one 7-oz. glass of beer every 10 minutes, he will drink six beers in 50 minutes before reaching that level. At the rate of one 7-oz.

glass of beer every fifteen minutes, he can drink seven beers and it will take him 1 hour and 30 minutes to reach that percentage.

The Hon. P. V. FELTHAM.—Have you any figures which go the other way? Supposing a man drank three beers in three minutes, what would happen?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—Any volunteers for experimental purposes would be welcomed by Dr. McCallum, but it would undoubtedly have the effect of increasing the blood alcohol content above the level which would be reached if a person drank three beers in an hour. In other words, the rate of consumption makes a difference. I suggest that anybody who drank three beers in three minutes and then drove a motor vehicle would be a fool. That is the sort of conduct we are trying to discourage. By making it possible for hotels to stay open a little longer, people will be enabled to drink their beer leisurely and possibly with food. I continue with these figures. If a man drinks one 7-oz. glass of beer every twenty minutes, he can drink nine beers before reaching .05 per cent. At the rate of one 7-oz. glass of beer every 25 minutes, the amount he can drink before reaching that percentage is eleven beers, and it would take 4 hours 10 minutes. If he drinks one 7-oz. glass of beer every 30 minutes, he can drink 30 beers, and it will take him 9 hours 30 minutes to reach .05 per cent. blood alcohol content. There are certain qualifying factors. If a person is of heavy build and is well in excess of 11 stone, he will reach that level more slowly. If he drinks more slowly again, that will have an effect. If he takes food with his drink, this again has a marked effect. All these qualifying factors must be taken into account.

Mr. Phillips provided a certain amount of evidence in the report, and an abundance of evidence in the appendix to the first report, to prove his contention that alcohol has a marked effect on the rate of road accidents. At page 25 of Part I. of his report, he refers to a report entitled, "The Role of the Drinking Driver in Traffic Accidents," which was produced by R. F. Borkenstein, together with a considerable group of other researchers. Mr. Phillips comments—

> In this particular study, examination was made of the blood alcohol concentrations of 5,985 drivers involved in accidents over a period of one year in the City of Grand Rapids (Michigan, United States of America). By way of control, comparison was made with the blood alcohol concentrations of 7,590 drivers not involved in accidents, but driving past the same places and at comparable times to those in which the accidents occurred.

This is the type of experiment that is particularly valuable, but it has been conspicuous by its absence in the past. Drivers in the accident involved group were under-represented in a group with less than 0.04 per cent. blood alcohol concentration. I continue the quotation—

> This involved group began to be "over" represented as the measure of blood alcohol concentration began to pass above the limit of .05 per cent. The degree of risk of the driver was found to increase with the increase in his blood alcohol concentration. When he reached to a measure of .10 per cent. he was found to be between six and seven times more likely to become involved in an accident than a driver with zero blood alcohol concentration. When the alcohol concentration of involved drivers reached to .15 per cent. it was found that he was 25 times more likely to cause an accident.

Perhaps the Commissioner's general outlook on this point is best summarized by the first paragraph on page 29 of the report, in which he said—

> A modern community with an intensity of motor traffic such as exists in Australia should require its citizens to observe standards of reasonable caution in preserving the safety of their fellow citizens. Notwithstanding—

and this is significant—

> a possible safe margin for some individuals with blood alcohol concentrations of .06 or .07 per cent. under some circumstances, a reasonable margin can and should be observed bearing in mind the amount of liquor which may be consumed without exceeding the safety point. A driver of a motor car

who drives his vehicle when he has a blood alcohol concentration in excess of .05 per cent. is acting in a selfish, reckless, and anti-social manner. All forms of public expression should combine in condemning such conduct and in due course in making those who so act aware of the condemnation of the community. This is not the only practical course which should be undertaken, but it is basic to all others. When it has become accepted the attitudes of magistrates, juries, and even of Judges, may show some slight modification.

It should be understood that the expert evidence does not assert that every person with blood alcohol concentration in excess of .05 per cent. is "drunk" or "incapable of driving a motor car." What is asserted—

and this is the crux of the argument—

is that a very substantial majority indeed of normal "drinking drivers" will have their skills impaired at concentrations at and higher than this figure. Some drivers may be affected at lower concentration, though these will not be numerous.

Finally, at the top of page 32 of his report, the Commissioner referred to the recommendation in these words—

In my opinion the establishment of the standards indicated should in due course be translated into law and enforced with the appropriate penalty. This involves the creation of a legal offence of driving a motor car with a blood alcohol concentration exceeding .05 per centum. It is not necessary to repeat the arguments which have been developed in the course of the preceding discussion and which in my view provide justification for such a law.

Those are the main points mentioned in the Commissioner's report. However, Mr. Phillips referred to a great deal of supplementary evidence. In the appendix to his report, the Commissioner referred to the research work undertaken by Dr. Keith Bowden between 1951 and 1956 on drivers who were killed in traffic accidents. Of the 103 cases investigated, 67 of the victims had blood alcohol concentrations of at least .1 per cent.; and 15 were at the level of .15 per cent. or over.

It is interesting to note the corelation between the findings in various parts of the world. Dr. J. C. Lane, who is a noted expert in aviation and engineering fields, commented on this point. From the studies conducted in other parts of Australia, there is a certain similarity in the findings. In Tasmania, a study showed that of 245 persons killed in motor accidents in southern Tasmania between 1954 and 1964, 29 per cent. of the pedestrians had an alcohol concentration of .05 per cent., or above, while 21 per cent. of drivers had an alcohol concentration of .15 per cent. or more, and 42 per cent. had a concentration of over .05 per cent. Finally, in South Australia, a survey of 174 traffic accidents occurring in and around the Adelaide metropolitan area revealed that of 104 persons over the age of sixteen years who died and from whom samples were taken, 38 per cent. were found to have alcohol of varying amounts in the blood, with an average concentration of .2 per cent.

Clause 2 of the Bill sets out the offence of driving with a blood alcohol content of more than .05 per cent. It is expressed in grams per 100 millilitres, which is the orthodox and accepted way of describing blood alcohol concentration. Clause 3 amends the evidentiary provisions of the Crimes Act 1958 relating to blood alcohol tests and to breath tests using a breath-analyzing instrument. I should like to refer specifically to paragraphs (*c*) and (*d*) of this clause. Before a member of the Police Force can require a person to take a breath-alyzer test, he must first believe, on reasonable grounds, that the person has within the last two preceding hours driven a motor car.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—What is meant by the expression "reasonable grounds"?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—That would be a matter for the court to determine; I do not think it is the prerogative of this House to decide this question. It is a provision which has been in the Act for the past four years, and it has worked satisfactorily.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—Is it a case of detecting a motorist driving over double lines, or in some other way being guilty of a specific breach of the traffic code?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—It would be the court's responsibility to consider whether a motorist had driven over double lines, whether he had refused to observe traffic signals, or whether he had consistently pulled up too abruptly. All of these matters would be taken into consideration by a court, and the decision would be left to the court. It is not unusual for an expression of this type to appear in an Act; in fact, the same words have formed part of section 408 of the Crimes Act since 1961.

The constable must first have reasonable grounds for believing that the person has within the last two preceding hours driven a motor car and that, whilst in charge of the car, he was driving in a manner which indicated that his ability to drive a motor car was impaired. The grounds on which a motorist can refuse to furnish a sample of his breath for analysis have been slightly enlarged above those in the original legislation. Paragraph (*d*) of clause 3 provides that it will be a defence for a person who refuses to furnish a sample of his breath if he can satisfy the court that there were no reasonable grounds for requiring him to furnish his breath for analysis. This will clarify the intention, which was not expressly set out in the original legislation.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—What would be the position of a man who had been drinking at home prior to being interviewed by a policeman?

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—A person could not be charged under this Bill unless he had been tested within two hours of the alleged offence.

The Hon. I. R. CATHIE.—He could have been drinking at home.

The Hon. L. H. S. THOMPSON.—That is so, but that would be evidence that he would have to present to the court. A similar provision to that contained in this Bill has already worked satisfactorily in the past. By and large, in the years before the advent of the breathalyzer, the advantage had been with the driver who had been charged with an offence. In many cases, the court had been at a disadvantage because it did not possess scientific evidence showing whether the driver had been drinking lightly, moderately, or heavily.

The principal advantage of breathalyzer testing is that it will furnish the court with this necessary information. Frequently, in the past, motorists who were obviously affected by alcohol were apprehended on the roads and it was amazing to notice the disabilities that they developed between the time of their apprehension and the court hearing and which they claimed accounted for their unsteady driving. In the absence of any scientific evidence to the contrary, the court would not know whether the motorists in question had been drinking at all, let alone heavily. The court must have this necessary information available to it.

Far more important than this, however, is the fact that this Bill is designed to discourage people from mixing heavy drinking with driving, and to induce those who have been drinking lightly to drive carefully. The Government's aim in introducing this legislation is not to harass and victimize motorists, but to make a constructive approach towards reducing death and suffering on the highways. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of the Hon. Samuel Merrifield, for the Hon. J. W. GALBALLY (Melbourne North Province), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Tuesday, November 23.

STATE FORESTS LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

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

APPRENTICESHIP (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of the Hon. L. H. S. Thompson (Minister of Housing), for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

The Hon. J. M. TRIPOVICH (Doutta Galla Province).—This is the sixth amendment of the principal Act, and is the type of measure which is introduced from time to time either to correct faults or omissions or to effect improvements in the legislation resulting from the experience, in this instance, of the Apprenticeship Commission. All of the amendments embodied in the Bill have not only the approval of the Apprenticeship Commission, but are also endorsed by both the Melbourne Trades Hall Council and the Victorian Employers' Federation. Thus there can be very little controversy over them, and I wish to make only a few observations on the new provisions.

At one time I endeavoured to relate to the House the rather interesting history of apprenticeship in this State. For example, I pointed out that it took about 26 years to have the first apprenticeship legislation enacted in 1927. The attitude of the employers in those days was influenced by the American experience, inasmuch as in that country, one firm with 8,000 employees had only eight apprentices. Of course, apprenticeships were not encouraged, and process workers were favoured. Now we have moved into a highly technological age, and all sections of the community, including employers and employees, are agreed that technologists must be available to assist in our development.

With emphasis laid on apprenticeship, the Victorian Employers' Federation and employers generally have co-operated with the Trades Hall Council and the various unions in the improvement of the treatment of apprentices and training techniques. Clause 2 of the Bill raises the number of members of the Commission to nine. In the original Act of 1927, provision was made for two members to represent the Chamber of Manufactures and two members to represent the Trades Hall Council, with a part-time president. In 1946, the membership was increased to three representatives of each body with a part-time president. The Bill proposes to lift the representation to four members on each side and a part-time president. The additional member on the employers' side will be nominated by the Victorian Employers' Federation. No doubt this is in recognition of what the Federation has done and whom it represents. My party has no objection to that.

All honorable members were circularized by the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce with submissions that could be advanced on its behalf concerning its not being given representation on the Apprenticeship Commission. Of course, it is the Government's prerogative to appoint whom it desires, and we do not contest the Government's view that the Victorian Employers' Federation is the most suitable body. We are pleased that the Government did not persevere with its proposed 1962 legislation, which Mr. Bradbury will remember. The Government then attempted to divorce the Apprenticeship Commission from the Education Department. The move was defeated in this House. The Opposition strongly resented the proposed breaking of the connexion with the technical schools when Mr. Nilsson retired.

It is interesting to note that since the original legislation was enacted there have been only three part-time presidents of the Apprenticeship Commission. The first was Mr. E. P. Eltham, from 1928-34, followed by Mr. O. E. Nilsson, the Chief Inspector of Technical Schools, from 1934 to June, 1962, and since then Mr. A. C. Eldridge, the Deputy Chief Director of Technical Schools, has done a remarkable job in this

capacity. This creates a rather difficult position because while it is essential that the Commission be related to the technical schools and the holding of the dual position cannot be broken, a time must come when it will be necessary to consider appointing a full-time chairman. In 1951, the total number of apprentices was 10,176, of whom 1,685 were in the country. By 1964, the number had risen to 23,161, of whom approximately 3,081 were in the country, and last year the total had grown to 24,372. The staff of the Commission has grown from 37 in 1951 to 59 at present, but the administrative staff has increased only by a full-time secretary, a class A public servant who was appointed in 1960, and an assistant senior apprenticeship supervisor appointed in 1964. Apart from those additions, the staff increases have been of general routine staff, who process the work that goes through. The stage is approaching when a full-time president must be considered.

In the previous Bill on this subject the Government attempted to transfer the administration of the Commission to the Department of Labour and Industry. The Opposition would be just as loath now as it was then to see a break made with the Education Department in relation to the position of the president of the Commission. Sub-clause (2) of clause 2 provides that the person who held office as president of the Apprenticeship Commission of Victoria immediately before the coming into operation of the new section shall continue to hold office after the coming into operation of this section during the balance of the term for which he was appointed.

Clause 3 of the Bill concerns the formal proof of evidence in court actions in which the Commission may be associated. A similar provision appears in clause 8, which provides that a certificate signed by the person who directed that the proceeding be taken shall be prima facie evidence of the fact stated, thus obviating the necessity of proof. Clause 4 sets out the qualifications of members of trade committees, which are expert committees. The Government has, quite rightly, seen fit to break away from restricting membership of the committees to persons who have been actively engaged in the trade, and to allow one member on each side—employer, employee—to be appointed who has not been directly employed in the trade. There may be some full-time officers of trade unions who desire to serve on these committees but who have not served their full time in the trade. However, their administrative qualifications and experience may make them valuable in the role of member of a trade committee. A similar situation may apply to officers of employer organizations.

Clause 7 contains some excellent provisions. Paragraph (*b*) removes the doubt about the nature of arrears of pay that may be subject to the court order which may result from a play on the words "of pay (including increased rates for proficiency, if any)", for which will be substituted the words "of any moneys payable under this Act or under indentures of apprenticeship." I believe this will clarify a lot of the actions which have been necessary to obtain arrears of pay.

There is nothing controversial in the remaining clauses, some of which will obviate redundancies which were not corrected when the Act was amended in 1963. One provision makes a formal grammatical amendment, to which there can be no objection. The regulation-making powers of the Commission are broadened by paragraph (*d*) of clause 10. There has been frequent discussion in this Chamber on the extension of regulation-making powers, but in this instance there should be no objection to the proposal to enable the Commission to restrict the working of shift work or of overtime or working on public holidays by apprentices, to provide for the taking into

account of overtime worked in determining when apprenticeship has been completed, and to requiring employers to provide tools of trade or pay an allowance for them.

My party has no criticism to offer in regard to the Bill. We pay tribute to those who administer the Apprenticeship Commission, and I pay a strong personal tribute to the representatives of the Trades Hall Council and the employers for the great interest they have taken in the training of apprentices, because Australia depends greatly on the qualifications of these young men in its efforts to attain its rightful place amongst the leading nations in this technological age.

The Hon. A. K. BRADBURY (Northern Province).—This is a Bill to amend the Apprenticeship Act 1958, and for other purposes. I do not propose to traverse the ground so ably covered by Mr. Tripovich, who adequately dealt with the major and many of the minor points of the measure. I am pleased that the Government recognizes the progress that the Apprenticeship Commission is making, and that the State is endeavouring to keep pace with the progress of industry and technology by reconstituting and enlarging the Commission, as well as broadening its scope of activities. I am glad that one of the new members to be appointed to the Commission will be a nominee of the Victorian Employers' Federation, to which I pay a tribute for the work it has done in encouraging apprentices in this State. It is largely through the efforts of the Federation that Apprenticeship Week is now so well established in Victoria. It culminates in a presentation night in the Melbourne Town Hall. Apprenticeship nights are held in the majority of centres where apprentices receive training, and they create a good deal of interest among parents and the general public.

The Victorian Employers' Federation has been responsible for the introduction of overseas bursaries which provide the opportunity for young tradesmen in this State to travel overseas and increase their knowledge in the advanced countries of the world, as a result of which they can return better equipped to do their jobs in this State.

Members of the Country Party wholeheartedly support the Bill. Many more comments could be made, but Mr. Tripovich has capably covered the ground. For the reasons stated, we support the Bill.

The motion was agreed to.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

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

That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.50 *p.m., until Tuesday, November* 23.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, November 17, 1965.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER **(Mr. Christie)** took the chair at 3.37 p.m., and read the prayer.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

CONSTRUCTION OF POWER HOUSES.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Premier—

1. Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement in the Morwell *Advertiser* newspaper of 25th October, 1965, attributing to him the statement that when the gigantic Hazelwood project was complete the Government had plans for another £100 million project and knew it could finance it?

2. Whether he will state just where this project will be established?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

1. The report referred to by the honorable member for Gippsland South has since been brought to my attention.

2. The proposals are currently being examined, but the Government is not yet in a position to make an announcement.

TULLAMARINE AIRPORT.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS: COMPLETION DATE.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Premier—

1. How much, approximately, the Victorian Government is committed to spend on all works in connexion with the establishment of the Tullamarine jet airport?

2. When the airport will be completed?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

1. No precise figures can be given at this stage. The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works has undertaken to construct a 15-in. main to the boundary of the airport at a cost of £35,000. This cost is being met initially by the Commonwealth, but will be refunded by the Board in eight equal annual instalments commencing in July, 1967.

The sewerage proposal selected is estimated to cost £142,000, and negotiations for the financing of this work are proceeding.

Between the north-western corner of Essendon aerodrome and the Tullamarine airport the Country Roads Board is constructing 4½ miles of the Tullamarine Freeway at a total estimated cost of £1,800,000. Up to date £350,000 has been spent.

Electricity requirements are still the subject of discussion between the State Electricity Commission and the Commonwealth Department of Works, and as yet the Commission has not been given final details. Consequently it is not possible at this stage to give an accurate estimate of cost.

2. Present indications are that the airport could be opened in 1968.

NATURAL GAS DISCOVERY.

INQUIRY BY DR. HETHERINGTON: TERMS OF REFERENCE.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Premier—

Whether he is now in a position to advise the House of the terms of reference for the inquiry by Dr. Charles Hetherington relating to Victoria's natural gas resources; if so—(*a*) what are the terms; and (*b*) how long it is expected the inquiry will take?

For **Mr. BOLTE** (Premier and Treasurer), Mr. Rylah (Chief Secretary).—The answers are—

Having had long discussions with Dr. Hetherington it was obvious that to restrict him to narrow terms of reference would be to inhibit him.

Accordingly, he has been asked to make a study and advise the Government on the development of natural gas and oil resources of the State. The general headings of study are—

1. The assessment of the size of the recently discovered natural gas reserves, to determine whether supplies are adequate to provide partial or full natural gas service to the Melbourne area and whether there is gas available for export from the State.

2. The prospects for additional supplies of gas and for the discovery of oil.

3. Leasing and royalty regulations and the administration thereof.

4. Consideration of conservation (i.e., the practices for orderly development, recovery and economic use of hydrocarbon resources), and the administration thereof.

5. The measures necessary to ensure the most efficient use of the State's hydrocarbon resources in the public interest, including the authorization of pipe-lines, and the administrative organization required.

6. The regulation of gas utilities serving the public, the regulation of gas pipe-lines supplying gas for re-sale to the public, including possible wellhead price controls and the method of administration.

Naturally he has been invited to diverge from these headings where in the light of his inquiries and of his experience, it is apparent that this would be of value to the State.

Dr. Hetherington's general study is expected to be completed early in the new year.

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD.

EXTENSION OF EAST COBURG LINE.

For **Mr. MUTTON** (Coburg), Mr. Wilkes asked the Minister of Transport—

If he will ascertain and inform the House when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board anticipates that a start will be made on the construction of the extension of the tramway by a double-track line along Nicholson-street, East Coburg, to the terminus at Bell-street?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The short answer to this question is: About the middle of 1966. I should like to add that in reply to question No. 15, asked by the honorable member for Coburg, on Wednesday, 23rd September, 1964, I stated that, before the work could commence, a 30-in. water main must be shifted and that the earliest that the Board of Works could move it was June or July, 1965. I now have to advise the honorable member that the Board of Works has indicated that the estimated cost of this work has risen from £11,000 to £18,000 and that the Board will not be able to undertake the removal of the main before the end of the coming summer season. That is the reason that the tramways works cannot commence until the middle of 1966.

CONVERSION TO DECIMAL CURRENCY: EFFECT ON FARES.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote) asked the Minister of Transport—

1. What will be the increase or decrease in each fare charged by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board due to conversion to decimal currency?

2. What effect this will have on tramway accounts, based on tickets sold in the year 1964-65?

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer to the first part of the question is in the form of a printed schedule of current fares and decimal fares, which I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* without my reading it.

Leave was granted, and the schedule was as follows:—

MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD.

FARE SCALE.

Sections.	Present Fare, November, 1965.	Fare from 14th Feb., 1966.		Variation.	
		Decimal Currency.	Sterling Equivalent.	Increase.	Decrease.
	s. d.	*c.*	*s. d.*	*d.*	*d.*
Adult—					
1	0 7	6	0 7·2	0·2	..
2	1 0	10	1 0	..	..
3	1 5	15	1 6	1·0	..
4 or 5	1 10	20	2 0	2·0	..
6 or 7	2 2	20	2 0	..	2·0
8 or 9	2 6	25	2 6	..	..
10 or 11	2 9	25	2 6	..	3·0
12	3 1	30	3 0	..	1·0
13	3 4	30	3 0	..	4·0
14 or 15	3 8	35	3 6	..	2·0
16 or 17	4 0	40	4 0	..	..
18 or more	4 4	45	4 6	2·0	..
Children and Pensioners—					
1	0 4	3	0 3·6	..	0·4
2	0 4	4	0 4·8	0·8	..
3, 4 or 5	0 8	7	0 8·4	0·4	..
6, 7, 8 or 9	1 0	10	1 0	..	..
10, 11, 12	1 4	13	1 3·6	..	0·4
13, 14, 15	1 8	15	1 6	..	2·0
16 or more	2 0	20	2 0	..	..
All Night Fares—					
1	1 5	15	1 6	1·0	..
2	2 0	20	2 0	..	..
3	2 6	25	2 6	..	..
4	3 1	30	3 0	..	1·0
5	3 8	35	3 6	..	2·0
6 or 7	4 0	40	4 0	..	..
8 or more	4 4	45	4 6	2·0	..

DECIMAL CURRENCY—FARE ADJUSTMENTS.

On and after Monday, 14th February, 1966, all fares will be in cents. To make the change-over easier, some fares will be altered on and after Sunday, 5th December, 1965, as under:—

Sections.	Present Fare.	On and After Sunday, 5th December, 1965.	On and After Monday, 14th February, 1966.
	s. d.	*s. d.*	*c.*
Adults—			
1	0 7	0 7	6
2	1 0	1 0	10
3	1 5	1 6	15
4 or 5	1 10	2 0	20
6 or 7	2 2	2 0	20
8 or 9	2 6	2 6	25
10 or 11	2 9	2 6	25
12	3 1	3 0	30
13	3 4	3 0	30
14 or 15	3 8	3 6	35
16 or 17	4 0	4 0	40
18 or more	4 4	4 6	45
Children—			
1	0 4	0 4	3
2	0 4	0 4	4
3, 4 or 5	0 8	0 8	7
6, 7, 8 or 9	1 0	1 0	10
10, 11 or 12	1 4	1 4	13
13, 14 or 15	1 8	1 6	15
16 or more	2 0	2 0	20
All Night Services—			
1	1 5	1 6	15
2	2 0	2 0	20
3	2 6	2 6	25
4	3 1	3 0	30
5	3 8	3 6	35
6 or 7	4 0	4 0	40
8 or more	4 4	4 6	45

Where practicable, between 5th December, 1965, and 13th February, 1966, tickets will be printed in both shillings and pence and cents in order to accustom passengers in advance with future cent fares. On and after 14th February, 1966, they will be printed in cents only.

Mr. MEAGHER (Minister of Transport).—The answer to the second part of the question is—

2. Based on tickets sold in the year 1964-65, the effect of the changes will be to increase the Board's revenue for the year ending 30th June, 1966, by approximately £83,000 equivalent to 0.94 per cent. of its estimated revenue had no fare variation taken place.

MOTOR BOATING ACT.

REGISTRATION FEES: PROVISION OF FACILITIES.

Mr. RING (Preston) asked the Acting Minister of Public Works—

1. What is the total amount of registration fees paid by owners of motor boats since the commencement of the Motor Boating Act 1961?

2. How much money has been expended in providing facilities for boat owners in—(*a*) Port Phillip Bay; and (*b*) elsewhere?

3. Whether the Government undertook to provide slipways at South Werribee; if so—(*a*) what slipways; and (*b*) when such slipways are likely to be provided?

Mr. BALFOUR (Acting Minister of Public Works).—The answers are—

1. The total amount of fees paid is £268,602.

2. Subsidies which have been approved from the motor boating fund amount to:—

(*a*) Port Phillip Bay, £79,563.

(*b*) Elsewhere, £130,541.

3. (*a*) A subsidy has been approved for a motor boat launching ramp at South Werribee.

(*b*) See reply to 3 (*a*) above.

HOUSING COMMISSION.

HOMES: CONSTRUCTION IN SALE: ALLOCATION TO AIR FORCE PERSONNEL.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South) asked the Assistant Minister of Education, for the Minister of Housing—

1. How many houses and flats, respectively, have been completed in Sale by the Housing Commission in each of the last three years?

2. How many houses and flats, respectively, are now under construction in Sale by the Commission, approximately when they will be completed, and how many will be made available to Royal Australian Air Force personnel?

3. What is the Commission's housing programme for Sale in the next eighteen months, and in what streets the houses will be erected?

Mr. ROSSITER (Assistant Minister of Education).—The answers provided by the Minister of Housing are—

1.

——	1962–63.	1963–64.	1964–65.
Houses ..	17	21	19
Flats "	12 lone person 6 low-rental	..	..

2. Forty-two houses, eleven row houses and eight two-bedroom flats are at present under construction and it is expected that they will be completed prior to 30th June, 1966.

Thirty-six houses will be made available to Royal Australian Air Force personnel.

3. 1965-66 building programme—48 houses.

Programme beyond June, 1966, has not yet been determined.

Houses will be erected in Gutheridge-parade, Raglan-street, Ruf-street and Ray-street.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

HEATHMONT STATE SCHOOL: REFUSAL TO RE-ADMIT PUPILS.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—Mr. Deputy Speaker, by leave, I should like to make what may be described as a personal explanation, in relation to a question asked by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. I should first like to say that, in common with all Ministers, I endeavour to examine the answers to questions very carefully and make myself responsible for them. However, I feel that part of an answer I gave to the honorable member yesterday was not sufficiently revealing, although it was literally true.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition asked a question relating to the refusal to re-admit Peter and Linda Smith to Heathmont State School. In reply to Part 4 of the question, " Whether delay has occurred in reviewing this decision ; if so, why? ", I said that Mrs. Smith was interviewed on 17th September, the case was reviewed immediately, and my decision was conveyed to her by letter dated 17th September.

I did look into the matter on 17th September, but I was then advised that Mrs. Smith was happy to send the children to the other school in view of the fact that transport was available to take them to that school. Hence, I did not examine the matter on its merits. The minute I made on the file reads as follows:—

> Discussed with Acting Director and Assistant Chief Inspector of primary schools. As Mrs. Smith has agreed to send the children to Southwood if a bus service is available, and it now appears that such service is now available, letter can be re-cast along those lines.

That being the situation, I did not inquire fully into the merits of the matter, nor did I make any decision on the merits at that stage. It later appeared that the lady was, in fact, not satisfied by the provision of a bus service and wished to send her children to the Heathmont school which they had previously attended.

This was not brought to my notice. I had very little time to examine this answer which was submitted yesterday, and I now wish to state that the matter will be kept open, and I will look into it on its merits.

VICTORIA POLICE FORCE.

APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT MILNER TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I desire to ask a question without notice. The Chief Secretary has agreed to answer it. It refers to the startling statement in to-day's *Herald* that a senior police officer had been appointed to take charge of all investigations into allegations of improper conduct against Victorian policemen.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—The Leader of the Opposition may only ask a question.

Mr. RYLAH.—You agreed to ask a question.

Mr. STONEHAM.—That is so. My question is this: Is the Chief Secretary aware of the mounting uneasiness——

Mr. RYLAH.—That is not the question you said you would ask. I do not agree to this question being asked, I will not give leave. The question on which I agreed to give leave was whether I was prepared to make a statement with regard to Superintendent Milner's position.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Order!

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I raise a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition asked me whether I was prepared to make a statement with regard to Superintendent Milner's appointment which was announced in the press this morning. I told him I was prepared to do so if he asked me a question framed in this way: Are you prepared to tell the House the position with regard to Superintendent Milner's appointment? That is the only question on which I am prepared to grant leave.

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—On the point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was recently ruled by Mr. Speaker that once leave was granted the matter was open and one could say what one wished.

Mr. SUTTON.—Yes, and he maintained that ruling, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Order! This is not a question of leave being granted. The Leader of the Opposition informed me that the Chief Secretary was prepared to answer a question, and, with my permission, he is asking a question. I ask him to observe the point brought forward by the Chief Secretary and ask the question which it was agreed be asked.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—Thank you, Sir. I ask the Chief Secretary if he is prepared to make a statement as to why Superintendent Milner was appointed to conduct these inquiries, in preference to a Royal Commission.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not the question either.

Mr. SUTTON.—It is near enough, I suppose.

Mr. RYLAH.—I will be gracious and say it is near enough. I am afraid I will have to answer at a little more length than I intended. Superintendent Milner was appointed, to take up duty from to-day, to investigate all future allegations, or at least to supervise the investigation of all future allegations, of improper conduct alleged against members of the Police Force, as well as the statement made yesterday by Judge Rapke in somewhat extravagant language, and also one or two of the side issues.

Mr. TURNBULL.—The side swipe.

Mr. RYLAH.—Yes, and also one or two of the side swipes resulting from the Solicitor-General's investigations. The reason for the appointment—and this is in no way derogating from what the Solicitor-General

is doing—was this: The Solicitor-General himself felt that it would be a good plan to have one officer, and one officer only, at police headquarters, detailed to make these investigations so that any member of Parliament, any citizen, and, for that matter, any Judge, would know that a complaint against a member of the Police Force would be investigated by a top level officer or, at least, if he did not make the investigation himself, he would supervise it. This would replace the present system whereby, if allegations are made against a member of the Police Force, they are investigated in the district where they are made, by somebody especially appointed by the Chief Commissioner, or, possibly, by the Chief Commissioner himself, although there are problems associated with the Chief Commissioner making investigations as, subsequently, he may have to deal with the persons concerned as a matter of discipline. The appointment of Superintendent Milner to carry out these functions is intended to provide a service to both the community and the Police Force.

I should think that every honorable member of this House would know of the reputation of Superintendent Milner. He is a first-class man and is certainly not one who will be easily "panicked" into accepting false allegations, of which there are many, taking notice of wild statements, of which there have been many; nor will he be "panicked" by the number of people who want to get on to the band wagon of the present investigation.

Because of the words "Royal Commission" used by the Leader of the Opposition, I take this opportunity of saying again that 99 per cent. of the Police Force are 100 per cent. loyal, devoted, and honest. The allegations which have been made are limited to very few members of the Police Force.

Mr. STONEHAM.—We agree.

Mr. RYLAH.—The unfortunate thing is that, although the Leader of the Opposition may agree that the allegations are limited to very few members of the Force, many people are, I repeat, trying to climb on to the band wagon. The impression is being created in the public mind that allegations of corruption, and so on, apply to the Police Force generally. Of course, nothing is further from the truth.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Who said that it applied to the Police Force generally.

Mr. RYLAH.—This is the impression which is being created in the minds of policemen, in the minds of policemen's wives, and in the minds of other people. It is something about which every member of this House is concerned.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—Is it the press?

Mr. RYLAH.—I am not naming specific people, but a lot of people are climbing on to the band wagon.

Mr. STONEHAM.—I think you should explain that.

Mr. RYLAH.—I am not making allegations against any member of Parliament. It is the duty of every member of Parliament to help me confine these allegations to where they lie, and that is against very few men in a very loyal and devoted Police Force.

RACING (DOG RACING) BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Racing Act 1958.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

ST. KILDA LAND BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary) moved for leave to bring in a Bill relating to certain lands at St. Kilda and at Elwood in the parishes of Melbourne South and Prahran and for other purposes.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was brought in and read a first time.

STAMPS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of Mr. Rylah (Attorney-General) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—This is a Bill to amend the Stamps Act 1958. Measures of this type are debated by Parliament almost annually. In his second-reading speech the Attorney-General stated that the measure would rectify one or two anomalies which have become apparent from the enactment of the 1964 legislation. Of course that legislation created new duties in respect of mortgages, guarantees and agreements, and it restated the duties applicable to settlements of gifts.

The Bill consists of a number of unrelated amendments. Recently in this House, the Leader of the Country Party stressed that many Bills which could rightly be termed Committee Bills were being debated at length in the House. This is a Committee Bill, and, in order to observe the proper forms and ceremonies of this House, I shall deal with the various clauses in more detail during the Committee stage. In any event, it is difficult to make a general speech on a Bill of this type.

Each year, the stamps legislation is becoming increasingly important. After all, it is the main taxing legislation of this State. Speaking from memory, during the current financial year the stamps legislation will produce for the Government income amounting to approximately £23,000,000. The situation in this regard has changed considerably from the time when many of the members now in this Chamber were first elected to Parliament. Of course, I exclude from this category members such as the Minister of Education. I should like to congratulate the honorable gentleman upon his elevation by Her Majesty to the status of Queen's Counsel in this State. I have already conveyed my personal congratulations to the Minister but, in view of the fact that the honorable gentleman is present and is in one of his most pleasant moods, I consider it appropriate to commend him for the high status which he has attained in the legal world.

I have examined the Bill and, in accordance with the usual arrangement, I have discussed it with Mr. Richards, the Comptroller of Stamps, who has satisfied me that the Bill will cure certain anomalies which were created by the 1964 legislation. The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr. BLOOMFIELD (Minister of Education).—I should like to congratulate the honorable member for Brunswick West for one of the most remarkable second-reading speeches that I have heard from him. It was exceedingly courteous, friendly and kind of the honorable member to speak as he did concerning me. I greatly appreciate his remarks, and I am happy that the House received them as it did.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—I shall continue the debate in a friendly way by indicating that the Country Party supports the Bill. Recent amendments to the stamps legislation have broadened the scope of the legislation, which now covers a wide variety of matters. It is necessary that honorable members should keep up to date with the developments that are taking place within the community, and therefore a thorough understanding of measures of this type is essential. I believe this amending Bill will provide for bankers and legal men a greater insight of the workings of the stamps legislation; it will also tie together many loose ends which have become apparent since the enactment of the 1964 legislation.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (As to certain receipts by solicitors or agents).

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—Section 51A of the Stamps Act deals with duty which is payable in cases where several receipts are issued to cover what basically amounts to one transaction. For example, money which is paid to a solicitor under a contract could be passed on by the solicitor to another solicitor, who, in turn, could pay it to the person who is entitled to receive the money.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—Each solicitor taking part in the transaction would derive some " cream " from it.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Lawyers, just as other members of the community, must be paid for their work. My colleague is quite right in suggesting that some of the money would be deducted before it was finally paid over to the person who was entitled to receive it. The 1964 legislation was based on the assumption that duty would be payable on the total amount before deductions were made. The purpose of the amendment is to extend the operation of section 51A in order to give relief in those cases where up to 25 per cent. of the money received by a solicitor or an agent is retained by him. The Opposition offers no objection to this proposal.

The clause was agreed to, as was clause 3.

Clause 4 (How conveyance subject to future payment &c. to be charged).

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—No doubt, the honorable member for Hawthorn will be interested in this clause, which relates to stratum titles. When a person purchases a flat under a stratum title, he really possesses the title to the air space of the flat in question.

Mr. G. O. REID.—The flat could be on the ground.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Various parts of a block of flats, such as a stairway or a passageway could be located on the ground and these are not covered by the titles held by the stratum title holders. I am informed that one flat in each block of flats is owned by a service company and that each lot holder has an agreement with the service company by which he undertakes to pay to the company, for example, £2 a week to maintain the gardens, passageways, and other services.

In order that a defaulter might be made responsible, a charge is imposed on each flat and that charges him with his liability under the service agreement. Of course, in this context a charge is really a mortgage. The charge is merely a device to facilitate the enforcement of the service agreement; it has no connexion with the consideration passing between the parties. Technically, it would attract duty in addition to the duty payable on the real consideration. This clause exempts the payment of this charge. Of course, certain work must be undertaken around a block of flats, and the stratum title holders must pay for this work.

Mr. LOXTON.—The service charge also covers maintenance work.

Mr. TURNBULL.—That is so. If the block of flats is big enough to have elevators, these would also come under the service agreement. Over a period of years, a tremendous amount of maintenance work not only to stairways and passages, but also outside the building would be required in connexion with a large block of flats. This is one of the modern ways of living in Melbourne, especially in the inner areas, and it is fair that the people concerned should not have to pay duty on a transaction on which the ordinary citizen is not required to pay duty.

That clause was agreed to.

Clause 5 (Collateral securities).

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—This is an important provision. When the legislation was originally

enacted, stamp duty was required to be paid on every mortgage at a rate, I think, of one-quarter per cent. There are certain organizations in Melbourne, with which the honorable member for Prahran would be familiar, which, when they grant a mortgage on property, require a number of collateral securities. I well remember the honorable member for Broadmeadows bringing to see me the secretary of a company carrying on business in Broadmeadows. In this instance, because of the requirement relating to mortgages, the people concerned had to pay duty on each of three collateral securities. Of course, that was never intended, and subsequently relief was given by legislation, and duty was payable only on the primary security, the collaterals being duty free. According to Mr. Richards, the position was not clear if, for example, the primary security was not available within the jurisdiction. It may be that duty could be taken on a collateral security, but that it might not be enforceable when it was stamped.

The other point is that the original security may be in the nature of a guarantee. The Act provides that this must be stamped with a certain quantum of duty. Let us assume that one of the collaterals was a mortgage. If only the primary instrument was stamped with guarantee duty, that would not be sufficient if the secondary document was a mortgage. Under the legislation, the mortgage duty will have to be paid on one of the collateral securities if it is in truth a mortgage, but that does not excuse one from paying duty on the primary instrument, the guarantee.

Doubtless, to those who are not familiar with the daily working of the Stamps Office many of these matters may be a little clouded, but, fortunately for the State, the Comptroller of Stamps is always available to the public and is ready and willing to explain how duty is payable under the Act. I do not know whether the Comptroller would accept the following suggestion, namely, that if, when about to reduce a transaction to writing, one had some doubts about the position before commencing to draw up the document, one could see the Comptroller or one of his assistants to ascertain whether the document was liable to duty, and the type of duty that would be incurred.

In the past, many solicitors have readily embodied transactions into agreements and lodged them with the Stamps Office, only to find that duty which they had never envisaged was attracted by the document. Unless people are continually drawing documents it is not always easy to know beforehand whether a document will attract duty. However, this is one of the taxation methods of this State, and the Comptroller of Stamps has his duty to perform. If the instrument is liable to duty, he has no option but to tax it. One of the distressing things to many young people who are buying homes these days is the amount of money that they have to pay in stamp duty on the transfer of property.

As the Leader of the Country Party stated on a previous occasion, if a Bill is a Committee measure it should be fully explained and dealt with in Committee in preference to the Minister concerned making some general statements when introducing it, and leaving honorable members completely in the dark as to the real terms of the clauses.

The clause was agreed to, as were clauses 6 and 7.

Clause 8 (As to powers of attorney and appointments of agents.)

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—In his second-reading speech, the Minister gave a brief explanation of the Bill, and it was then open to honorable members to do some research on it. Unfortunately, all honorable members are not in a position to do this, and for that reason we are indebted to the honorable member for Brunswick West for his intimate knowledge of the principal Act and, secondly, for his interest in carrying out research

on the measure and making its results available to honorable members generally. On behalf of the Country Party, I thank the honorable member for Brunswick West.

The clause was agreed to.

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

ST. KILDA LAND BILL.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands). —I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It may be stated that this Bill had its origin in a decision of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in May, 1957, that, in order to protect the sea wall along Marine-parade at St. Kilda, a stone mole about three-quarters of a mile long would be constructed along a line of sand-banks offshore, for the reclamation of an area of about 48 acres between the mole and Marine-parade, provided that the St. Kilda City Council defrayed the cost of filling and undertook development of the area. The Board also sought an assurance from the Lands Department that, when reclaimed, the area would be reserved for public recreation, and placed under the control of the St. Kilda City Council as a committee of management.

At that time, erosion had made such inroads into the reserve adjacent to Marine-parade that, although the section of the reserve north of Dickens-street was under the control of the St. Kilda Shore Committee, and the reserves south of Shelley-street were controlled by the St. Kilda City Council, no committee of management was appointed to administer control of the section of permanent reservation between Dickens-street and Shelley-street, as it had mostly disappeared.

It will be evident, therefore, that, in addition to the reclamation of a considerable area of new land from the sea-bed, a large portion of an area of 15 acres 3 roods 4 perches permanently reserved as a site for public recreation by Order in Council of 28th June, 1880, would also be restored.

It was proposed that the mole construction and reclamation would cover the area from Point Ormond to a point about midway between Blessington-street and Shakespeare-grove, and, as the St. Kilda council agreed to undertake the reclamation and development of the area—provided that the land was reserved as a site for public recreation and placed under the council's control—the St. Kilda Shore Committee agreed to relinquish control of its section of the reserve adjacent to the reclamation area, and the Lands Department approved in principle of the council's request for reservation and control.

The council's original plans for development of the area, when reclaimed, included the widening of Marine-parade and provision of lawns, amenities, recreation facilities and car parks, and at a later stage the construction of a marina.

The Bill has three main aspects related to the council's proposals for reclamation and development of the area. The first is in regard to the widening and straightening of the section of Marine-parade between Shakespeare-grove and a point about one mile further south, where the existing route of Marine-parade links with Ormond-esplanade.

All the reserved areas involved, with the exception of a small section about 150 yards long immediately south of Shakespeare-grove, are under the control of the St. Kilda City Council as a committee of management.

The small section of the Shakespeare-grove end, referred to just previously, is under the administrative control of the St. Kilda Shore Committee, and that body has concurred in the proposed excision for the road widening, under conditions which will not involve the shore committee in expenditure, and which have been agreed to by the St. Kilda council.

The proposed excisions will affect four reservations of sites for public recreation, of which two are permanent reserves and two are temporary reservations. Three and a quarter acres, in three separate sections as defined in part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Bill, are to be excised from an area of 15 acres 3 roods 4 perches permanently reserved by Order in Council of 28th June, 1880.

An area of 19 perches, in two separate sections as defined in part 2 of Schedule 1 of the Bill, is to be excised from the area temporarily reserved by Order in Council of 5th May, 1964. Three roods and 30 perches, defined in part 3 of Schedule 1 of the Bill, are to be excised from an area of 3¾ acres temporarily reserved by Order in Council of 30th November, 1915, and an area of 2 acres and 30 perches, defined in part 4 of Schedule 1 of the Bill, is to be excised from an area of 54 acres permanently reserved by Order in Council of 2nd October, 1882.

The road widening proposals have been designed to increase the Marine-parade roadway to a general width of 104 feet, with some extra width being provided adjacent to Shakespeare-grove and Glenhuntly-road to facilitate traffic flow.

In the course of the investigation into the council's road-widening and straightening proposals, it was discovered that a width of about 19 feet of the 1880 permanent reserve adjacent to the west side of Marine-parade had been incorporated into that roadway many years ago, and that the existing route of Marine-parade between Shelley-street and the point where it links with Ormond-esplanade had been constructed without the area involved having been formally excised from the reservations.

The Marine-parade increase in width to 104 feet now proposed will include the 19-ft. width just referred to, but the existing section of Marine-parade through Point Ormond, which will be superseded by the new straightened route, will remain as part of the original reservation.

The second aspect of the Bill relates to the proposed marina which developed from a review of the council's plans in regard to the reclaimed area, when the second stage of the project, involving reclamation of the section between Elwood canal and Thackeray-street, had been completed at about the middle of 1963.

The council's plans for the marina development envisage the provision of 8 acres of water area with about 195 mooring pens and three launching ramps. It is also proposed that, on the adjacent land area of 12 acres, parking space will be available for cars and trailers, and modern facilities will be provided for the berthing, launching, repairing, storing, fueling and provisioning of boats and also for the comfort and convenience of users of the marina and the public in general.

Although not viewed favourably when originally proposed, the marina project was later approved departmentally, and has the concurrence in principle of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works and also of the Ports and Harbors Branch of the Public Works Department subject to final drawings being submitted for its approval.

The northern section of the stone mole was redesigned by the Board to make provision for the marina, and consequent on this action an additional area of the sea-bed was placed under control of the council after having been temporarily reserved by Order in Council of 6th July, 1965, as an extension of the site for public recreation reserved by Order in Council of 5th May, 1964.

The council's expenditure on its reclamation works up to the present time has been £47,000, and it is estimated that a further amount of from £15,000 to £20,000 will be expended to complete this work. It is also estimated that the expenditure of an

additional amount of about £100,000 will be required to be undertaken by the council in connexion with works related to the construction of the boat harbor, involving the installation of the necessary sheet piling and launching ramps, and the construction of internal access roadways and parking areas.

Honorable members will no doubt remember the passing of the Local Government (St. Kilda and Elwood Land Reclamation) Act, No. 7171, just twelve months ago, to validate certain expenditure by the St. Kilda council on works related to the reclamation project. The present Bill proposes that the council be authorized to lease an area of 20 acres, as defined in Schedule 2 of the Bill, for purposes of a marina.

Provision has been made for the marina area to be leased by the St. Kilda City Council, in order that the council may recoup some of its expenditure on the reclamation works, and to provide funds for the maintenance of the reserves under its control. The Bill provides also that the lease will be for a period not exceeding 50 years, and this term is in line with the general statutory provision in the Land Act relating to Crown leases in the metropolitan area.

The proposed lease will cover parts of three reserves comprising the permanent reserve of 1880 and the temporary reserves of 5th May, 1964, and 7th July, 1965. In regard to such lease, it is proposed that the erection of the sheet piling around the perimeter of the water section of the marina, the reclamation of the area outside the sheet piling, other ground works, and the installation of the launching ramps will be completed by the council, and tenders called for the leasing of the site for purposes of a marina.

The definition of a "marina" for the purposes of this Bill is set out in clause 2, and has been designed to cover the facilities which the council proposes that the lessee will be required to provide under the terms of the lease.

The successful tender will be subject to approval by the Lands Department, the Public Works Department, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, the Country Roads Board and the Tourist Development Authority, and any fueling facilities will be required to be approved by the port officer of the Public Works Department.

The third aspect of the Bill is the provision for the council to lease an area of one acre at Point Ormond for the purposes of a restaurant which, it is proposed, will be a modern structure to replace the existing old kiosk in that locality. The restaurant site proposed to be leased forms part of the area of about 54 acres of Crown land which was permanently reserved for public recreation by Order in Council of 2nd October, 1882, of which the St. Kilda City Council is also the committee of management. The proposed term of lease in this case also is to cover a period not exceeding 50 years. The old restaurant has been there for more than 50 years and no one seems to know how it got there or who put it there, but I think everybody would agree that it should be replaced.

I shall now refer to the clauses. Clause 1 is the usual citation of the title. Clause 2 defines "marina" and "Minister" for purposes of the Bill. Clause 3 makes provision for the reservations to be revoked by the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister, of the parts required to implement the road widening and straightening proposals, provided that the areas defined by plan or plans of survey signed by the Surveyor-General are the same or substantially the same as set out in parts I., II., III. and IV. of Schedule 1 of the Bill. This provision has been made because the descriptions in the schedules are not technical descriptions of surveys but were compiled from the best information short of

actual survey, available from departmental and council sources, to indicate to honorable members, as accurately as possible, the areas involved in the proposed excisions.

Clause 4 similarly provides for possible minor adjustments to the description of the 20-acre proposed marina site, on completion of the survey of the area which will follow as closely as possible the description given in Schedule 2. This clause also makes provision for authority for the St. Kilda City Council to lease that area as a site for a marina.

Clause 5 authorizes the council to lease, as a site for a restaurant, an area of 1 acre of permanent reserve, at Point Ormond, to be defined by survey. It is not possible at this stage to furnish a description of the site similar to those set out in Schedules 1 and 2. Sub-clause (1) of clause (6) provides for the proposed leases to be subject to the approval of the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister, and for the term of each lease not to exceed 50 years. Sub-clause (2) of this clause makes provision for moneys received by way of premiums or rents from the leases to be expended by the council in the maintenance and improvement of the reserves under its control, or for such other purposes as the Minister approves. This provision is in line with that set out in section 222 of the Land Act. Clause 7 contains the usual provision that no liability shall attach to the Crown.

This development will be beneficial. Certainly the proposed widening of the various roads is necessary. So far as the marina is concerned, with the increasing popularity of boating in Victoria, some facilities are required close to the city area. The council believes that it should recoup some of the money expended in order to provide for the maintenance of 48 acres of Crown land which has been reclaimed from the sea. It believes that, to carry on this necessary work, it should lease the area to private enterprise, and the Government supports it in that view.

Mr. SUTTON.—Could not the council itself run it?

Mr. BALFOUR.—That aspect has been considered, but the council believes that the project is a little different from the normal municipal undertakings. For the information of honorable members, I have plans of the project which are most descriptive. They show where the high-water mark was in 1888, and also the various roadways and reserves that I have mentioned. If honorable members require further assistance, the officers of my Department and of the St. Kilda City Council are at their disposal. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. SUTTON (Albert Park), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 25.

COUNTRY FIRE AUTHORITY (SERVICE OF NOTICES) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 10) on the motion of Mr. Wilcox (Minister of Immigration) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—This is a small but important Bill, which seeks to amend section 41 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958. It relates to the posting of notices for the removal of fire hazards. There are few matters of greater importance than the prevention of fire. On many occasions over the years, the Opposition has stressed the importance of municipal officers energetically applying the provisions of the principal Act. The Opposition also stresses the broader aspect of creating strategic firebreaks with the co-operation of the Forests Commission and the Country Fire Authority. Therefore, Opposition members are in favour of any

measure which will strengthen and facilitate the application of this provision.

Doubt has been expressed as to the position of municipalities which, in the absence of any action by the landholder, carry out necessary work and are then confronted with the task of recouping the cost of such work. Sub-section (2) of section 41 of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 states—

> Any such notice may be given—
>
> (*a*) by delivering it personally to the owner or occupier to whom it is directed;
>
> (*b*) by sending it by post in a registered letter addressed to such owner or occupier at his last known place of abode; or
>
> (*c*) (where service in either of such ways is impracticable) by posting it in some conspicuous position on the land to which it relates.

The difficulty of proving service in accordance with paragraphs (*a*) and (*b*) is of concern to municipalities. Therefore, clause 2 proposes to substitute new sub-section (2) of section 41 of the principal Act to provide—

> Any such notice may be given to an owner or occupier of any land in writing or may be served upon such owner or occupier—
>
> (*a*) by delivering it to him personally or to his agent;
>
> (*b*) by leaving it at his usual or last-known place of abode;
>
> (*c*) by posting it in a registered letter addressed to him at his usual or last-known place of abode or business or his usual or last-known postal address; or
>
> (*d*) in the case of any body of persons corporate or unincorporate by posting the registered letter or delivering it addressed to the chairman clerk or secretary thereof at the offices of the body.

Provision is also made further to strengthen the position in respect of the serving of the notices. I hope that, with the passage of this Bill, the Country Fire Authority and the municipalities will not lose any time in taking urgent measures to deal with the menace of the bush fire.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—The Country Party supports this Bill. Whilst the amendments proposed are of only a minor nature, they will have far-reaching effects upon landholders who are not prepared to clear their land and who do not have the interests of the community at heart. Many people in the community who own land have no consideration for the people living nearby. There are circumstances in which some people are not able to help themselves, but all honorable members know of the absentee landowners who simply do not care for the well-being of owners adjacent to their land.

This Bill indicates the desire of the Country Fire Authority and the municipalities to take action to ensure the safety of the community. It provides that the costs accumulated against a property for the carrying out of fire-protection work will be charged against the land, irrespective of whether or not the owner can be found, and it will ensure that the municipalities will eventually be able to recover the costs from the owner.

At this time of the year, with the approach of the bush-fire season, I take the opportunity to express concern about some features of the administration of the organizations charged with the responsibility for fire protecton. There has been quite a change in the top-level administration and I hope it is being reflected throughout the organization.

Surveys are being undertaken in an endeavour to level out the inequality of the distribution of certain equipment which should be available to all areas of the State. Whatever is the outcome of these surveys, we hope that some of the areas which are not quite so remote, and where equipment is needed, will receive greater consideration than they have been given previously. I also hope that further thought will be given to the widening of the scope

of purchasing power in connexion with makes of motor trucks for use by the Country Fire Authority.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable member is straying from the Bill which deals with the serving of notices.

Mr. TREWIN.—I acknowledge that I was a little wide of the Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I thought a word or two in this connexion would not be out of place as the fire season is with us. A very great challenge faces the Country Fire Authority and the volunteer fire fighters who are ever alert to the dangers that exist. The Country Party supports the Bill.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—As indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, the Labor Party supports the Bill, as its aim is to bring about a situation wherein proper officers, as they are known, will not be faced with the same problems that have confronted them in the past in regard to serving notices on absentee landowners or landowners who are not known or cannot be traced. The Government seems to be attempting to establish a system similar to that which prevails in connexion with the control of noxious weeds. If a land owner cannot be traced, noxious weeds authorities are empowered to carry out the necessary work and place a charge on the title of the land. Whether this will be possible under this legislation, I do not know, but if it does prove to be so it will be to the benefit of the authorities concerned.

The only other point I wish to raise concerns the employment of proper officers. It is very easy to load this type of work onto officers of shire councils who are, in my opinion, already heavily burdened with work for their municipalities. It is necessary that the Government should undertake a serious examination of the existing regional system. The State is divided into regions under the control of a regional officer. Immediately a serious fire hazard is faced in a particular region, we know from practical experience that the movements of the regional officer are restricted. He cannot move far from his headquarters because he might be required at any moment to take control of a serious outbreak. The regions are very large in area, and, as the regional officer must remain in close proximity to headquarters, he has to rely greatly on mobile volunteer brigades to take responsibility in the outlying parts of the region.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! Does the honorable member intend to relate these remarks to the serving of notices?

Mr. WILTON.—Yes, Sir. I believe that the serving of notices and the position of proper officers should be vested in the regional officers and not in municipal officers as is the case at present. The practice at the moment is for a shire secretary or engineer to be the proper officer responsible for the serving of notices and other similar work. In my opinion, this is not satisfactory, and from discussions I have had with these officers I am led to believe that they can give only scant attention to these duties because of the other demands on their time. First and foremost, they are senior administrative officers of a shire council, and their fire prevention work represents only secondary duties, which were loaded onto them in years gone by. Because of the complexity of these duties, I believe it is no longer practical for the Government to allow this situation to continue.

I suggest that the Government should examine the position with a view to either decreasing the area of the regions or adding to the permanent staff of the regional officers. If that were done, the duties encompassed by this Bill should be transferred to the regional officers who are salaried officers of the Country Fire Authority and are not subject to

the pressures that are perhaps placed on officers of shire councils when serving notices. The adoption of my suggestion would be a practical step forward in overcoming the problem presented by disinterested absentee landowners, who, in most instances, acquire land purely for speculative purposes. They do not appreciate, or are not willing to appreciate, the seriousness of allowing fire hazards to develop on their properties. This is something that demands urgent attention on the part of the Government.

I agree that the passage of this Bill will certainly assist in overcoming some of the problems in this connexion, but I consider that the situation would be more effectively met if my suggestion were adopted. Of course, the Government would need to carry the proposal through and provide regional officers with sufficient staff to enable all the duties involved to be carried out. They must make regular inspections and surveys in order to ascertain whether industrial organizations, business houses, and even private homeowners throughout their regions are carrying out their reponsibilities in connexion with elimination of fire hazards, or seeing that there is no possibility of hazards being created. I urge the Government to give serious consideration to the point I have raised.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Scoresby).—This small Bill has been brought before the House in an endeavour to overcome some legal doubts with which municipalities have been faced in connexion with the service of notices for the clearance of fire hazards. In my view, any action that can be taken to enable councils to get land cleared of fire hazards more quickly is well worth while. There is no doubt that any owner of land who allows his property to develop in such a way that it involves risk, not only to his own assets but also to those of his neighbours and the district as a whole, commits a criminal act, and I am pleased that this Bill has been introduced to clarify the powers of the authorities concerned.

However, I disagree with the point put forward by the honorable member for Broadmeadows. It is true that some municipalities in the State, perhaps many, have as yet not fully understood their responsibilities under the Country Fire Authority Act and in fact do just what the honorable member for Broadmeadows has stated. They allow officers in their employ to carry out the dual function of secretary, or perhaps engineer, and proper officer. I deplore this practice. It is a serious matter that this practice is adopted by so many municipalities, particularly those in areas such as the honorable member for Broadmeadows represents, which have faced very grave fire dangers within the past year or so.

I can speak with a great deal of confidence and happiness about the situation within my own electorate, because residents of the Dandenong Ranges, who face great fire dangers annually, have seen that three of the municipalities in the area have appointed full-time proper officers who are engaged on no other work. In all cases, they are men of great experience in fire prevention and control and were recruited from brigades within the area.

Municipalities have the records which cover all land owned in their area, and the municipal offices are the obvious centre for the administration involved in connexion with the serving of notices of this nature. Fire prevention in a district is something that is peculiarly of interest to the local inhabitants, and surely must be the responsibility to a very large degree of the people who own land and who live in the area. For that reason, I consider that municipalities rightly have this power under the legislation, and I consider that the honorable member for Broadmeadows and other honorable members who represent fire

danger areas should endeavour to encourage their municipalities to take a far more active interest in fire prevention work than apparently some of them are doing to-day. They should take a lesson from the shires of Knox, Sherbrooke and Lilydale which have been instrumental in getting many thousands of allotments cleared. I therefore welcome this additional authority which is to be given to the proper officer to enable him to ensure that the notices are served legally.

During the Minister's second-reading speech, there were two pertinent interjections by the honorable member for Benalla. First, he asked how the fees would be collected. All honorable members know that once a notice is served and the procedure as laid down under section 41 is carried out, if the landowner does not comply with the notice the municipality can in fact clear the hazard and charge the cost to the owner. I agree with the honorable member for Broadmeadows that this cost should become a charge against the property in the same way as unpaid rates are charged.

In country areas, particularly in mountainous districts, there are many allotments which could be cleared only at considerable cost. Although this Bill clearly provides that, in cases where the owner is not known or where his last place of address is not known, the notice may be published in a newspaper circulating in the area, probably many allotments will not be cleared, and the municipalities will refrain from taking action to clear them because of the large cost involved. I believe municipalities could well be given the power to make these unpaid charges a direct charge on the property in the same way as unpaid rates are made a direct charge.

The second pertinent interjection by the honorable member for Benalla dealt with the establishment of ownership of land and the Assistant Chief Secretary replied in the following terms:—

> Without doubt, there would be some trouble; but by the time the work was done there would always be the possibility that some information would come to hand. There are not many pieces of land in Victoria to-day in which someone is not interested in some way.

I dispute that statement, because throughout Victoria to-day there are large sections of land in relation to which there is some doubt as to ownership or at least there is some doubt as to responsibility for the ownership.

Mr. WHITING.—Is this because the Crown owns it?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—No, the land to which I refer consists of undeveloped private streets in subdivisions, some of which were made last century. It also exists in survey roads where a surveyor looked at a map and just drew a line. The line goes over mountains and the area could never be developed as a road. In the Titles Office the roads are shown as belonging to the subdivider, but he would have no legal responsibility for clearing fire hazards from them once the allotments in the subdivision were sold. I could take honorable members to dozens of such areas which are fire hazards in the Dandenong Ranges. The proper officer of the municipality knows that the land exists, but he does not know whose responsibility it is to clear this land.

Mr. TURNBULL.—The owner is the original subdivider.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—That is so, and he could have died 100 years ago. It is obvious that when the relevant provisions were taken from the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act and inserted in the Country Fire Authority Act, the Government should have gone one step further, because I understand that when a notice is served under the Vermin and Noxious Weeds Act, it applies not only to the land in question but also to half of any private street that fronts the land. If my views on this are correct, I believe the Country

Fire Authority Act should be amended in such a manner that notices served under it by the proper officer for the clearance of fire hazards on privately owned land will apply also to that section of the road which is as yet undeveloped. This would be a major step forward in bringing about the removal of fire hazards, particularly in mountainous areas where private street development cannot be expected to be carried out for decades.

I commend the Bill as drafted, but suggest that the Government should examine this further step with a view to assisting municipalities which are showing a great interest in this grave problem.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). —This debate has proved extremely interesting, and I hope the Government will peruse the remarks made by honorable members and find them useful. There is not a great difference of opinion in the views expressed, although I disagree with the honorable member for Scoresby and support the argument advanced by the honorable member for Broadmeadows on the question that the authority of the proper officer should not fall into the lap of the municipalities. I appreciate that in the Dandenong Ranges there is a strong sense of preparedness against fires and that excellent fire-fighting services have been established. However, it is unfair to suggest that all parts of Victoria have the same degree of development which could sustain the appointment of a permanent officer to do nothing else but the duties of the proper officer. To put it in simple language, they cannot afford it. I do not think this task is entirely the responsibility of the ratepayers, because proper control measures are of considerable benefit to insurance companies, and, because they contribute to the Country Fire Authority, that is the body which should be charged with the responsibility of providing these services.

Like the honorable member for Broadmeadows, I am not quite certain in my mind whether this should be achieved by creating additional regions within the State or by providing additional officers within each region to undertake these tasks. Probably either of these methods would be worthy of consideration and doubtless further ideas on this matter will be of considerable benefit.

By and large, the Country Party supports the amendment proposed in the Bill. The only qualification I have regarding it is that I had hoped there would be a more substantial amendment in regard to fire control, because there are many other aspects of fire control which are important. However, the proposed amendment will facilitate the work of those whose task it is to carry out preventive measures. In the report that members of the Country Party made after the fires earlier this year, emphasis was placed on the fact that every facility must be given to the people charged with the responsibility of carrying out preventive burning and the removal of fire hazards. This measure will certainly give some assistance to them.

I agree with the point raised by the honorable member for Scoresby regarding blocks of land in which nobody is interested. It would surprise the Minister to learn how many blocks of land in country areas are in this category. Many of them have been held in families for years, and members of the family have long since departed from the district. It is then a major task to trace the owners of these blocks.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—Before the paper work is finished, a fire has gone through them.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—That is so. This is a major problem to the Forests Commission because many of these blocks are adjacent to Commission land. In addition, in some of the old mining settlements, titles to land were taken out many years ago and the means of establishing the actual physical definition of the land have long since disappeared. Therefore, it is difficult to establish the

actual location of the block. Walhalla is such a place, and it is not possible to define on the ground the particular area for which a title was issued many years ago. This situation will pose problems in the administration of these provisions, but I hope the amendment will assist those who have the important job of clearing these blocks which are fire hazards.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—Like the Deputy Leader of the Country Party, I have listened with great interest to this debate. I do not claim to know a great deal about the activities of the Country Fire Authority, but I have learned from the debate that there are problems associated with the blocks of land to which reference has been made, Perhaps the Authority is confronted with the same sort of problem as municipalities face when they endeavour to carry out the regulations under the Local Government Act. The municipalities simply forward a notice by post and that is where their responsibility ends. Whether or not the notice ever reaches its destination is no concern of the municipality, because if the fire hazard is not removed the municipality has the power to clear the land and make the cost a direct charge against it. That system has worked successfully, and I have no doubt that a similar scheme could be applied in some country areas. However, in other areas referred to by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party such a method would not be successful.

Municipalities have found that the greatest offenders are Government Departments. The Housing Commission, in particular, and the State Electricity Commission control large tracts of land in the metropolitan area, and the municipalities have great difficulty in getting these public authorities to clear away fire hazards. On the perimeter of the metropolitan planning area which abuts the area controlled by the Country Fire Authority, there are many areas which could be an embarrassment to the Country Fire Authority in its endeavours to prevent fires in the summer period.

I suggest that the Minister might examine the situation to which I have directed attention, and that the Country Fire Authority might well approve of my remarks in relation to areas on the perimeter of the metropolitan planning area which abut the area controlled by the Authority. I believe the appointment of a proper officer of the Authority, as suggested by the honorable member for Broadmeadows, might be an additional means of overcoming the existing problem. I do not agree that the municipalities should be burdened with the cost. The honorable member for Scoresby stated that the shires in the electorate he represents have done a magnificent job, and I agree with him, but an enormous cost must be passed on to the ratepayers in those areas.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—In at least one instance a full-time proper officer was appointed under pressure from the ratepayers.

Mr. WILKES.—The authorities in those areas must be prepared to budget for such expenditure. Such an arrangement could not be applied in the Shire of Orbost, for instance, when one considers the Crown land or forest land that abuts the areas controlled by the Country Fire Authority. The appointment of a proper officer by the Country Fire Authority would obviously alleviate the expense in certain areas. I wish to point out that the municipalities have no problems in relation to serving notices, few problems in relation to ratepayers abiding by the notices that are sent out, but many problems in relation to Government authorities which are always the last to clear away fire hazards in and around the metropolitan area.

The motion was agreed to.

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

LAND SETTLEMENT AND RURAL FINANCE BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 9) on the motion of Mr. Balfour (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—In his explanatory second-reading speech, the Minister stated that this measure contains amendments to the Land Settlement Act, the Rural Finance Act and the Soldier Settlement Act. It may seem strange that this Bill should amend three separate Acts, but the history of the matter is that the Soldier Settlement Commission undertook administration of the Land Settlement Act. Then the Rural Finance Corporation was amalgamated with the Soldier Settlement Commission and the name of this body is the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission. The Commission assists in the development of land settlement in Victoria and provides finance to farmers for the purchase of livestock, machinery and seasonal requirements.

As the Minister pointed out, the first amendment relates to the Land Settlement Act 1959 and increases the authority to apply moneys from the Loan Fund for land settlement purposes. The existing authority is limited to £10,000,000, and expenditure to date totals slightly more than £9,500,000, so that only £500,000 remains to be allocated. Expenditure on settlement is proceeding at the rate of approximately £1,250,000 per year, and it is proposed to increase to £15,000,000 the amount which may be applied out of the Loan Fund for this purpose. The increase of £5,000,000 is not very great when one considers that expenditure is being incurred at the rate of £1,250,000 per year. In a few years' time, a further extension will be required. It may have been preferable to seek approval at this stage for an increase of £10,000,000 in the amount which may be applied to this form of settlement.

I am certain that land settlement will make further progress in the years ahead, although the Minister indicated that there is a drying-up of the supply of Crown lands which may be developed for land settlement along the lines envisaged by the Government. Members of our party have other views; we are aware that large tracts of land, particularly in the Western District, which are used mainly for grazing purposes could be acquired and subdivided into small farms if water were available.

Mr. GIBBS.—What area would you suggest, 1,000 acres?

Mr. FENNESSY.—The honorable member is well aware of the land to which I am referring. In the electorate that he represents, areas of from 5,000 to 10,000 acres carry about one sheep to the acre whereas, if they were developed on a proper basis as small farms, many more families could be supported in that district. The Labor Party has always advocated the policy of land acquisition from large landowners, whereas the Liberal Party does not approve of that policy because it represents the interests of the large landholders. Members of the Country Party, too, would like to see a number of large properties, which in some instances are owned by overseas interests, subdivided and utilized in the best interests of the land settler or the farmer and the farmers' sons who are willing, ready and able to develop such properties if they are given the opportunity.

Mr. WHEELER.—Many properties have been acquired.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I should think the honorable member for Essendon, who is engaged in the milk industry, would prefer the establishment of more dairy farms in Victoria to the land being allowed to lie practically idle and supporting only one or two sheep to the acre.

The Minister intimated that it is the Government's intention to acquire certain land where water is available for irrigation. I am familiar with the area that the Government has in

mind because I was a member of the Public Works Committee when it examined the question of the establishment of the Eppalock dam. The honorable member of Swan Hill also was a member of that committee at the time and will recall that when the committee was hearing evidence, certain farmers in the Rochester district were not anxious that the Eppalock dam should be constructed because they knew that their land could be commanded for irrigation purposes. I do not know whether they anticipated that "wet" values would then apply to their land. Apparently, some farmers in the Rochester district are incensed at the Government's proposals.

I read a newspaper report recently which stated that they are attempting to oppose any action by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to acquire their land. The farmers may be taking this action for the useful purpose of attempting to get a better price for their properties. Surely, they must realize that, if the Government is prepared to spend approximately £3,500,000 to £5,000,000 on the development of water resources in that area, it is not likely that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission would allow a "wet" value to be placed on what is now "dry" country and permit those particular farmers who have substantial properties to subdivide them and obtain "wet" value prices.

Mr. PHELAN.—Particularly when in some cases they have acquired it under soldier settlement conditions.

Mr. FENNESSY.—That is so in some instances, but not in all.

Mr. PHELAN.—The land was acquired.

Mr. FENNESSY.—In that area, originally, it was. The agitation I have mentioned is the only agitation which has developed in the area.

Mr. STIRLING.—How much water will there be available for extension of subdivisions?

Mr. FENNESSY.—I suggest that the honorable member for Swan Hill should direct a question to the Minister for Water Supply; I do not have the information before me. Honorable members have heard a lot about the development of Heytesbury. The development is substantial and will be of great benefit to the State. To date, 179 farms are occupied by leaseholders. The Minister indicated that 26,000 acres are under pasture which is being consolidated prior to the land being subdivided. It is hoped that 500 good dairy farms will be established in the area. An important point is that Crown land is being developed.

Those honorable members who visited Heytesbury saw that heavily timbered country had been acquired and was being developed. Clearing was costly. As the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission develops the farms to almost full production before the lessees occupy them, it is understandable that their development is costly. A few years ago, information was given to the House that, under the soldier settlement scheme, the average capital investment, before a settler took over the property, was £17,000. It would be interesting to know the amount of the capital investment in the farms at Heytesbury. Perhaps I should do what I suggested to the honorable member for Swan Hill and direct a question to the appropriate Minister. I thought, however, that he might have given the House that information during his second-reading speech.

The House has been informed that the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission has, so far, made advances to settlers amounting to about £361,000. That amount does not seem so great. The loans have been made for the purpose of purchasing livestock, farm machinery, and such things. The Minister said that the Commission had made loans available to "its" settlers, and I should like to know whether the provision applies only to settlers who come under this scheme.

Mr. BALFOUR.—To those who come under this scheme.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I thank the Minister for providing that explanation. Members of the Country Party would be as interested in this as I am. Such a situation arose with the development of Eppalock. In and around Elmore and Rochester, dry land which was occupied by small farmers, who used it for grazing, can now be irrigated because water is available. Many of the farmers do not have the resources to purchase diary cattle and necessary machinery, or to provide for seasonal requirements. I was approached by a farmer from that area who told me of these circumstances, and I suggested that he should apply to the Commission. But, as the Minister has indicated. the Commission will make money available on loan only to " its " settlers, and so other farmers will be left out in the cold.

Mr. BALFOUR.—They can apply for assistance under the Rural Finance Branch of the Commission. Money is made available to settlers placed on blocks by the Commission for plant, stock, and so on. You and I could seek assistance from the Rural Finance Branch of the Commission.

Mr. FENNESSY.—That is the point I make. The Minister has indicated that only the people the Commission settled on the land could obtain loans from it. I thought that was rather restrictive; farmers are not able to obtain loans to develop their properties.

Mr. BALFOUR.—They can be helped by the Rural Finance Branch.

Mr. FENNESSY.—What the Minister says answers my question. That is a slight contradiction of what he said in his second-reading speech.

Mr. BALFOUR.—You are speaking about three different things.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—I invite the honorable member to make his speech, and I suggest that there be less conversation.

Mr. FENNESSY.—I think I have made my point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hoped to obtain the answer which the Minister has just given, that money would be available from the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission to such farmers as I have mentioned. There is now only one body.

Mr. BALFOUR.—But it has several funds; different things are provided from different funds.

Mr. FENNESSY.—In the past, the Rural Finance Corporation, as it was, would even finance industry in the country. I wanted to be sure that any farmer in the area could approach the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission for a loan, but I am inclined to the belief that special consideration will be given to those whom the Commission settled on the land and other people may be left out on a limb. In the interests of production, I hope they are not.

Another amendment refers to the acquisition of land valued at less than £1,500. The amendment to the Act contained in this Bill will allow the Commission to acquire such land if, for instance, it requires a small block for the purpose of providing access to properties or the building of a road. Previously, the Commission had to negotiate with the owners of such land, because land valued at less than £1,500 could not be compulsorily acquired. A great deal of trouble was experienced in obtaining such land.

Another purely machinery clause provides for the writing off of bad debts. If a farmer forfeits his lease and his assets are sold, the Commission will pay him any equity he has in the property, but in some instances money may still be owing to the Commission. In such cases, it was the practice of the Commission to recommend to the Treasurer that the amount owing be written off. This amendment will have the effect that such recommendations will be unnecessary as the Commission itself will be able to waive the outstanding debt if it wishes to do so.

I was intrigued with the provisions relating to fences. The Commission has never been regarded as a landholder for the purposes of the Fences Act. If fences belonging to neighbouring farmers were destroyed in the process of the Commission's activities in developing land, the farmers could not proceed against the Commission to require it to re-erect the fences because the Commission was not a landholder. Such farmers have had to wait until the land was made available to a settler under purchase lease and then to take action against the settler for his share of the cost of restoring the fences. The reverse situation will now apply, and in this respect I instance the development at Heytesbury, where 25,000 acres are under pasture, buildings have been erected, and stock are on the land. Previously the Commission could not take action, directed to the erection of fences, against neighbouring landholders, if it were necessary, but now it will be able to do so as the amendment provides that the Commission will be regarded as a landholder for the purposes of the Fences Act. This means that a neighbouring landowner will be able to proceed against the Commission to have damaged fences restored, and similarly the Commission will be able to take action against neighbouring landholders if that is necessary.

Another short clause deals with the repayment of interest. It is not of great consequence, but it may assist some farmers. At present, if a settler wants to pay what he owes the Commission, he must give three months' notice. If a settler were lucky enough to win a Tattersall consultation or had a couple of bumper years, he might wish to pay off his purchase lease but, because of the necessity to give three months' notice, he would have to pay interest for the further three months. The amendment provides that the Commission may waive the requirement of three months' notice if that is desired and so payment of the extra interest may be avoided.

The Labor Party regards this Bill, which amends three Acts, as worth while. Its provisions will assist in the development of land settlement and make things a little easier for some leaseholders. Therefore, the Labor Party offers no opposition to it.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—Speaking for the Country Party, I first indicate that we consider that this Bill is necessary and should enable better and smoother working of the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission. The Bill amends three Acts, the Land Settlement Act, the Rural Finance Act, and the Soldier Settlement Act. As has been already stated, three separate functions are now operated within the one Commission. The Country Party believes that the amendments proposed in this Bill are necessary.

Clause 2 amends the Land Settlement Act. The land settlement section of the Commission has rendered excellent service in many different areas for the development of the State. The chairman and his Commissioners have worked hard in a most efficient manner and, although from time to time they encounter problems, they seem to be able to give satisfaction in the majority of instances to the individual farmers or to the groups of farmers who have been settled under the Land Settlement Act.

To illustrate the extent of the Commission's work, honorable members need go no farther afield than Heytesbury, where a vast land settlement scheme has been developed to the credit of the Commission. Certain problems have been associated with the development of Heytesbury. I have visited the area, and I feel that the greatest problem was in determining suitable soil types and ascertaining what could be produced within a certain period from the land that was allocated to settlers. No set pattern could be followed in this regard. If blocks with an area of 300 acres were made available to each settler, I am sure that some settlers

would be unable to produce sufficient with which to maintain themselves, while other settlers in the same district would become well established. Of course, this problem is not peculiar to the Heytesbury district.

Honorable members who have travelled throughout the State would know that in almost any district, some farms, which may be worked adequately and efficiently, do not produce good yields. The action of the Commission in endeavouring to assist the settlers at Heytesbury is creditable. The Commission has allowed additional areas of land to be made available to certain settlers in order that they may make an adequate living from their holdings.

I should like to voice a word of criticism concerning the policy adopted by the Commission when clearing land at Heytesbury. I do not know whether land in other areas of the State has been cleared in the same manner. Unfortunately, when clearing the land, no trees were left standing. This is somewhat short-sighted because a farm without trees is analagous to a ship without a sail. Shelter must be available for stock, and shade assists in the conservation of soil, especially in areas where there is a congregation of water by run-off into gullies. The method of clearing land could be improved.

Land settlement has enabled Victoria to make available to many young men areas of land which have been used to good purpose. The qualification of settlers has been determined by a policy which operates on a points system. I understand that this practice is working satisfactorily, although there are many disappointed men who cannot understand why they have not been selected as prospective settlers. If the current practice was not in operation, the selection of settlers would be very different from what it is. To illustrate this point, I emphasize that twenty blocks are now being allocated by the Commission, which has received approximately 400 applications for these areas. It is not easy to determine who shall be the successful settlers.

Under this Bill, additional financial authorization is being given to the Commission. This is necessary in order that the Commission may continue its work. I believe that recently in a country area the Minister of Lands said that there were huge tracts of land still to be developed within the State. I do not know whether this measure will mean that further land will be developed, but it is pleasing to know that additional authority is being made available to the Commission.

The second amendment in the Bill empowers the Commission to write off the liability of settlers for advances in certain cases. When a settler surrenders either his temporary lease without being granted another one, or his purchase lease without a new purchase lease being granted, he may have certain financial commitments which he is unable to fulfil. In such circumstances, it has been necessary for the Commission to write off certain amounts. These amounts have not been very substantial, and it is hoped that they will not increase when this provision becomes known. Now that legislative approval is being given for the Commission to act in this manner, the Commission will be able to write off liabilities knowing that it is acting within its powers, and the Treasury will carry the responsibility for the resultant deficiency.

The amendment in paragraph (c) of clause 2, which amends section 46 of the Fences Act, will enable the Commission to overcome certain problems with which it has been confronted when it has taken over and opened up new country and found itself at a disadvantage with neighboring property owners concerning the erection of common boundary fences. So far as various public authorities are concerned, the responsibilities for fencing are somewhat different. It is always accepted that

a landholder whose property adjoins Crown land, fences himself off from the Crown; when his property adjoins a road, he fences himself off from the road; but when his property adjoins railway property, the Railway Department fences itself off from the landholder's property. It is interesting to note that so far as fencing is concerned, the railways look after themselves.

The amendment proposed in this Bill will enable the Commission to be a landholder in its own right and, until someone has obtained a purchase lease, the Commission will act as the owner of the land. Therefore, agreement with the adjoining landholder can be arranged, and the necessary financial arrangements made so that the fencing can be provided and maintained in reasonable order.

The amendment proposed by clause 3 to the Rural Finance Act is of no great significance, but it will enable the Commission to take certain action concerning loans and interest payments. Under the existing law, a borrower is required to give three months' notice to the Commission if he decides to make early repayment of his loan, and, when notice is not given, the Commission must charge three months' interest. Frequently, the charging of additional interest is not desirable, and the amendment in clause 3 will enable the Commission to use its discretion to waive the interest when it considers such action is justified.

So far as rural finance is concerned, the Commission is rendering excellent service within the community. This was borne out early this year when disastrous bush fires swept the State. Officers of the Rural Finance Branch of the Commission visited many of the areas concerned and, after discussing the problems with those persons who had been adversely affected by the fires, they provided much-needed assistance to many landholders who, because of the losses incurred, would have had great difficulty in rehabilitating themselves on their properties. I commend the Commission on the promptness with which this work was carried out.

Clause 4 of the Bill deals with an amendment to the Soldier Settlement Act. I think it could be agreed that, as time passes, and some soldier settlers are nearing the stage of life when they may wish to retire or dispose of their properties, or perhaps hand them over to their sons, an opportunity should be provided for them under section 86 of the Act to make certain financial arrangements which would assist them in this regard. They would be enabled to make arrangements concerning the future management of their farms and lead a somewhat more comfortable life than would be possible if they remained on the farms. Again, I commend the Commission for the excellent work it has done in the past. I could cite instances where difficulties have been created by the taking over of land but, in almost all cases, satisfaction has been given to all concerned. I commend the Bill to the House.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time, and committed, *pro forma*.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands) presented a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending that an appropriation be made from the Consolidated Revenue for the purposes of this Bill.

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

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

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Application of Soldier Settlement Act to Land Settlement Act).

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands). —During his second-reading speech, the honorable member for Brunswick East correctly stated that the Bill

amended three pieces of legislation. As I indicated when explaining the measure, one of the main purposes of the Bill is to amend the Land Settlement Act and to raise the limit of expenditure of loan funds from £10,000,000 to £15,000,000.

And I stated that in addition to expending money in the development of various projects, the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission also makes advances to settlers to enable them to buy essential livestock, plant, machinery and seasonal requirements. Up to date, the sum of £361,000 has been advanced for these purposes. I made that statement deliberately to tie the matter up with settlers who had been settled under the Land Settlement Act.

I wish to make it clear to the honorable member for Brunswick East, and any other honorable members who may have doubts on the matter, that the Rural Finance and Settlement Commission has several funds and, almost daily, assists farmers with finance to purchase stock, machinery, and so on, and to erect haysheds and carry out other developments on their land, as well as to acquire additional land, and to repair and build houses. In addition, assistance is given to industry in the country. Out of the agency funds which are operated on behalf of the Treasury, assistance is granted to provide relief in the case of losses caused by bush fire, flood, frost and other disasters.

Mr. FENNESSY.—In other words, the £361,000 applies only to the Commission's settlers?

Mr. BALFOUR.—That is so. Many people are under the impression that these settlers have a lot of finance available to them. I have taken a good deal of interest in the settlers who have been allocated blocks over the past twelve months. In the main, they are persons who are or have been share farmers, who have been employed in the industry for between eight to twelve years, who have a wife and two or three children, a motor car, and the usual amount of household furniture, and who possibly have a herd of between 45 and 70 cows. Very few of them possess any liquid cash in the bank; in fact, some of them go on to the properties with a bank overdraft. That is the type of person whom we help out of this fund in the purchase of stock, tractors, implements, cow sheds, milking machines, and so on.

Mr. WHITING.—Of course, it is only a loan.

Mr. BALFOUR.—That is so. The allocation of farms is worked out on a points system. Applicants are interviewed by the Commission which, in its wisdom, allocates a certain number of points for each particular category, experience being taken into account. I think honorable members would agree that the main thing to determine is whether an applicant will make a successful settler. Over the years, the Commission has not made many mistakes, and I believe its method of selecting settlers is excellent. I think any person who has had seven, eight or ten years' experience in the industry and who possesses a herd of cows, for example, has a fair chance of having a property allocated to him.

The honorable member for Benalla mentioned the clearing of land at Heytesbury. Frankly, I do not blame the honorable member for doing so because the first question most people ask when they go there is, "Why did you clear all the trees?" I admit that the land looks bare, but it was developed in this way for reasons of economy. No doubt in his visit there, the honorable member for Benalla saw two bulldozers operating chain and ball with another bulldozer following up pushing down the trees. This is a more economical process than dodging around patches of timber here and there. It has also been found that if trees which are part of a virgin forest are left standing in patches they often die. In some cases where trees have been knocked

down, there is a regrowth and very nice trees spring up. We believe that the settlers themselves will plant trees, and that if such trees are put in the right places in a few years there will be a fair amount of shelter.

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.

The sitting was suspended from 6.25 *p.m. until* 8.4 *p.m.*

RACING (DOG RACING) BILL.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of this Bill is to—

(*a*) authorize the extension of off-course totalizator betting to metropolitan dog race-meetings ;

(*b*) remove the provision from the Act authorizing persons attending a dog race-meeting outside a radius of 30 miles of Melbourne to bet on any horse-race being decided elsewhere on the same day; and

(*c*) provide for the payment of an allowance to members of the Totalizator Agency Board for their attendance at meetings of the Board.

When the Racing (Totalizator Extension) Act 1960 was passed to enable the introduction of off-course totalizator betting, an amendment was made to sub-section (3) of section 96 of the Racing Act 1958, to the effect that the off-course totalizator provisions of the Act would not apply to dog-racing. The Government considered that, for a new venture, it would be advisable to restrict operation to horse and trotting race-meetings.

The scheme has proved to be very popular with the racing public, and has been most successful in its operation. It has also been most beneficial financially to the clubs participating in the distribution of profits, and to the racing industry generally. The sums paid into the Hospitals and Charities Fund have also increased substantially as a result of off-course totalizator operations, and perhaps it would be appropriate to give honorable members a brief summary of the amounts paid to Consolidated Revenue, and subsequently paid to the Hospitals and Charities Fund.

In 1959-60, which was the year immediately prior to the introduction of off-course betting, the amount paid to the Fund was £884,400. Subsequent amounts were 1960-61, £956,800 ; 1961-62, £1,386,900 ; 1962-63, £1,963,000 ; 1963-64, £2,674,500 ; and 1964-65, £3,338,800. The effect of Totalizator Agency Board operations on starting-price betting operators may also be of interest to honorable members.

Mr. DIVERS.—This will increase the gambling propensities of the people.

Mr. RYLAH.—I am delighted to hear that interjection. The answer is that the amounts previously channelled to the starting-price bookmakers are now going to the Totalizator Agency Board and the taxpayers are reaping the benefit of it. An interesting sidelight is to be found in the report of the Licensing Court, which will be tabled shortly, that the number of objections by the licensing inspectors to hotel licences on the ground that licensees were conducting starting-price betting on the premises has fallen considerably in the past few months.

Mr. SCHINTLER.—The starting-price bookmakers are now a dying race.

Mr. RYLAH.—That is so. The Government—and no doubt the Opposition—makes no apology for that state of affairs.

Mr. STONEHAM.—Is there any starting-price betting on dog-racing?

Mr. RYLAH.—There is a certain amount. I do not know how many honorable members have been to dog

race-meetings. I make it clear that I do not regularly attend these meetings. When I do so, I have the oportunity of meeting a different section of the people. Some people have described dog-racing as "the poor man's racing." I do not know whether or not that is correct. Perhaps I might be in trouble for mentioning that phrase.

Mr. RING.—The workers can attend the meetings only at night.

Mr. RYLAH.—Some workers can go only at night. The people who support this sport are interesting. In some ways dog-racing is better regulated than either galloping or trotting racing. From the stewards' point of view, the precautions taken and the veterinary supervision over the sport is an example to other forms of sport. I have not the benefit of the knowledge of the honorable member for Reservoir as to whether the veterinary precautions are or are not effective. At least these people are presenting the sport in a way that is a credit to them.

Mr. COCHRANE.—Apparently the Warragul club does not come into this.

Mr. RYLAH.—The business done on country dog race-meetings is extremely small. On the other hand, I felt it appropriate to recommend to Cabinet a scheme which could operate on the two main meetings in Melbourne and from which the country clubs should benefit from the distribution of the proceeds from the Totalizator Agency Board. That is the basis on which I have introduced this Bill. If honorable members do not like it, they can toss it out, because I am not going to have a quarrel over it.

This Bill is the result of an arrangement with the dog-racing people in both the city and the country. If I am going to be accused of preferring the city to the country, I shall withdraw the Bill now and not proceed with its second reading. If the honorable member for Gippsland West will listen to me and allow me to complete my remarks, he will realize that the dog-racing people at Warragul will eventually benefit. If he tells me that the country dog-racing people do not like it and that Warragul is in the forefront, I shall withdraw the Bill.

Mr. PHELAN.—When does political pressure start and finish?

Mr. RYLAH.—I do not understand political blackmail, and I do not like to be accused of it, even by the honorable member for Kara Kara. There has been a marked decline in starting-price betting since the advent of the Totalizator Agency Board. Prior to 1961, it was estimated by the Chief Commissioner of Police that more than 200 starting-price bookmakers were operating in lanes in Melbourne. To-day there are none. In 1960, the police obtained 817 convictions against these operators, but in 1964 the number was only 179. This marked reduction is convincing evidence that starting-price operators are now few and far between, and that the racing public prefer legal methods of off-course betting.

Whilst there is little evidence of illegal betting on dog race-meetings, it is felt that the request by dog-racing interests to have the Totalizator Agency Board operate on such meetings in the metropolitan area should be approved. It is proposed, therefore, to extend off-course totalizator facilities to dog race-meetings held in the metropolitan area by the Melbourne Greyhound Racing Association at Olympic Park and the National Coursing Association at Sandown.

The request necessitated inquiries being made whether the Totalizator Agency Board could handle off-course investments on dog race-meetings. The Board has advised the Government that it can provide the facilities required provided that the clubs make certain changes, acceptable to the Board, regarding the framing of the programmes.

Prior to 1960, betting by way of wagering at dog race-meetings was restricted to events conducted on a licensed ground. In 1960, the law was amended to allow betting by way of wagering at dog race-meetings on licensed grounds situate outside 30 miles of Melbourne on horse-race events held elsewhere on the same day, as the Government had been informed by the country clubs that they had spent substantial sums of money trying to improve the sport in country areas, but because of lack of support were finding it increasingly difficult to carry on. The clubs considered that it would aid the sport considerably if betting on horse race-meetings were permitted at dog race-meetings, and rather than jeopardize the future of the sport the Government agreed to the clubs' request in the form of section 57A.

It is considered unfair, however, that bookmakers at dog race-meetings in country districts should be permitted to operate on horse events being conducted elsewhere. By way of example of this situation, both Ballarat and Warragul dog clubs frequently race on a Saturday afternoon, and bookmakers present at their meetings bet on horse events being conducted in Melbourne. This practice is legal under section 57A of the Racing Act 1958, but it is contended that many of the public attend country dog-meetings only to bet on metropolitan events with the result that the Totalizator Agency Board agencies at country centres lose business to bookmakers. On the other hand, the more money held by bookmakers, the greater is the amount of money available for distribution to the dog clubs from bookmakers' turnover tax.

The question to be decided by the clubs was whether they would prefer bookmakers operating under section 57A as a source of revenue or rely on the profits from Totalizator Agency Board operations. I have been advised that a vote taken by the dog-racing clubs on the question disclosed that they were unanimously agreed in favour of the return from the Totalizator Agency Board and also agreed to the termination of bookmakers at dog meetings betting on horse-races being decided elsewhere. The Bill, therefore, proposes to repeal section 57A, and the law will then revert to that which prevailed prior to 1960.

Honorable members will note from clause 4 that it is not proposed to repeal the section until a proclaimed date, which will be after the conclusion of the current racing year ending 31st July, 1966. It is intended that clubs will receive fees and participate in the distribution of bookmakers' turnover tax until they are eligible to receive Totalizator Agency Board dividends. Thereafter they will be dependent upon the commission distributed by the Board.

Clause 3 of the Bill proposes that the interests of the participating dog clubs in the distribution of the residue of commission by the Board shall be the subject of agreement of a joint nominee of the two metropolitan dog-racing clubs and a person resident outside the metropolitan area to be appointed by the Chief Secretary on the nomination of the Dog-racing Control Board.

Sub-clause (2) of clause 3 empowers the Governor in Council to fix travelling and other allowances in respect of the attendance of members at meetings of the Board. This, of course, refers to the general Totalizator Agency Board members who have been carrying out some pretty onerous duties for quite a long while without even receiving travelling expenses for their attendances. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Wednesday, November 24.

DRIED FRUITS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands), was read a first time.

RAILWAYS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 15) on the motion of Mr. Meagher (Minister of Transport) for second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—This is an exceptionally short Bill which seeks to amend section 149 of the Railways Act. Section 149 provides, among other things, that any person who has been temporarily employed for at least two years in the Railways Service is eligible for consideration for appointment to the permanent staff. When service grants applied after three years' service, it was considered desirable that these employees should be allowed a period of one month in which to determine whether or not they desired to accept permanent employment. However, under the incremental payments scheme, which came into operation on 25th October, 1964, service grants which were previously payable after three years' service became payable only after five and seven years' service.

Naturally, this situation removes the need for any urgency in calling upon employees, particularly juniors, to make a decision on whether they desire to seek permanent employment, and the Bill substitutes the words "twenty-four months" for the words "one month" in paragraph (*b*) of sub-section (2) of section 149. This will provide a longer period in which these employees can make up their minds. Of course, if they choose to make a decision immediately after their initial two years' service, the way is still open for them to do so. As the proposal seems to be a very sensible one and provides employees with a greater time in which to make a choice, and thus is in their own interests, the Labor Party naturally has no objection to the passage of the Bill, so there is no point in debating it at length.

The motion was agreed to.

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

STATE FORESTS LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 5) on the motion of Mr. Balfour (Minister of Lands) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—A Bill of this nature is presented annually to authorize loan expenditure on State forests. On this occasion, the sum of £1,375,000, once again a very disappointingly inadequate amount, is to be authorized for the purpose of permitting the Forests Commission to carry out its loan programme. Although the Bill authorizes the allocation of £1,375,000, the actual proposed expenditure during the financial year ending 30th June, 1966, is only £1,088,000.

There is no doubt that the Forests Commission is a Cinderella activity of this State. When one reflects upon the great potential value of the Victorian forests and the tremendous productivity that could be organized if the Forests Commission were given adequate funds, one must realize how consistently it is being let down by this Government. A comparison of the amounts provided under respective headings in the schedule this year with those allocated last year is interesting. The sum of £300,000 is allocated for fire protection work, and the same amount was made available last year. The allocation of £125,000 this year on indigenous State forests is £10,000 more than was provided last year.

The provision of £220,000 for extraction roads is £30,000 less than that provided last year; for plantations of softwoods and hardwoods

the allocation of £520,000 is £60,000 more; for forest officers' quarters, workshops and other buildings the allocation of £90,000 represents an increase of £10,000; for purchase of plant and machinery the allocation of £15,000 is the same as last year; and there is a new allocation of £25,000 for advances for farm forestry.

In relation to fire protection, it is interesting to note that in the annual report of the Forests Commission for the year 1964-65 it is stated on page 7—

> The cost of fire fighting for the summer season was prodigous, being about £195,000, and involved the diversion of funds from forest developmental and regular maintenance activities.

That shows a disgraceful state of affairs so far as the forests of this State are concerned. I am most apprehensive as to what future generations will think of our stewardship, and I contend that we should bring from overseas a top forestry expert to report in a critical fashion —not critical so far as the Commission is concerned because I am sure that with the limited funds made available to it, it is doing a magnificent job—for the purpose of bringing home to the Government and to the people of this State generally the full dimensions of the shocking neglect of our forest resources. In East Gippsland, there is tremendous potential but it is not being developed by modern silvicultural methods.

At page 24 of the report, there is a reference to the devastating fires which occurred in February and March of this year, in the following terms:—

> The Briagolong fire originated in the State forest on 17th February and by 24th February was controlled on its southern edge, located almost entirely in State forest.

That is to say, it was burning for a week.

> On 3rd March, a day of extreme fire danger, another fire commenced on roadside in grass land at Blanket Hill, west of Glenmaggie weir. It travelled rapidly east and keeping south of the previous fire, threatened Briagolong township. On the same day the south-east corner of the original fire broke away and crossed the Mitchell river eventually reaching Bruthen.
>
> The Omeo fire originated from a lightning strike low down in the Tambo river gorge on 17th February. On 3rd March, this fire broke the control which had been achieved and by the 6th had crossed the Buchan river to the Snowy river, with one spot fire thrown across the latter.

Obviously the control referred to was ineffective.

> Seven hundred Commission personnel were mobilized, together with very substantial Country Fire Authority forces to combat the fires.
>
> Accounts are not yet finalized, but direct suppression costs of the fires, excluding overhead charges, were approximately:

	£
Briagolong, Macalister	58,600
Omeo	29,300
Forrest	17,800

To meet these costs, funds have had to be diverted from most urgent and essential works. One could not possibly imagine a picture of greater neglect of most valuable resources. On page 25 of the report, under the heading "Fire Research," it is stated—

> Routine investigation of various fire retardant chemicals was continued. One chemical with promising properties was dropped from an aircraft onto a fire to test both the efficacy of the chemical and the suitability of aircraft available on charter for this purpose.

There is no further comment. I presume that the Forests Commission was favorably impressed but knowing the antagonism of this Government towards the employment of modern methods, especially the use of aircraft, for fire fighting, the report terminates at that point.

I want to contrast this situation with the position of the United States of America, and for that purpose I propose to quote from an issue of *The Australian Fire Gazette*. The Forests Commission reported that the total area of State forest burnt this year was 805,548 acres, whilst about 12,000 fires burn an average of 200,000 acres of natural forests in the United States each year. Admittedly, that 200,000 acres is an

average and the area destroyed in Victoria this year is well above average. In regard to the United States, the article in *The Australian Fire Gazette* states—

Many more start but all but one in a hundred are put out before they can do much damage. To protect the forests, there is a highly skilled organization of many men, the experience of six decades, and the newest techniques.

It is obvious that adequate funds are provided for fire protection in the United States of America.

Mr. DARCY.—Are they pine forests or eucalypts?

Mr. STONEHAM.—The reference is to forests generally. The report continues—

The jumpers' part is the most glamorous and dangerous. Usually they are college students who are carefully chosen for these summer jobs. They undergo four weeks of gruelling training in how to fight fires, take care of themselves in the woods, and jump from an airplane and land safely in whatever kind of wooded, rocky, mountainous, remote terrain a fire might start.

There is a direct relationship between that situation and the Briagolong fire referred to in the annual report of the Commission, because that fire occurred in a remote and inaccessible area. What facilities were provided for men to go in and control and extinguish that fire in its early stages in the interests of the State? The quotation continues—

In minutes they can reach, fight, and put out a fire that a ranger with burro and pack used to take days to get to. In twenty years, 4,529 smokejumpers have made 21,000 jumps.

Air tankers dropped 124,000 gallons of water and retardant on 24 fires in 1956 and nearly six million gallons on 1,050 fires in the severe 1960 season. The use of smokejumpers has risen rapidly, too, from 27 jumps on nine fires in 1940, the first year of operational use, to 2,559 jumps and 637 fires in 1960.

Besides 200 privately owned and contracted air tankers and 400 smokejumpers, the Forest Service air attack forces include many small well-equipped "helitack" crews, who go by helicopters. Tankers, helijumpers—small waterpump tanks and accessories—and hose-laying helicopters are used widely. We expect to have self-guided, retardants-carrying bombs or missiles to carry more powerful suppressants and better chemicals, push-button controls to send them on their way.

I know that this sounds fantastic, but I am drawing a contrast with the absolutely deplorable situation revealed in the annual report of the Forests Commission.

Newer developments include fireproof clothing for fire fighters, an aluminized fabric shelter for emergency protection of men caught in a fire, new pumps and mixers for chemicals, a new hand-held burning torch for widening the fireline, new and larger manoeuverable parachutes, new accessories for helicopters, and a wind machine to blow chemicals on the fire.

I could go on at great length referring to items of that sort. The point is that in this State there are people who are just as modern-minded as the Americans, but for some strange reason the Government discourages them. I refer to the Victorian Air Rescue Service. In the same magazine to which I have referred there is a reference to this organization. These men pay for everything out of their own pockets and provide their services free. In regard to this organization the article states—

Composed of only twelve men—five parachutists, four dispatchers, and two pilots—the Victorian Air Rescue Service aims to bring immediate and effective help to anyone who may have the misfortune to be injured or stranded anywhere in the State.

All the members hold first-class first-aid certificates and each of them is on a 24-hour alert.

They all work in or close to Melbourne and can leave their jobs at a second's notice to join a rescue mission.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—I should like to know if this has a bearing on fire fighting?

Mr. STONEHAM.—It has. The greatest expanse of the Gippsland fires this year was in forests, and I am asking what the Minister intends to do so far as the adoption of modern techniques are concerned. The article continues—

The service operations manager, 30-year-old legal clerk Tom Confoy found that the use of parachutes to drop small packs of supplies was far too costly, so the group set about trying to find a cheaper method.

They participated in test days conducted recently at Eltham by various municipalities, and I cannot understand why the Government is not encouraging this organization.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Is the honorable member talking about rescues or fire fighting?

Mr. STONEHAM.—Their main concern is with situations which develop when bush fires break out. I am trying to draw a contrast with the absolutely shameful provision in this Bill for fire protection purposes. I have dealt only with one aspect—the failure to make proper provision for the protection of our forests from fires.

I could pursue the subject of indigenous State forests and plantations of softwoods and hardwoods and point to the need for a tremendous amount of work to be done so that this State will reap the advantage of the forest resources which have been provided for us by nature, and on which, up to date, we have expended little effort. One can travel for long distances through East Gippsland forest areas and see no evidence of any silvicultural activity. A question which we should ask ourselves is whether we, as a people, really deserve to have the stewardship of these fine resources when we are so flagrantly neglectful and oblivious of our duty to posterity in not seeing that these forests are developed not only for our own use, but also for future generations.

I wish to express my dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of the amount of money provided for in this Bill. I think it is a disgrace to the State of Victoria. I could, if necessary, speak at great length on this subject, but I do not intend to do so. I note in the section of the Bill dealing with the provision for fighting forest fires that, although the sum of £300,000 is shown, the proposed expenditure this year is only £250,000. In his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned a number of items of equipment that will be provided. However, it is obvious that in no part of the schedule is adequate financial provision being made. Consequently, although our party does not intend to oppose the Bill, we hope that next year when the State Forests Loan Application Bill is produced, it will contain some evidence of a greater sense of responsibility towards the development of the vast resources which Victoria possesses.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East).—If the activities of the Forests Commission were confined to a relatively small region—something in the nature of a large factory or large enterprise of that kind—considerably greater notice might be taken by the general public of what the Commission is doing. As its activities are scattered to the farthest corners of the State, the average person is inclined to under-estimate the outstanding work being done by the Forests Commission and the tremendous problem with which it is confronted. I do not share the views of the Leader of the Opposition, who criticized the activities of the Commission. I believe that by and large it is doing a pretty good job within the framework of the funds available to it.

Mr. STONEHAM.—I said that.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I doubt whether many people appreciate the problem with which the State is confronted so far as timber supplies are concerned. Some action should be taken now if we are to be in a position to meet the needs of the community in the foreseeable future.

I wish to quote from a report, which I believe is in the hands of most members, entitled *Forest Finance in Australia*, by J. G. Rodger, B.Sc. Mr. Rodger was the Director-General of the Commonwealth Forestry and Timber Bureau from 1946 to 1959. Therefore, I submit that he would have a pretty fair knowledge of the timber industry in Australia. In the introduction to his report, he states—

> It has been estimated that by the year 2000 Australia will need a log supply of 1,200 million cubic feet. If one-half of this

quantity is to be supplied from the native forest, considerably more money will have to be spent upon this forest than is being spent upon it at the present day and such expenditure will need to commence immediately. If the other half of our requirements are to be provided from softwood forest of a fast-growing type, we will need to increase forthwith our present rate of extension of these forests from about 25,000 acres to 60,000 acres per annum.

This report, which I commend to all honorable members, contains a considerable amount of information and gives a comprehensive summing up of the present position. Mr. Rodger goes on to state—

I believe that the additional moneys needed to prepare now for the demands of the future will have to come largely from Loan Funds and the efforts of private landowners.

I shall not delve into all the reasons why he believes money must come from these sources, but I suggest that honorable members should read the report for themselves.

One of the major problems confronting the development of the forest areas is the system which over the years has been adopted by the Forests Commission in the logging of our State forests. I have had considerable discussions with sawmillers and others engaged in the industry, and I believe that one of the greatest handicaps under which they are suffering is the lack of security of tenure in regard to logging areas. In theory at least the sawmiller has only an annual right to an allocation within an area. Consequently, he is placed in a position where, if he wants to be certain of a return from his efforts, he is inclined to exploit the area rather than to develop it in a way which will provide continuity of supplies.

This point is well illustrated in a comment made by Mr. L. T. Strahan, from whom I am sure all honorable members have received information from time to time, in an extract from *Leaguer News* published by the Victorian Decentralization League in October, 1965, in which he makes the following pertinent comment:—

Expansion of the timber industry at any given centre presupposes only two basic conditions—the supply of wood in the necessary volume should be perpetually available, and the rate of expansion of industry should not exceed the rate of growth of the forests. To the layman and perhaps some sawmillers the second condition may appear difficult, but in fact it calls for no more skill, if as much, on the part of the forester than the skill of the farmer who produces and harvests his crop annually.

Both are bound by the principle that they can harvest only what they grow annually; but here the forester has a great advantage in that he need not harvest his crop when markets are depressed and prices low, provided he takes care to observe the principle over, say, five year periods. He can thus take advantage of market conditions, unlike the farmer, who when the price is "right" generally has a poor harvest. Mostly he has to sell whether he likes it or not.

This principle is one of which the Forests Commission is gradually taking notice. The Commission could well start the ball rolling by applying this principle in the new areas which it has recently allocated in the Errinundra district in East Gippsland. In mentioning those areas, I feel that the Minister should be criticized for the manner in which he released the information as to the allocation of these particular areas. No doubt he was well aware of the considerable conflict of opinion which existed in various parts of East Gippsland, particularly between Heyfield and Orbost, as regards the rights to this timber area.

To sum up the situation briefly, a group of sawmillers at Heyfield, having a large investment in milling equipment and so forth, were faced with a relatively short availability of timber in their existing licence areas. They were faced with the old bogey of the sawmiller that, as soon as he cut out, he had to get out. That is the generally accepted principle on which the Forests Commission has worked over the years. This was the situation which faced the fairly prosperous little town of Heyfield. Naturally, the people of that town were

disturbed to think that within four or five years their town could suffer a severe recession. On the other hand, the people in the Orbost shire have long been looking forward to the opening up of these forest areas because they looked upon them as being a means for further development in the area. They were hoping that the additional people who would move into the area would bring in their wake many of the facilities that most of us accept as every-day rights. So a situation developed in which there was considerable conflict between these two centres.

Eventually, the Commission announced that the Heyfield group of sawmillers were the successful applicants for these areas. I do not dispute the decision for a moment. I think the Commission alone was in a position to make the decision and was in possession of the facts on which to base its judgment. It is not for the purpose of being critical of the decision that I raise this point. I think the reaction of the people in East Gippsland can be summed up rapidly simply by reading the headlines which appeared in newspapers in three separate towns at the announcement of this news. The Maffra *Spectator,* which circulates in the Heyfield area, headlined the news with "Logging Lays Spectre of a Ghost Town". The Bairnsdale *Advertiser,* which circulates between Heyfield and Orbost, greeted the news with the headline, "Timber Project's Mixed Reception". The Orbost *Snowy River Mail* headlined its item with "Outsiders Get Our Timber: Heritage Goes".

In making the announcement, I believe the Minister omitted some important information, first, that, although the Heyfield group of sawmillers were obtaining a new allocation of 12,000,000 super. feet per annum, when they start utilizing this area they will be foregoing 8,800,000 super. feet of the allocation which they at present hold in the Heyfield area. This new area will help to bring about security of tenure and continuity of supplies which are so important and which have been entirely lacking within the timber industry for so many years. The reason for cutting down their allocation in this area is to ensure that their mills will be able to continue, even at a reduced rate of production, for a greater number of years. In the meantime, it is hoped that, with the availability of pine logs from private plantations in the area, Heyfield will become a permanent sawmilling centre.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—I have allowed the honorable member considerable latitude in this part of his speech. I suggest that he complete his remarks on this matter and return to the subject-matter of the Bill.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I was leading up to the point that, on the other side of the picture, there is something which comes very close to forest utilization and the amount of funds to be spent on forests. The Heyfield-Orbost sawmilling group proposes to commence pine planting within the Orbost area, and to build up pine plantations to help provide for the continuity of their enterprise in the Orbost area. A couple of weeks ago, I asked the Minister representing the Minister of Forests to what extent pine planting was being undertaken in various parts of the State.

It was rather disturbing to find that in the eastern division, which is the division that encompasses the Orbost area, no softwood nor, indeed, any hardwood plantation is being established. I believe that now is the time when the Forests Commission should investigate the possibility of pine planting in the eastern portion of the State. We should be adult enough in our outlook on forestry to endeavour to ensure the necessary degree of continuity in forest production.

The activities of the Forests Commission in fire-fighting operations are of the utmost importance. The Leader

of the Opposition quite rightly emphasized this aspect of the Commission's activities. It was unfortunate, however, that in his second-reading speech the Minister did not outline the up-to-date position on the fire-fighting methods and activities of the Forests Commission. I refer to a recent article in the *Latrobe Valley Express*. It drew attention to the intention of the Forests Commission to charter a helicopter for work in connexion with the suppression of fires in the coming season. The helicopter is being purchased by a Mr. Neil McInnes, who is prominent in aerial farming methods in East Gippsland. The helicopter is to be used by the Forests Commission in the coming fire season to transport men and supplies to remote areas. It is to be based on Heyfield. The construction of landing pads is already in progress. No doubt, the proper development of this facility will considerably assist in fire-fighting operations.

I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition that a stage is likely to be reached in which aerial suppression of fires can be undertaken by fire jumpers, the bombing of fires from the air with water, and such methods, because I believe that the fires which we experience are different in character from those that occur in the places where such methods work successfully.

Mr. STONEHAM.—There is a place for these activities.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—If there is a place for them, it is, in my opinion, a limited place. Not many people really appreciate the enormous number of fires that occur in extremely difficult country, but with which our forest fighters manage to cope. If anybody should be bitter about the fire-fighting activities of the Forests Commission, it is the people of Gippsland East, because of what happened there. But I have not detected any great degree of bitterness because most people agree that, to a certain extent, these fires are inevitable. It is not agreed that they need necessarily be of such extent as they were in East Gippsland in the early part of this year.

One of the most important effects of the conflagrations in East Gippsland is that at this stage of this spring, in the eastern division of East Gippsland, the Forests Commission has burnt 140,000 acres of forests. Admittedly, it has been a particularly good year to do this. This has been an extremely dry year and, in the early part of spring, the skies of East Gippsland were almost as smoke-filled as they were during the bush-fire period.

In addition to the 140,000 acres of forest burnt by the Commission, approximately 60,000 acres has been burnt privately. I am advised that has been done with and without Forests Commission approval. The result is that, with the very large area which was burnt in the fires early in the year, there is quite substantial protection from fire in most parts of East Gippsland. This activity of the Forests Commission must receive continued support and encouragement. Our forests should be burnt at the right time of the year when the fires burn slowly and do not damage the timber to any great extent, and the forest benefits as a result.

Mr. STONEHAM.—Is this the first time that burning has been carried out on that extensive scale?

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I suggest that this is the first time in recent years that there have been suitable conditions for burning on such a large scale. In many years it is very difficult to burn the bush for more than a very short period, and there is the question of the physical resources necessary to carry out the work. I believe that the Forests Commission would like to burn protectively around all its boundaries, particularly where its forest adjoins privately owned land, but it is not physically possible to do so. More co-operation between the Forests

Commission, the Country Fire Authority, and private landowners should be encouraged.

I was referring to a newspaper article concerning the methods being adopted by the Forests Commission. The article also reports that two American "trail building" machines are being imported for testing. These machines are something like rotary hoes, but instead of throwing earth behind them they throw it to one side, building up a trail of earth from which burning can take place so that a fire can be burnt around and contained. If these types of machines could be taken to the seat of fires by helicopters or some other method, they could save a tremenous amount of hard work and slogging by Forests Commission employees. At present, these employees have to carry hand tools through very difficult country to carry out fire suppression operations. Anything which can be used to assist them in that work will no doubt be of considerable help in suppressing fires.

I revert to the question of the work of the Forests Commission and the ultilization of our timber resources. One of the Commission's activities is the management of State forest catchments for both timber production and domestic water supply. These operations are carried out most successfully in many of the watersheds of Victoria, and the town supplies from these catchments are in no way detrimentally affected. Very soon, somebody must grasp the nettle and say that this type of activity must be developed in the water catchment areas of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—The honorable member is straying far from the terms of the Bill.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I submit, Sir, that we are discussing the general forest areas of the State which will be developed and built up, I hope, by the provision of funds from the Government to the Forests Commission for timber utilization. It seems rather a pity that such a large and valuable forest area cannot be mentioned during this debate. But I must abide by your ruling, Sir, that it does not come within the terms of this Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I draw the attention of the honorable member to the Bill itself and the Minister's second-reading speech. In neither is there any reference to the subject the honorable member has mentioned.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I believe that the Forests Commission will steadily get into a more and more difficult financial position. I think this is shown by figures I was given in response to a question I asked recently. I sought information on the amounts paid into Consolidated Revenue by the Forests Commission as compared with those received from Consolidated Revenue over the past five years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—Order! I must rule the honorable member out of order. This is a loan application Bill, and I invite him to discuss it.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find some difficulty in discussing the Bill without making these references because certain moneys are received from royalties, certain moneys from loan funds, and certain moneys from appropriation. All these moneys are applied to common purposes. They are not separated so that some particular works are carried out by funds from one source and others by funds from another source.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—If the honorable member cares to read the Minister's second-reading speech again, he will see that it is entirely about loan funds made available to the Forests Commission. The question of revenue and the payments into the Consolidated Revenue by the Forests Commission are not the subject-matter of the Bill.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—I mentioned earlier that Mr. Rogers, formerly the Director-General of the Commonwealth Forestry and Timber Bureau, indicated that it was his belief that the only way the future requirements of forest products for the Commonwealth could be met was by the provision of loan funds and funds from private sources. Unless I can show that the funds available to the Forests Commission will decrease, I cannot justify my claim that the loan funds which must be applied to the Commission in succeeding years must be increased.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—If the honorable member for Gippsland East addresses himself to that aspect he will be in order, but he is not in order in debating revenue.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—To demonstrate my point, I shall simply refer briefly to the comparative decrease in revenue available to the Commission during the next few years. Perhaps I could overcome your objection, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by making a passing reference to a question asked by me on 19th October of this year and the answers supplied by the Assistant Minister of Education on behalf of the Minister of Forests. The honorable gentleman informed me that the anticipated annual collections by way of royalties would remain fairly stationary at about £2,679,000. Approximately one-half of this money is paid into Consolidated Revenue and the other half remains as part of the Forestry Fund.

Although the Commission is supplying increasing quantities of logs from the forests under its control, these logs are now coming from an area of the State where lower royalties are payable. In other words, although the Commission is providing more goods, it is, from a financial point of view, getting less in return. Of course, people in country areas realize that a smaller return is derived from all goods which come from places which are a long way from the capital city. The Forests Commission will be faced with this problem in the future. The Government must examine the question of increasing the loan funds which are made available to the Commission if our children and our grandchildren are not going to condemn us for our lack of foresight and appreciation of the problems that they will meet so far as forest resources are concerned, say, in the year 2000.

Mr. SCHINTLER (Yarraville).—As a back-bench member of the Opposition, who has some little knowledge of the forests of the State, I am apalled to think that this Government, which is supposed to be progressive, has seen fit, with all the knowledge it has, to make available in loan funds an amount of only £1,375,000 to this most important State instrumentality. During the period that I have been a member of this House, and also in my private capacity, I have been privileged to familarize myself with practically all of the forests within the boundaries of the State. In the course of travelling thousands of miles throughout Victoria, I have satisfied myself that the work being done in the forests to-day is of a very high standard and that it is greatly undercapitalized and unappreciated by this Parliament and the general public. I say that advisedly because I am familar with the activities of the members of this very efficient Commission.

I have seen the Commission's watchtowers functioning during periods of fire danger; I have seen these towers being manned for 24 hours of the day; I have seen them at work during fires; and. I have seen the extremely close co-operation between the Country Fire Authority and the Forests Commission. The co-operation between these two instrumentalities would provide an object lesson to many other Government Departments. The co-operation is very much in evidence, particularly

when there are serious bush fires which could affect the well being of the State.

While I have been a member of Parliament, I have heard many thousands of words spoken on the subject of decentralization. I am only a layman, but I am convinced that forestry is an industry which lends itself admirably to decentralization. In our forests, this State has a great natural asset, but, unfortunately, the Government is starving the Forest Commission of funds. As a result, Victoria is importing each year timber valued at approximately £12,000,000. If the State had adopted a long-sighted policy 50 years ago so far as forests are concerned, there would be no need to-day for Victoria to import 1 foot of timber. Unfortunately, however, in the early days of Victoria's history, the forests were razed and ravaged by unthinking people, with the result that this generation is paying for it. Future generations will for decades be required to pay for the short-sighted policy of this Government so far as the loan allocation to the Forests Commission is concerned.

I have clear recollections of condition in this State during the 1930's. Together with many other people who can recall the depression years, I hope that such an era will never recur. However, one good thing emerged from the depression. The starving work force was directed into the wilds of the country, and, hundreds of workers from the metropolitan area, who had practically no knowledge of forestry work, were divided into gangs and directed to plant pines in the Bright district. As a result of this directed work undertaken by starving men in the 1930's, Victoria is to-day reaping a rich harvest.

I have seen land in the Bright district which is producing £500 an acre from the sale of *pinus radiata*, which was planted by forced labor during the depression years. If action of this type could be taken during the 1930's when everybody was fighting for food, why is it necessary in these days of supposed prosperity for the Forests Commission to be starved of loan money? This is a classic example of a Goverment adopting a short-sighted policy.

Many people do not realize that from the economic point of view the forestry industry is a source of great wealth. Some stands of mountain ash and alpine ash in Victoria which I have seen are valued at £1,000 an acre as they stand. Admittedly, it has taken 90 years for these trees to grow and some of them are in inaccessible places, but the value of the timber that can be grown in areas that are suitable for no other purpose is almost fantastic. It is possible to derive mountain ash valued at £1,000 from 1 acre of land. This information should provide the Government with food for thought.

In the areas around Shelley and Koetong, where the Forests Commission has wisely opened up areas of virgin country, having bulldozed, burnt and cleared thousands of acres which have been planted with stringybark, peppermint and pine, the money that is being spent to-day will be returned to the State's coffers 50-fold in 30 years' time. This is an ideal form of investment for any Government which wishes to implement a policy of decentralization. Unfortunately, the Government is giving only lip service to decentralization.

During the tragic fires in 1939, when many people in Victoria were burned to death, the conscience of the public was awakened to the fact that something of a practical nature could be done by way of forestry development. As a result of the policies which were implemented at that time, the Forests Commission has built from its own funds 12,000 miles of access roads throughout the forest area of the State. This is an asset which is not appreciated by members of the public, who have not seen the roads in question. I am appalled that this Government is so

short-sighted as to make only a miserable amount of money available to the Forests Commission.

Mr. BORTHWICK (Scoresby).—The honorable member for Yarraville is appalled that in this Bill the Government has made available out of loan funds an amount of only £1,375,000 for the Forests Commission. Of course, the honorable member knows that Victoria has no real say regarding the total amount of loan funds made available to the State. In fact, the Treasurer of any State Government to-day has almost no responsibility so far as loan funds are concerned, other than that of determining how the money shall be used. When the honorable member for Yarraville suggests that the Government is starving the Forests Commission of loan funds, he should take the House into his confidence and inform it which Department should be deprived of loan funds in order that a greater allocation could be given to the Commission.

Mr. WILKES.—That is your function.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—Of course, it is the Government's function to allocate loan funds! I become bored when I hear this same complaint concerning the shortage of loan funds available to every Government Department. So far as school buildings are concerned, the Minister of Education has frequently stated that he is starved of loan funds, and the same could be said of the Minister of Agriculture or any other responsible Minister. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has no say over the total amount of loan funds allotted to this State.

I agree with the honorable member for Yarraville that money spent on forestry development represents a magnificent investment. But is it a greater investment than money spent on education, health or police protection? In my view, money spent on education is the greatest investment this State can make at the present time. I disagree with the honorable member for Yarraville who suggested that the Government should reduce the loan funds available to, say, the Education Department, so that additional trees could be planted for the benefit of some future generation. If the honorable member wishes to be appalled at the Government and if he desires to attack the Government in this regard, he should say which Department he feels should have its loan allocation reduced.

Under item 1, the sum of £300,000 is to be spent on fire protection. This subject is my main interest in the Forests Commission in my electorate. Earlier, the Leader of the Opposition attacked the Forests Commission for not using parachutists to fight fires in Victoria. It is true that, in the State of Montana in the United States of America, the Johnson Fire Service has achieved fame on television for its "smoke-jumpers". I should like to see the Leader of the Opposition or any other honorable member jump from an aircraft in an Australian mountain ash forest where often the trees rise some 300 feet into the air. This is a proposition quite different from the type of forest fire which occurs in the United States of America, where the parachutists jump over pine or fir plantations and where there is a much softer effect on landing.

The information provided by the Deputy Leader of the Country Party on the development of helicopters in East Gippsland and landing pads reveals a much more effective way of using aircraft—to get to the source of a fire in relatively quick time. In recent years, I have been pleased to note that the Forests Commission has been experimenting with the use of Bentonite at the Ballarat airfield. I hope the Commission will get more information on this. I believe there is a use for some type of aerial fire fighting in the initial stages of a fire—within an hour or so of the outbreak—whereas possibly it would take 36

hours to gain access by foot. I think the Commission should continue with this type of experiment.

Honorable members will recall that for a number of years I have been agitating for the use of town planning measures to establish fire prevention zones in difficult areas of forest adjacent to towns in this State. Some months ago, I was happy to note that when the Minister for Local Government gave his final approval of the town plan for the Shire of Knox, he announced that additional areas in the Dandenong Ranges had been prescribed as forest areas for fire prevention purposes. Over a number of years, under town planning, substantial timbered areas which had been subdivided last century on the western face of the Dandenong Ranges have been zoned as forest areas, thus the Forests Commission has been charged with the responsibility of acquiring the land and returning it to the Crown. The original purpose was to preserve some of the natural beauty of these timbered areas for generations to come. It occurs to me that this method should be used to establish a continuous belt of land that could be burned pre-season by the Commission in conjunction with the Country Fire Authority.

Under the new town plan that has been approved, existing Crown lands and forest controlled land have been joined together by such a belt of land. This consists of hundreds of relatively small areas. The Minister of Forests should ensure that the Forests Commission takes early action to acquire this land which has been zoned, so that pre-season burning can be carried out in the area above The Basin—between there and the ridge of the range. Every major fire in the area has emanated from this "hot spot" of The Basin. I congratulate Cabinet and the Government on the decision it made to zone the area and to support the municipalities in relation to the provision of Forests Commission funds.

Mr. HOLLAND.—Would not the Forests Commission have a priority list for such acquisition?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—In fact, the Commission has acquired a lot of land over the years, but not for fire prevention purposes. This is a relatively small band of land which will provide a continuous strip to be burnt around the township.

Mr. WILTON.—How wide should the strips be?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—With the co-operation of Mr. Gill, the Fire Protection Officer, in 1962, we were able to work out this plan. It has been decided by the Forests Commission that an adequate strip would be 200 yards in width, and that the undergrowth should be cleared pre-season, leaving the timber upright to act as a buffer for flying sparks which would thus fall to a clear floor. In my view, this is the only method of giving adequate protection to a very dangerous area. I am grateful that the Government saw fit to use the Forests Commission in this way. However, unless the Commission is prepared to act quickly in acquiring the property, it may be some years before the scheme will be effective. Again this year I wish to refer to the Sherbrooke Forest, and to pay a tribute to the committee of management, which acts on behalf of the Forests Commission in the area. The amount of money which is available for the administration and upkeep of Sherbrooke Forest is still inadequate. About two years ago, the Minister of Forests saw fit to appoint a full-time ranger to assist in the protection of this national asset. I believe he has been successful in his activities, but I deplore the fact that the forest remains unfenced.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—How big is it?

Mr. BORTHWICK.—The honorable member for Gippsland East is continually harping about the size of the forest. Of course, its area is small in relation to the straggling areas in his electorate. Sherbrooke Forest is

known throughout the world, and whether or not the honorable member for Gippsland East likes it, the people of this State will demand that it be preserved in its natural state.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Then it should be a national park.

Mr. BORTHWICK.—I do not mind whether it is a national park or a forest. While it is administered by the Forests Commission, I shall continue to nag the Commission, but if it is administered by the National Parks Authority I shall nag the Authority. The point is that, of all the forests controlled by the Forest Commission, Sherbrooke Forest would attract ten times as many visitors and bush walkers as any other. Sherbrooke Forest is the showplace of the Forests Commission ; it is a prestige forest and, being close to Melbourne, many people from overseas like to visit it to see an Australian forest in its natural state. Of course, the Commission is entitled to use it for that purpose, but it is unfortunate that access to the forest can be gained from any nearby road. Consequently a lot of the natural growth has been trampled into the ground. Many of the smaller trees and shrubs are being continually damaged by people who make their own track from any side of the forest. For its protection, this forest so close to Melbourne should be fenced, and the entrances clearly defined.

I congratulate the Forests Commission on the fire prevention work which has been carried out in the Dandenong Ranges in recent years. Only last year, some 7 miles of new breaks were established. In the current year, the Commission is establishing for the first time one of the major breaks and works for fire protections in the ranges. Honorable members will be aware that on the western face power lines go from the foothills to the television towers in a large clearing. This follows an old survey road to which I have previously referred, joining Glasgow-road. Glasgow-road is to be extended by 5 chains on either side to provide a break to protect the Montrose and Kalorama areas. This is typical of the keen desire that exists to establish some form of fire protection in the Dandenong Ranges, and I congratulate those responsible in this regard. I know that I have the support of all the local residents when I pay a tribute to the efforts and energy of the forest officer in that area, Mr. Jim Westcott, a man known widely throughout the Dandenong Ranges for his fire prevention work and co-operation with all brigades of the Country Fire Authority.

With the honorable member for Yarraville, I believe that the protection of the forests from fires is of great value to the State. The Government is increasing its softwood plantings; current proposals will ensure the planting of 6,000 additional acres, and the area thus treated is increasing year by year. Within the limits of the available finance, including the loan funds allocated from Canberra, the Government is taking worth-while action in the field of forestry. It is all too easy for members to criticize the Government on its apportionment of loan funds. I think members are too apt to do this without making some concrete suggestion to the Treasurer as to how he should allocate the loan funds in other ways. I deplore that tendency, and I congratulate the Forests Commission on the work it is doing in my electorate.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—This Bill authorizes the provision of loan money amounting to £1,375,000 for works and purposes relating to State forests. I support the remarks made by the honorable member for Yarraville. The Forests Commission is one of the productive instrumentalities of the State. It produces for the Consolidated Revenue Account each year a considerable sum of money, and I believe that if it is to operate effectively consideration should be given to the scope of the

work which it undertakes, directly and indirectly, in regard to forest activities.

Item 1 of the schedule provides an amount of £300,000 for fire protection. In protecting the forests, the Commission is carrying for the State as a whole a large burden of responsibility in protecting assets other than forests. I do not think there has been any better example to illustrate this fact than the fires which occurred in South Gippsland in February and March of this year. In this regard, I think there should be a more realistic approach in the allocation of funds.

Reference has been made to Sherbrooke Forest, and it has been stated that this is a wonderful asset. A consideration of the productive value of that area and the funds invested indicates that the work that the Commission has undertaken there is out of all proportion to the money provided for the other forests in the State. The income is not being returned to the Forests Commission by way of royalties, as is the usual case. The benefit is being derived by the Tourist Development Authority and, as the Deputy Leader of the Country Party suggested, that Authority should supplement the work of the Forests Commission in that area. I believe that this is an important aspect, which the House should not overlook.

Item 3 of the schedule covers an appropriation of £220,000 for extraction roads. It is not only the timber extractors who use those roads; they are used for all sorts of purposes, including tourism.

Mr. HOLDEN.—Extraction roads are not much used by tourists.

Mr. PHELAN.—They are used by tourists and others. In many places, the State Electricity Commission uses forest access roads to get to power lines, but the roads are a charge entirely against the Forests Commission. There are many similar examples throughout the State. I do not think either the Forests Commission or this House wants to split straws on these issues, but consideration should be given to the preservation of our productive assets. With the honorable member for Yarraville, I have a long enough memory to know that a lot of forest areas have been depleted because of the timber needs of our growing community and the financial inability of the Commission to undertake an effective programme of reafforestation. I think the time has come when the State cannot afford to neglect this important aspect any further.

An important feature of which the House should be aware relates to the amount of loan funds that should be currently made available to the Forests Commission. It is not a news flash to advise members that most of the forests producing a significant volume of commercial timber are now hundreds of miles from the metropolitan area, and that 70 per cent. or upwards of the timber won in the State is used within the metropolitan area. However, because of the policy, with which I agree, of stabilizing the prices at which the material can be marketed in the metropolitan area, there is a graduated scale of royalties. The amounts payable outside the metropolitan area are smaller than in it. Formerly, the royalties were fixed in accordance with a 40-mile radius from the metropolitan area, and subsequently they were based on a rail freight factor involving a distance of 130 miles. The scale has been progressively falling. It seems to be obvious that the proportion of loan funds provided for developmental work in the more remote areas must be increased. The allocations from Consolidated Revenue and from loan funds are in the ratio of almost two-to-one.

When this subject was debated earlier, I was interested to hear the Minister of Education interject, "Would you take it off other sections to provide these funds?" If the necessity arose, I should say, "Yes." The

Government must have the courage to decide where it will invest its funds. It should invest them in productive fields such as the forests, which constitute a magnificent asset.

The amount of £25,000 is provided under item 8 of the schedule for advances for farm forestry. This relates to the Forests Amendment Act 1964, the object of which is to encourage private plantings. I consider that this scheme has much merit. There is great justification for encouragement being offered to people to undertake reafforestation if the Government is not capable of doing so or cannot manage its financial affairs sufficiently well to enable it to carry out afforestation works on its own account.

The sum of £15,000 is provided under item 7 for the purchase of plant and machinery other than provided under other items. It appears to me that, in view of the needs of the State, this is a paltry, insignificant amount. When we think of the opportunities that exist for reafforestation work, the provision of only £15,000 for this purpose out of a Budget of some £300,000,000 is out of proportion, particularly in view of the fact that this State instrumentality contributes in excess of £2,600,000 to Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. WILCOX.—You have not read the whole item. It says, " other than provided under items 1 to 5 inclusive."

Mr. PHELAN.—Item 1 relates to fire-fighting equipment. Another item relates to houses, hostels and other items required for staff and other people.

Mr. WILCOX.—Item 4 relates to plantations of softwoods and hardwoods; you should consider them all.

Mr. PHELAN.—I appreciate that the Minister may have tried to render some assistance in good faith. For a number of years, I have taken a keen interest in the work of the Forests Commission, and I have worked with the products of the forest. I regret that, in many parts of the State, in the relatively short period of my lifetime, I have seen the depletion of the forests. I believe that the State of Victoria has some of the best hardwood forests in the world—they are the best in Australia—and it is tragic that, through lack of funds, they are being depleted.

I hope that in years to come the Government will take a more realistic view of things, having regard to the length of haul from the remote parts of the State where the Forests Commission is now expected to operate, and ensure that a greater allocation of loan funds is provided to enable the Commission to operate effectively.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—I could hardly let this debate pass without passing a few comments, because huge pine forests are situated in the north-east of Victoria. Also, much of the ash milled in Victoria comes from this area. Honorable members will miss the contribution that would have been made to the debate by the honorable member for Benambra, who is at present in New Zealand as a representative of this Parliament to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference. During his trip overseas, he paid much attention to the methods used in Scandinavia in the treatment of the forests, and no doubt he will pass on this information to the Forests Commission to further develop the timber resources of Victoria.

I now refer to fire-fighting equipment. Unfortunately, during last summer there was much devastation of our forests. I pay a tribute to those men, who, for many months, worked in the forest areas in an endeavour to save our valuable stands of timber. There is a great bush-fire potential in Victoria. Already protective burning has been carried out. Unfortunately, in parts of the north-east, this burning got out of control, but providential rain assisted this operation and prevented major damage.

The new high-frequency radio equipment purchased by the Forests Commission will prove to be of great value to rural areas this year. The Commission has established magnificent radio control throughout Victoria. On one occasion I was the guest of the Commission on top of Mount Buller, and I had the pleasure of listening to radio conversations between forest officers from all parts of the State. Because of its high altitude, this area lends itself admirably to radio communication. It is gratifying to know that the Forests Commission is well to the fore in radio communication. This was further illustrated when honorable members were also guests of the Commission on a tour of the forest areas of the north-east. We saw an excellent example of the efficiency of the Commission's radio communication system on a day of high fire danger when many outbreaks were reported from various parts of Victoria.

Honorable members witnessed a demonstration of the up-to-date methods adopted by the Commission, particularly an experiment in the dropping of foodstuffs and water from a light aircraft. The use of light aircraft has great potential, not only in the development of fire-fighting methods, but also in the management of forests generally.

The efforts of the Forests Commission in connexion with plantations of softwoods and hardwoods are now being rewarded. There are some magnificent stands of the different varieties of pine at Bright. Not only are the financial rewards now becoming apparent, but it has been found that the trees can be planted as seedlings, and, with reasonable care, can be developed in many parts of Victoria. Some of the stands planted around Bright are yielding tremendous quantities of timber. There is evidence at Bright of a subsidiary works in the development of a veneer peeling machine, which reflects great credit on the millers in that area.

Last Sunday, I passed through the Koetung plantation, and I was agreeably surprised to see that trees planted three or four years ago were doing exceedingly well, and that a further clearance was taking place to extend this plantation. This plantation will develop into one of our major softwood areas.

It should be remembered that Australia imports timber to the value of £100,000,000 each year. Therefore, the Forests Commission should not be deprived of loan funds. Whilst all Departments want more money, there is the tendency to say, "Where will the finance come from?" However, the Government should meet the challenge. I was grateful to the Forests Commission for the opportunity to visit the Errinundra plateau, where I saw one of the most magnificent stands of virgin timber in Victoria, which I did not know existed. I pay tribute to the Forests Commission for its efforts.

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I rise to comment on the speech of the honorable member for Scoresby —I regret he is not present—who took exception to the remarks made by the honorable member for Yarraville. He felt it his duty to spring to the defence of the Government on the question of finance. He used what has become the accepted trick of the Government by pointing his finger at the Opposition and saying, "Where would you get the finance from, and what Department would you rob?" I find it difficult to take the Government seriously when it adopts that attitude. As is the case with every Government Department, the Forests Commission is subject to Treasury direction, and part of its loan funds must be diverted back to general revenue. This is done by making oncost charges for work carried out by the Public Works Department. In certain circumstances, this has been as high as 11 per cent.

Item 5 of the schedule to the Bill makes a provision of £90,000 for forest officers' quarters, workshops

and other buildings. Portion of this expenditure will find its way back to revenue because of the Treasury direction. This applies to every Department which calls on the Public Works Department to carry out necessary works. This is an illustration of the insincerity of members on the Government side of the Chamber in attempting to defend the Government for its lack of foresight by hiding behind a conglomeration of statistics, in the hope that it will be accepted as factual by all and sundry. A closer analysis of the situation shows that there is no substance in the argument of the Government. It should administer its own financial affairs in an honest manner, and stop hiding behind the double-dealing trick of loading oncost charges onto the funds of Departments such as the Forests Commission. This would enable the Commission to obtain greater use from its loan funds.

Mr. DARCY.—What does the Public Works Department do with the oncost charges?

Mr. WILTON.—I invite the Minister of Water Supply to examine what the Public Works Department did from 1952 to 1955, and to follow the methods of financing used by the Government of that time. The answer will be quite obvious, and I am charitable enough to believe that even the Minister of Water Supply could grasp it. Honorable members on the Government side of the Chamber should not continue to advance this argument to justify the actions of the Treasurer and the Government; it is time they were honest with themselves.

Mr. HOLDEN (Moonee Ponds).—I wish to refer very briefly to one of the responsibilities of the Forests Commission. Paragraph (*a*) of section 20 of the Forests Act provides, *inter alia*—

> Subject to this Act the Commission shall out of such moneys as are legally available make provision for the following, namely:—
>
> (*a*) the preparation and carrying out of all forest surveys including such as are necessary for the demarcation of forests and for working plans.

In sub-section (1) of section 3, "working plan" is defined—

> "Working plan" means a detailed scheme for the control and regulation of the working of a forest or any part thereof and for ensuring the maintenance of a sustained yield of forest produce therefrom.

I believe this provision has been in the Act since 1918, but has never been implemented. If there is one thing more than another that this State needs it is the allocation of some of the loan funds made available to the Forests Commission under this Bill for the purpose of formulating a plan for a sustained yield of forest produce from our eucalypts. Throughout the forest industry, there have been moves over this long period to bring to fruition a sustained yield management plan for our eucalypt forests, but why nothing has been done by the Forests Commission to bring this about I do not know. The eucalypt forests are being cut out, and unless action is taken we will have "had" it. I do not think this is good enough.

Mr. A. T. EVANS.—I invite the honorable member for Moonee Ponds to visit the Daylesford district.

Mr. HOLDEN.—The honorable member for Ballaarat North is talking about softwoods.

Mr. A. T. EVANS.—No, I am talking about hardwoods.

Mr. HOLDEN.—There has been no sustained management plan in connexion with eucalypts anywhere in Victoria, and I think it is time that we asked the Minister of Forests to direct the Forests Commission to formulate a plan so that steps can be taken in this direction. I take this opportunity of speaking on this Bill to invite members of the Forests Commission to get off their seats and do something about it.

The motion was agreed to.

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

GAS REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

This Bill was received from the Council and, on the motion of Mr. DARCY (Minister of Mines), was read a first time.

WATER SUPPLY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 19) on the motion of Mr. Darcy (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—This is a Bill to authorize the expenditure of £15,125,000 on works of water supply, irrigation, drainage, sewerage, flood protection and river improvement throughout the State until such time as a further water supply loan application Bill has been approved by Parliament.

The Minister of Water Supply stated that the proposed expenditure for the financial year 1965-66 will be £9,315,000. The reason why £15,125,000 is authorized is to cover expenditure in the early months of the next financial year before next year's Bill is considered.

When one considers that water is one of the greatest assets of the State, the expenditure of £9,315,000 on developmental work does not seem to be a great amount. When the State Forests Loan Application Bill was debated earlier this evening, the honorable member for Yarraville was taken to task by the honorable member for Scoresby who stated, in effect that, if the Labor Party wanted more money spent on State forests, it should indicate from what other Department funds should be taken. I think the honorable member for Scoresby was very well answered by the honorable member for Broadmeadows.

The Labor Party believes there is no need to take money from any other Department to provide more funds for water supply developmental purposes. We consider that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should be constituted on the same basis as the State Electricity Commission or the Gas and Fuel Corporation. These statutory authorities can go onto the loan market and raise money by public subscription for further developmental works. After all, water is the life-blood of the State.

Irrigation has been highly developed in Victoria, approximately 1,200,000 acres being served. This is a greater area than is irrigated in any other State, and I think it represents about half the irrigated land of the entire Commonwealth. This is quite an achievement for Victoria. Yet the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is working under an archaic charter, functioning merely as a Department, and is not permitted to make a profit. Money raised by personal income tax and other forms of taxation by the Commonwealth is channelled into this State as loan funds. Yet we have the situation in Victoria that the headworks for irrigation schemes are capitalized by the State, and charges to irrigators are based on the costs of maintenance and distribution only.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Do you not think this should be the case?

Mr. FENNESSY.—Why should not capital works be paid for by the water users? Capital works of the State Electricity Commission and the Gas and Fuel Corporation, which are provided from money subscribed by the public, are paid for by those persons who use the services provided. What is wrong with that? After all, if primary producers had to pay a little more per acre foot of water used, the additional cost would be passed on to consumers.

Mr. WHITING.—You are supporting higher charges to the consumer?

Mr. FENNESSY.—Farmers would do that in any case. This is a popular theory with members from the country. They maintain their

numbers in this House only on account of the attitude they adopt on this question. Their slogan is, "Hands off the primary producer; get everything for him as cheaply as is possible." This is a winner for them at election time. But the Labor Party makes no apology for making this suggestion. We make no apology for believing that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should be constituted along similar lines to other statutory authorities. I am sure that the businessmen in this House, particularly those on the Government side of the Chamber, know that this is practical thinking. It is not possible to run a business in the manner in which the Commission is being conducted, using public revenue as a means of providing capital head works. Until such time as the Commission is functioning as a proper statutory authority and can go onto the open market to raise money, the position will not be rectified.

In a journal published by one of the trading banks recently, I read a suggestion that primary producers are at a disadvantage because they are unable to go onto the open market for money in the same way as ordinary businesses do and raise capital by the issue of debentures and unsecured notes. Of course, this is a popular method of financing these days. If a primary producer wants money with which to improve his property, he has to go cap in hand and ask his bank manager for a further overdraft. It is only begging the question to suggest that he does otherwise.

At present, the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission is working on a ten-year plan for water development, and this plan was actually a recommendation made by the Public Works Committee in its interim report on the water resources of Victoria. I think honorable members generally will agree that it was a good recommendation, and the Government is adopting it. The result is that the water resources of this State are being developed as they should be. The first project undertaken was the Bellfield dam in the Grampians, which is now nearly completed. In addition, the first stage of the Buffalo river dam near Myrtleford is to be opened next Friday. When the second stage of this dam is completed under the ten-year programme, there will be 600,000 acre-feet of water behind the dam well. Of course, large amounts of money are required for the construction of these dams. In addition, the Government has to face up to the problems associated with the acquisition of the land necessary to enable the second stage to be undertaken.

Mr. TREWIN.—Have the land acquisitions for the first stage been completed?

Mr. FENNESSY.—The honorable member would know more about that than I do. So far as I know, the first stage of construction is completed. This Bill provides £800,000 for land acquisition this financial year, so those farmers whose land was acquired for the first stage of the project and who have not yet been compensated should receive their money this financial year.

Mr. DARCY.—The money is available.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The honorable member for Benalla will now be able to convey that information to his constituents. The next stage of the plan is the construction of the Nillahcoote dam on the Broken river and a further development is the Winton swamp project, where there will be a diversion from the Broken river into the Winton swamp and the water will be used in the Goulburn area. The first shot for the Nillahcoote dam was fired about a month ago. On that day I met several of the farmers in the area, and they were most joyful that the project had been started. It will provide water for irrigation for those farms along the Broken river

below the dam, and will ensure that Benalla has a secure water supply, which is all to the good.

Taken by and large, the ten-year programme is proceeding satisfactorily, but, if more money was available along the lines I suggested, it might be possible to complete more of these projects within the ten-year period. I have some doubts that the whole programme will be completed under the present method of financing.

Members of the Labor Party are concerned about the water situation which exists at present. Most honorable members are aware that Victoria is suffering from a drought, and recent reports indicate that very little rain has fallen in the watershed areas, with the result that most of the main reservoirs are not carrying anywhere near their full capacity. I understand that the Hume weir is only a little more than half full and Eildon weir is low. It is possible that irrigation farmers may have to face a cut in their water supplies this year. This does not mean that they will not get their usual water-rights plus 30 per cent. sales. In many instances, the farmers have been buying up to 70 per cent. additional to their water-rights, but they may not be in such a fortunate position this year. If they are restricted in the use of water, they may have to reduce their herds, and that would be bad for the country. Unless good rain falls soon, a serious situation could face Victoria next year, with the result that financial returns will be lower.

In regard to water reserves, an article in the *Age* of Tuesday, 6th July, is of interest. It states—

WATER CUTS WARNING.

Victorian farmers face a substantial cut in irrigation water supplies next season unless good rains fall soon.

The acting secretary of the Water Commission (Mr. G. W. Lewis) said yesterday rainfall on the main irrigation catchments for the first half of the year was, in some places, down to a quarter of the average.

Flows into the reservoirs during June have been among the lowest recorded, he said.

The volumes carried over in most Victorian storages are adequate to ensure a reasonable satisfactory delivery.

That is not very encouraging to irrigators generally.

But, unless good rains fall on the catchments over the next six weeks, the water available to individual irrigators is likely to be substantially less than during the 1964-65 season.

In the *Age* of 5th November, the following statement appeared:—

IRRIGATION WATER LEVELS ARE DOWN.

Victoria's irrigation water storages at the end of October were at their normal December level.

Honorable members can imagine the drag-off for irrigation water over a period of two months.

A State Water Commission spokesman said yesterday the partial failure of this year's spring rains had advanced the season by about two months.

If further useful spring rains did not fall some irrigators on the upper Murray system could be restricted.

Figures issued by the Commission this week showed Victoria's storage reservoirs were 1,239,700 acre-feet below capacity.

Worst affected was the 2,500,000 acre-feet Hume weir on the River Murray, which was 750,000 acre-feet below capacity.

The spokesman said the inflow into Hume weir this year was only about 35 per cent. of the normal rate.

Failure of early spring rains had already caused an abnormal October demand on supplies by farmers producing irrigated annual pastures.

Demand would not be great again until early December, when fruit, vegetable and annual pasture irrigators needed more water.

In regard to the Eildon storage, the report states—

This season large amounts of water would have to be released from Eildon weir to supplement the flow of water along the Murray.

The River Murray Commission announced in Melbourne yesterday it would allocate fixed amounts to Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia during the 1965-66 irrigation season.

The quotas were retrospective to November 1, and it would be left to the States to decide how the water would be used.

This will be causing a great deal of concern to irrigators in the Goulburn-Murray irrigation system.

Taken by and large, the situation to-day is not hopeful, and I think it is a matter for great regret that the stage has been reached where we are building mainly storages and not taking care of the loss of water in the distribution system.

When I refer to the loss of water, I have in mind the archaic system which perpetuates water losses and which has proceeded almost since the days when Deakin founded the irrigation system in Victoria. The system of open channels results in an immense seepage loss. Maintenance of these channels is costly, and in some cases they are overgrown with weeds, such as distichum, which slow down the flow of the water. It is to be regretted that more attention has not been paid to the distribution system and the resultant water losses.

Only recently, the chairman of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, Mr. Tisdall, stated that water losses amounted to about 30 per cent. in the irrigation areas and about 60 per cent. in the Wimmera-Mallee system. The Wimmera-Mallee system is a classic example of the wastage of water in its distribution. What is the point of building storages from loan funds if we do not ensure that the water that is stored reaches its ultimate destination on the farm?

Mr. WHITING.—What is the alternative?

Mr. FENNESSY.—I hope to be able to inform the honorable member. As I have said previously, the water should be piped, particularly in the Wimmera-Mallee system, irrigation channels should be concrete lined, and the laterals in the irrigation system, where possible, should be pipes. Last year I attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference at Jamaica with the Clerk of the Parliaments, Mr. John Robertson. Whilst overseas, we paid a visit to the Salt river project in Arizona. I have no doubt that Mr. Robertson would agree with what I am about to say. In this project, most of the water comes from one river, and practically the whole flow of the river is conserved. This project is situated in the 6-in. to 8-in. rainfall belt, and one would imagine that evaporation in this desert area would be very great. The water from the Salt river project is piped, particularly the laterals, and the main channels are cement lined. I have yet to hear any suggestion of that method being adopted in Australia. The pipes which have been used in the Salt river project are no-joint cast-in-place concrete pipes. If any member is interested, I have brochures from the No-Joint Concrete Pipe Company, Yuba City, California. I took the opportunity of speaking to the engineer, who showed Mr. Robertson and me over the whole system. I told him that I would be interested to learn details of the no-joint cast-in-place concrete pipe and would be grateful if he could forward any information to me.

There are two no-joint cast-in-place concrete pipe companies in America. One is the Fullerform Continuous Pipe Corporation in Phoenix, Arizona, and the other is the No-Joint Concrete Pipe Company, Yuba City, California. One company uses a pneumatic tube over which the concrete is poured, the tube is deflated and pulled out, and then used again further on after the concrete machine passes over it. The other company uses a system of steel half-pipe moulds, separated by strainers. Once the concrete is placed over these moulds, which extend for a distance of perhaps 30 or 40 feet, and it hardens, a man knocks out the strainers and the moulds are taken out and used again. Some of the pipes are up to 4 feet or 5 feet in diameter. This method is less expensive than the pneumatic tube method, and was used in the Salt river project. I believe the steel mould method

would probably result in a better cast of the no-joint pipe. This method is 20 per cent. or 25 per cent. cheaper than pre-cast pipes.

I was interested to learn that neither of these companies had any connexions in Australia. After Mr. Wilson, the engineer on the Salt river project, had written to the Fullerform Continuous Pipe Corporation, I received the following letter:—

Dear Mr. Fennessy :

Mr. T. T. Wilson, Jr., Engineer for Salt River Project, Phoenix, Arizona has informed us of your visit and your particular interest in cast-in-place concrete pipe. He has asked us to furnish you with additional information that we may have. Various pamphlets and other material is enclosed.

It may be of interest to you to know that we have had considerable correspondence with many companies in your country that have been interested in our pipe construction method that have not materialized principally because of the pre-cast pipe manufacturers opposition to our construction. Pre-cast companies are attempting to keep our equipment out of their territories in order to maintain their price structure, yet it is to the advantage for users of concrete pipe to have us in the area just to get the much lower prices. The advertisement on back of Western Construction reprint will give you a good example of this.

If there is any other information that we can furnish, let us know.

Sincerely yours,
(Sgd.) Frantz R. LUPTON,
President.
FULLERFORM CONTINUOUS PIPE CORP.

I understand, from conversations with certain engineers in America, that the company in question is the monopoly known as the Hume pipe company.

If anyone can get get past the Hume company, he is good. So far as that company is concerned, it pre-casts pipes. I have a list of the prices from the American company to which I have referred, and I know that, as a businessman, the honorable member for Kara Kara will be interested in this information. The costs of the cast-in-place pipe is much lower than the pre-cast pipe. It is understandable why the American firms are having difficulty in getting this machine into Australia to do this work.

Mr. RAFFERTY.—In Arizona, what is the delivery cost compared with other parts of America?

Mr. FENNESSY.—I have not those figures with me, but I believe I could get them. It is possible that there may be comparisons. In America, the comparative cost per acre to the irrigator is much higher than the cost to Victorian irrigators. The cost of the commodities that accrue from the irrigated areas in America are not much higher than in Australia. The irrigators in America pay more for their water than is the case in Australia.

The Salt River project in Arizona is operated under a statutory authority and has Government support. It is run on business lines. However, there are difficulties with riparian rights. Mr. Robertson and I were interested in this aspect, and Mr. East, the former chairman of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, reported on it. Victoria had no trouble with the introduction of its Water Act because it is based on a system of almost complete nationalization of water within Victoria. Riparian rights are almost non-existent in Victoria, and the original Water Act provided for that. The riparian rights died with the original owner of the property. But that is not the case in America. With an irrigated property close to a town, there is the dual situation that the property still has the water right, and if it is subdivided and used for housing, each house owner has the riparian right, and irrigation water is available as well as water for domestic purposes. There are two systems; the irrigation water comes to a certain point and a charge is made to bring the water onto the property. Instead of watering the gardens, they flood them. The average irrigation system is used in the same way as on irrigation properties.

On the question of the piping of water, in the *Herald* on Wednesday, 21st April in the column "Country Party Voice" there is an article under the heading, "Water Must Go by Pipe-lines", which states—

> Surprising little publicity has been given to the suggestion made recently on the way to improve Australia's water supply,—one of the most important elements in future prosperity and progress of this country. Speaking in the House of Representatives late last month, the Country Party member for Mallee, Mr. Winton Turnbull, said that this country was becoming more dependent than ever on water, even during normal seasons.
>
> He said the adequate supply of water for domestic use, for stock and for irrigation, was an urgent necessity.

That is true. Who should know more about it than the honorable member for Mallee in the House of Representatives? The Wimmera-Mallee system flows through his electorate. It must appal him, as it does all of us, to see more than 50 per cent. of the water being lost to the individual farmers. We should get down to the basis of piping water, first to the Wimmera-Mallee system. It is the old question and the old argument: "Where are we to get the money from?" As the Minister of Transport knows, the same argument has been used in relation to the underground railway in Melbourne. Everyone agrees that the underground system is necessary.

I believe that irrigation water should be piped. The State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should allocate a certain proportion of its moneys each year for the piping of water for the Wimmera-Mallee system, and when further funds become available, the Murray-Goulburn system should be so developed. As an honorable member interjected, it is done in Western Australia. It gladdened my heart to see that, at the Wellington dam in the south-west of Western Australia, which was recently completed, pipes were plugged into the wall of the dam and the water was piped into the wheat country and used for stock and domestic purposes. If it can be done in Western Australia, which is a poorer State than Victoria, surely Victoria can at least make a start.

The cost of the pipes could be met by the sale of the water that would be saved. At present, 50 per cent. of the water is lost, and if 30 per cent. of that water could be saved for sale, it would probably meet the cost of the pipes.

Mr. PHELAN.—Probably it could be done if the Comomnwealth Government was a little more realistic and was prepared to give Victoria a better reimbursement.

Mr. FENNESSY.—There is no doubt about that. I recently read the March-May, 1964, issue of *Victoria's Resources*. It provides a fund of information for anyone interested in water conservation projects. An article entitled "Water Resources of Victoria" was contributed by Mr. R. A. Horsfall, M.B.E., Commissioner of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It deals with the whole Victorian water situation. If any member has not already read this article, I advise him to do so.

Mr. Horsfall's summary is worth recording as it gives such an extremely good picture of the situation in Victoria. He puts his summary in question and answer form under the title "Summary—Water Resources of Victoria".

> Question.—How much have we got?
>
> Answer.—About sixteen and one-half million acre-feet as average annual stream flow.
>
> Question:—Where is it?
>
> Answer.—42 per cent. in Northern Victoria and about the same—or possibly slightly less—in the south-eastern part of the State, the balance in the south-west.
>
> Question:—How much do we use?
>
> Answer:—About 1970, or possibly before, we will be using about 3,600,000 acre-feet north of the Divide; 630,000 acre-feet in the south-east; 70,000 acre-feet in the south-west; a total of 4,300,000 acre-feet for the State.
>
> Question:—How much more could reasonably be used?
>
> Answer:—(i) North of the Divide, 600,000 acre-feet;

I was a little surprised to see the figure of 600,000 acre-feet, because that is the amount of water which will be stored in the Buffalo river dam within the next ten years, and there is still to be taken into consideration Nillahcootie reservoir on the Broken river, and the Winton swamp outside Benalla. The summary continues—

(ii) South-east, 3,400 acre-feet; (iii) south-west, perhaps, 700,000 acre-feet. Total, Victoria, 4,700,000 acre-feet.

That is the extra amount which could reasonably be used. In his conclusion Mr. Horsfall said—

The general position is perfectly clear. It is likely that, by 1980, all rivers of northern Victoria will be used to the greatest extent practicable. Waters of the south-west, with some important exceptions, are inclined to be saline.

That is the Wannon river and surrounding area.

The Snowy and rivers further east are too remote; those of South Gippsland are too small. For immediate practical purposes we are left with the waters of the streams between Melbourne and the Tambo. From these, at very great expense, we could reasonably expect to use 2,000,000 acre-feet per annum in addition to the volume now abstracted.

Mr. Horsfall's summary is so worth while that I thought it should be recorded in *Hansard* for the benefit of honorable members who may not have seen his article. He claims that some 2,000,000 acre-feet of water could become available in the future.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—That is in south-eastern Victoria?

Mr. FENNESSY.—That is over the whole of Victoria, but the south-east of Victoria is the future watershed of the State as almost all the water from the north-eastern rivers is already being used.

By and large, I have stated the position of the Labor Party. More attention should be paid to using to the best advantage the water already in our storages. That can be done only by making our distribution system more efficient and by ensuring that the waste which occurs in the irrigation areas both in the north and, to a much greater degree, in the Wimmera-Mallee system, is reduced to the minimum. I believe this can be done only by the introduction of a piping system, and I should like to see the system operating in the Salt river project in Phoenix, the cast-in-place concrete-pipe system, introduced in Victoria. I have no doubt that Mr. East, the former chairman of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, visited the Salt river project, and it is probable that the Commission has in its files information about the cast-in-place concrete-pipe system and its cheapness.

The Commission could introduce the system. It is not necessary for any private individual to try to defeat the monopoly of the Hume pipe company in Victoria, and, indeed, in Australia. I feel certain that once this system was introduced into Victoria, other States would be interested. It would effect a very great saving in costs of installation and at the same time would allow us to conserve much more of our water and to use it to greater advantage, to the benefit of the primary producers of this State, by cutting down our loss of water to a minimum. The Labor Party does not oppose the Bill.

On the motion of Mr. WHITING (Mildura), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

TRAFFIC CONTROL AT INTERSECTION OF BOURKE AND SPRING STREETS.—UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: GRANTS BY AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH GRANTS COMMITTEE.—LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT: COUNCILLORS' INSURANCE.

Mr. DARCY (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That the House, at its rising, adjourn until to-morrow, at half-past Ten o'clock.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. DARCY (Minister of Water Supply).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—On two occasions I have raised with the Chief Secretary the matter of the control of traffic on the corner of Bourke-street and Spring-street, outside Parliament House. On each occasion, the honorable gentleman was good enough to bring the matter to the notice of the Police Department and the Traffic Commission. Mr. Thorpe of the Traffic Commission has been in touch with me and made certain suggestions. However, I am sure that the Chief Secretary agrees that police supervision is lacking at this corner. Police who are on duty on the steps of Parliament House apprehend motorists who do not obey the stop sign a little to the north of the intersection, but they pay no attention to the traffic turning into pedestrians crossing the street. Surely it is not too much to ask these young constables, who are learning the tricks of the game outside Parliament House, to watch the traffic which is continually turning into, and not giving way to pedestrians.

It is a hazard to cross Spring-street. Elderly people take two steps out and find that the light cycle is timed so finely that there is not sufficient time for them to get across. One honorable member of this institution was prosecuted for walking against the red light at this crossing and was fined. It was through no fault of his own that he was stranded half way across; the rapid light cycle was responsible for his plight. I know that the Chief Secretary is interested in this matter and has brought it to the notice of the police. I urge that the police be asked to concentrate particularly on the northern corner of Bourke and Spring streets and the crossing to Parliament House.

Mr. DIXON (St. Kilda).—I wish to bring to the attention of the House and the Minister of Education a comparison of the figures released by the new Australian Research Grants Committee, the chairman of which is Professor Robertson of Adelaide. The figures to which I refer are—

	Melbourne.	*Adelaide.*
Total amount of research grants recommended ..	£272,153	£249,249
Percentage of total grants to all universities ..	14.7	13.5
Percentage of teaching and research staff in all universities, 1964 ..	17.3	10.4
Percentage of bachelor degrees conferred in all universities, 1964 ..	23.6	10.4
Percentage of higher degrees conferred in all universities, 1964	24.6	11.7

My point is that amounts awarded by the New Australian Research Grants Committee are grossly disproportionate to the research facilities at these particular universities. If there is no particular research project which demands a disproportionate allocation of funds to Adelaide University, what is the reason for these disproportionate amounts being awarded?

Mr. MANSON (Minister without Portfolio).—I shall direct the remarks of the honorable member for Northcote to the attention of the Chief Secretary, who has already shown his interest in this matter. I suggest that the honorable member should speak to the Chief Secretary to-morrow to see what can be done.

I shall certainly direct the attention of the Minister of Education to the figures quoted by the honorable member for St. Kilda. I suggest that he should furnish the Minister with the details he has available as quickly as he can, so that the Minister can make immediate inquiries.

Mr. FENNESSY (Brunswick East).—I direct a matter to the attention of the Minister for Local Government. To-day I received a letter from the

town clerk of the City of Brunswick, dated 16th November, which reads as follows:—

Re: Councillors' Insurance.

I understand that Cr. Ernest Jones has discussed with you and sought your interest in the matter of whether or not he is covered by the recently instituted Insurance, in respect of the incapacity he suffered and sustained on the occasion of the opening of the West Brunswick Elderly Citizens' Social Centre on Sunday, 22nd August, 1965. In regard thereto I desire to advise that I have written to the Secretary of the Municipal Association and subsequently to the Secretary for Local Government and a copy of each letter is attached for your information, together with a copy of the Municipal Association's Secretary's reply. No reply is yet to hand from the Local Government Department.

The letter to the secretary of the Municipal Association of Victoria is dated 26th August, 1965, and reads—

It is with regret I have to inform you that Cr. Ernest Henry Jones suffered a cerebral haemorrhage while acting in an official capacity on Sunday afternoon last, the 22nd instant and I advise you accordingly in case the provisions of the recently adopted Insurance Scheme apply.

The circumstances are as follows :—

Cr. Jones was Chairman of the Council's Elderly Citizens Social Centre Management Committee which consists entirely of local councillors.

On Sunday afternoon, 22nd August the new Centre erected by the Council at McColl-street, West Brunswick, was officially opened and Cr. Jones chaired the proceedings. At the conclusion of the formalities and as afternoon tea was being partaken Cr. Jones suffered a bad turn and I called his personal physician who diagnosed the trouble as a cerebral haemorrhage. The doctor called an ambulance to transport Cr. Jones home. He is obviously paralysed down the right side and quite unable to use his right hand and his leg is also affected.

A similar letter was forwarded to the secretary of the Local Government Department on 4th October last, but no reply has yet been received. As this is 17th November, it is evident that there has been some considerable delay. The reply which the town clerk received from the Municipal Association of Victoria was dated 31st August, 1965, and reads as follows—

I received your letter of 26th August and note with regret the illness which has befallen Cr. E. H. Jones whilst acting as Chairman at the official opening of the Elderly Citizens Centre on Sunday afternoon, 22nd August, last.

You inquire as to whether Cr. Jones would be covered by the councillors accident insurance policy issued by this Association to him. You will note that the benefits are to compensate for bodily injury caused solely and directly by accidental, violent external and visible means. This being so, I would imagine that Cr. Jones is not covered by the policy as his illness would have occurred through natural causes.

I was present at the opening on the day in question. I know Cr. Jones personally. He has taken a very active interest in the elderly citizens' centres in Brunswick, and he is chairman of the councillors' committee. He has been very active in this field for several years, and all agree that the elderly citizens' centres in Brunswick are a credit to the council.

Probably, there are more centres in Brunswick than in any other municipality. On the day of the opening of the new centre, Councillor Jones took an active interest to ensure that all the arrangements were complete and that everything was in order. He gave an address at the official opening. He was overcome more or less by the excitement created by the atmosphere and the activity in which he was engaged and, subsequently, he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage. Councillor Jones is now unable to work; he has lost his livelihood.

Councillor Jones's case is a matter of grave concern to all municipal councillors who are covered by the terms of this insurance, which provides compensation for accidents to councillors while they are engaged on official council business. Councillor Jones was engaged on official council activity, and I subscribe to the opinion that he should be covered by this insurance which is taken out by the Municipal Association. All councillors will be interested in the outcome of this case. I feel certain that, if it had not been for the activity in which Councillor Jones was engaged, he would not have suffered the cerebral

haemorrhage at the time, although no one could say whether he might have suffered it at some other time.

I ask the Minister without Portfolio to consider this matter. A letter containing the details of the case was forwarded to the secretary of the Local Government Department, but as yet Mr. Foletta has not received a reply. I should be grateful if the Minister without Portfolio would direct this matter to the attention of the Minister for Local Government.

Mr. MANSON (Minister without Portfolio).—The honorable member for Brunswick East has raised a matter of great principle to which he obviously does not expect me to give an off-the-cuff answer. However, I assure him that I shall direct the matter to the attention of the Minister for Local Government and ask for immediate inquiries to be made. I shall supply the honorable member with an early reply.

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.28 *p.m.*

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, November 18, 1965.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER **(Mr. Christie)** took the chair at 11.5 a.m., and read the prayer.

LOWER YARRA CROSSING.

CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY: ESTIMATES: METHOD OF FINANCING: CALLING OF TENDERS.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition) asked the Premier—

In respect of the proposed Lower Yarra crossing—

1. Whether a company has been registered with the approval of the Attorney-General; if so—(*a*) under what name and when; (*b*) what are the objects of the authority; (*c*) what is its capital; (*d*) whether it is a company limited by guarantee and, in such event—(i) who the guarantors will be, and (ii) what amount of guarantee will be provided by each; (*e*) who are the persons whose names appear in the memorandum of association?

2. Whether any bond will be provided to guarantee that the works will be satisfactorily completed and put into operation; if so—(*a*) by whom it will be furnished; (*b*) for what amount; and (*c*) what exigencies will be covered?

3. Whether reliable estimates have been prepared of—(*a*) costs of the proposed works; (*b*) annual anticipated income; (*c*) volume of traffic; and (*d*) scale of tolls to be charged; if so, what are the respective estimates?

4. Whether it is intended that the authority will raise the necessary finance locally or abroad and, in the former event, what effect this is likely to have on the programme of public works in this State?

5. What rate of interest will be paid in respect of finance so raised?

6. When it is anticipated that the bridge will be free of debt?

7. How many members will constitute the authority; by whom they will be appointed or elected and what interests they will represent?

8. Whether responsible individuals have already indicated their willingness to serve on the authority; if so, what are their names and positions?

9. Whether the accounts of the company will be subject to annual audit by the Auditor-General?

10. Whether public tenders will be called for the proposed work and whether the lowest satisfactory tender will be accepted?

Mr. BOLTE (Premier and Treasurer).—The answers are—

1. Yes.

(*a*) Lower Yarra Crossing Authority—on 21st October, 1965.

(*b*) The objects of the company are set out in its memorandum of association. As this is a lengthy document, I have arranged for a copy to be made available to the honorable member.

(*c*) The company does not have a share capital.

(*d*) The company is limited by guarantee.

(i) The guarantors will be every member of the company. It is not known who will become members, but the five subscribers to the memorandum are presently members.

(ii) Such amount as may be required not exceeding £10.

(*e*) Oscar Gwynne Meyer, 2 Cross-street, Toorak, S.E.2.—Managing Director.

Rupert Frederick Vian, 178 Tramway-parade, Beaumaris—Secretary.

Reginald Henry Scott, 3 Walbundry-drive, East Kew, E.8.—Company Director.

Edward Russell Bomphrey, 159A Gordon-street, Balwyn, E.8.—General Manager.

Frank Charles Michael, 493 Elgar-road, Mont Albert—Company Manager.

Leslie Arthur Schumer, 1875 Malvern-road, East Malvern—Company Director.

2. No.

3. Yes.

(*a*) £11,000,000 for the bridge; £4,000,000 for road construction work.

(*b*) £1,350,000 rising to £2,250,000 in the seventh year of operation.

(*c*) and (*d*) This income is based on an estimated average revenue of 25 cents per vehicle and volume of traffic beginning at 30,000 vehicles per day increasing to 50,000 vehicles per day by the seventh year of operation.

4. It is not possible to be precise at this point of time on the question of source of finance, local or from abroad, but in any event other high priority projects in the State public works programme will be unaffected.

5. This will depend on ruling rates of interest at the time.

6. In not more than 40 years from the date of operation.

7. The number of members is at present limited to 100; the subscribers to the memorandum and such other persons as the directors shall admit to membership shall be members. There is no indication of what interests they will represent.

8. Yes. The three initial directors are—

Mr. O. G. Meyer;
Mr. R. F. Vian;
Mr. F. C. Michael.

In the absence of specific provision in the existing articles of association the matter of appointing additional directors is in the hands of the members of the company.

9. Although the articles of association do not provide for audit by the Auditor-General, I can assure the honorable gentleman that the Auditor-General will have access, if necessary, to all the company's records.

10. Public tenders will be called, but a decision as to which is accepted can only be decided on receipt of the tenders.

GAS REGULATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. DARCY (Minister of Mines).—I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Gas Regulation Act prescribes the standard quality of gas used for domestic and other purposes, provides for a system of control to ensure that the standard is maintained, and, in general, imposes rights and duties on consumers and suppliers. In the Act, suppliers are referred to as "undertakers".

The Bill now before the House provides for certain amendments. Briefly the more important of these are:—

1. The defining of the term "water kilocalorie" and the alteration of the definition of "British thermal unit."
2. The extension of the maximum period for the testing of certain gas meters.
3. The introduction of the term "therm" and the use of that unit of measurement for the purposes of the Act, instead of measurement based on cubic feet.
4. The exception of refinery gas from the operation of the Gas Regulation Act.

I return now to the first of these amendments, that dealing with definitions. The Commonwealth Weights and Measures (National Standards) Acts (No. 64 of 1960 and No. 6 of 1964) and the regulations made under them provide for the establishment and use throughout Australia of uniform units of measurement, and uniform standards of measurement of physical quantities. At present, the definition of British thermal unit in the Gas Regulation Act is expressed in terms of heat whereas the British thermal unit in Commonwealth regulations is precisely defined in terms of international units of energy.

In varying degrees, the States are introducing the changes required so as to conform with the national standards. The amended definitions, in paragraphs (*a*) and (*d*) of clause 3 of the Bill, overcome the existing inconsistency by defining British thermal unit in terms related to water kilocalorie, which in turn is defined in terms related to units of energy as

in the Commonwealth regulations. It is also worthy of note that the water kilocalorie is the unit in which the results from the gas testing apparatus now in use are obtained.

The next important amendment deals with the testing period for gas meters. Section 22 of the Gas Regulation Act provides that meters be re-tested and re-stamped at intervals of seven years. Clause 6 of the Bill provides that meters manufactured on or after the 1st January, 1950, may remain in use for a period of ten years before being required to be re-tested and re-stamped. At one time, meters were all hand made and the meter cases were soldered. Nowadays many meters are assembled from prefabricated parts, and the cases are either bolted or screwed together. The heavy metal valves formerly used in meters have been replaced by very light plastic valves which induce much less strain and wear on the meter mechanism. It is considered that, because of improved techniques in design and manufacture, these modern type meters can be left in service for ten years without their becoming defective or their accuracy of measurement becoming unreliable. However, provision has been made in the Bill in sub-clause (3) of clause 6 for the Governor in Council to prescribe that meters of a type specified in the order shall be tested at intervals of at least seven years but less than ten years.

Another important amendment relates to the determination of which undertakers are to be subject to the provisions of the Gas Regulation Act. The Act provides that undertakers selling more than 25,000,000 cubic feet of gas a year are subject to the provisions of the Act. When the original Gas Regulation Act was passed in 1933, the calorific value of gas was prescribed as 500 British thermal units and that value was standard throughout Victoria for some twenty years. The Act provides, in paragraph (*a*) of sub-section (1) of section 15, that other standards of calorific value may be prescribed by Order in Council. In recent years, due to the introduction of gas made from brown coal—Lurgi gas—and gas made from Butane—liquefied petroleum gas—there are now several prescribed standards of calorific value in Victoria. These standards vary from 450 to 650 British thermal units per cubic foot. As a result of this, an anomaly is created.

For example, an undertaker supplying 23,000,000 cubic feet of gas having a calorific value of 650 British thermal units is not subject to the Act, whereas an undertaker supplying 26,000,000 cubic feet of gas having a calorific value of 450 British thermal units is subject to the Act. The first undertaker, not subject to the Act, supplies considerably more total heat units than the second undertaker, who is subject to the Act.

To overcome this anomaly, the Bill, in paragraph (*c*) of clause 2, introduces the term "therm", which is defined as the equivalent of 100,000 British thermal units, and, in paragraph (*e*) of clause 3, substitutes the words "an amount of gas capable of yielding more than 125,000 therms" for the existing expression "more than 25,000,000 cubic feet of gas". 125,000 therms is the exact equivalent of 25,000,000 cubic feet of gas having a calorific value of 500 British thermal units.

The fourth important amendment deals with refinery gas. Paragraph (*b*) of clause 2 defines refinery gas, and paragraph (*f*) of clause 3 provides that nothing in the Act shall apply to refinery gas. At the present time, refinery gas is supplied in bulk to certain gas undertakers—for example, the Gas and Fuel Corporation of Victoria and the Geelong Gas Company—and they admix this refinery gas with other gases produced by other means such as from brown coal or from light oils or from liquefied petroleum gas. It is supplied also through the Gas and Fuel Corporation to two very large industrial consumers, namely, Australian Carbon Black Pty. Ltd. and Australian Glass Manufacturers Co. Pty. Ltd.

Refinery gas, being a by-product of a refinery, is a very variable product with a calorific value which may vary between 1,200 and 2,200 British thermal units per cubic foot. In these circumstances, the Gas Regulation Act has no proper application to refinery gas.

I shall now explain the clauses of the Bill. Clause 1 contains the title, cites the Gas Regulation Act 1958 as the principal Act, and provides that the Act will come into operation on a day to be fixed. Paragraph (*a*) of clause 2 defines British thermal unit in terms related to "water kilocalorie" and in paragraph (*d*) "water kilocalorie" is defined in terms of energy. This is necessary, as already explained, to make the standards of measurement in Victoria consistent with those in Commonwealth legislation. Unless this is done, there could be some doubt about the validity of the Gas Regulation Act in this respect. Paragraph (*b*) of clause 2 defines refinery gas and paragraph (*f*) of clause 3 provides that nothing in the Act shall apply to refinery gas. As explained earlier, it is not intended that the usages of refinery gas will be covered by the Act.

Paragraphs (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) of clause 3 bring up to date the list of undertakers to which the Act applies. It will be seen that Wodonga has been added to those portions of the Gas Supply Company Limited to which the Act applies and that the Colac Gas Company Limited has been added as a separate undertaker. Paragraph (*b*), of sub-section (1) of section 4, provides that when undertakers sell a certain quantity of gas in a year, they can be specified by Order in Council as being undertakers to which the Act applies. The Wodonga portion of the Gas Supply Company Limited and the Colac Gas Company Limited have already been so specified. Whilst Wodonga is part of the Gas Supply Company Limited, Colac Gas Company Limited is a separate entity for the purposes of the Act.

Mr. Darcy.

Paragraphs (*d*) and (*e*) of clause 3 refer to the method of determining which undertakers are to be subject to the Act. I have already explained the reason for the substitution of "125,000 therms" for "25 million cubic feet of gas". Paragraph (*e*) of clause 3 expands the existing sub-section (2) by adding the words "for a continuous period of twelve months next preceding the 30th day of June in any year after the commencement of this Act". This addition is considered necessary as sub-section (2) does not delimit the period in which the specified amount of gas is to be sold. I have already referred to paragraph (*f*) of clause 3 in relation to paragraph (*b*) of clause 2.

Clause 4 provides for an amendment consequential on the introduction of the therm as a unit of measurement. The costs of administering the Gas Regulation Act are borne by contributions payable by gas undertakers, and the Act, in sub-section (4) of section 13 provides for a rate of contribution not exceeding 1d. for every 2,000 cubic feet of gas sold. To relate this rate of contribution to heat units and so make the rate of payment uniform throughout all gas undertakings, clause 4 of the Bill requires the payment of 1d. for every 10 therms of gas sold. This is the exact equivalent of a rate of 1d. for 2,000 cubic feet of gas having a calorific value of 500 British thermal units.

Paragraph (*a*) of clause 5 amends section 15, which provides that where an undertaker has sold more than 250,000,000 cubic feet of gas in 12 months, it may with the consent of the Minister supply gas of a calorific value determined upon the average calorific value during the calendar month; the average calorific value being determined by one or more recording calorimeters. It is considered that an undertaker selling more then 250,000,000 cubic feet of gas in 12 months is a large undertaker and could reasonably be required to install one or more recording calorimeters, and thus provision

is made in clause 5 for an undertaker to provide recording calorimeters if required by the Minister to do so. A recording calorimeter is the best means available for determining continuously calorific value of gas. Clause 5 also amends the expression "250,000,000 cubic feet of gas sold in 12 months" to "1,250,000 Therms", which is the exact equivalent of 250,000,000 cubic feet of gas having a calorific value of 500 British thermal units.

Paragraph (c) of sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Gas Regulation Act requires that gas supplied by an undertaker shall have a distinctive smell. The Bill amends this by requiring gas to have an odour which is distinctive and unpleasant. At the present time, a lot of gas not made from coal has little or no odour when made, and it is therefore necessary for undertakers to add a stenching agent to the gas so that any leakage of gas can be detected. The amendment contained in paragraph (b) of clause 5 requires the resultant odour to be unpleasant.

Clause 6 relates to the testing period for gas meters. I have already explained this provision when referring to the more important amendments provided by the Bill. Clause 7 of the Bill is a consequential amendment caused by the introduction of Commonwealth weights and measures legislation and the introduction of the term "water kilocalorie" in the Bill. Its effect will be to increase the calorific value of gas by approximately one part in 4,000. In the old terminology as used in the Gas Regulation Act, "Calorie" written with a capital "C" is the equivalent of the modern term "kilocalorie". It is 1,000 times the size of the "calorie" written with a small "c". The changes in the various heat units in this Bill will in no way adversely affect gas consumers. All the amendments provided for in this Bill are necessary for the most efficient and economical control of the supply of gas.

I am indebted to one of the staff of the Mines Department, Mr. Cobbett, who is a gas examiner. He will be available if honorable members wish to discuss with him the contents of this highly technical Bill.

On the motion of Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until Thursday, November 25.

DRIED FRUITS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. BALFOUR (Minister of Lands). I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The production of dried fruits is one of Victoria's most important horticultural industries and Victoria is the principal producer of dried fruits in the Commonwealth. The industry is the mainstay of the irrigation settlements from Swan Hill to Mildura. It is also an important export industry, and normally 70 to 80 per cent. of the crop is exported. The industry has always been of importance in the settlement of returned servicemen on the land. In the early days of the industry, marketing was chaotic, and legislation was introduced to provide for controlled marketing. The Dried Fruits Act 1958, No. 6239, is the present-day expression of that legislation.

The Act sets up the Victorian Dried Fruits Board and provides for the registration of packing houses and the control of marketing in Victoria. Similar legislation operates in New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. The important matter of export is covered by the Commonwealth Dried Fruits Export Control Act 1924–1964, under which the Australian Dried Fruits Control Board operates. Close liaison between all these Boards is maintained, and it is essential that the legislation under which they work should be uniform in certain respects. The Commonwealth Act has been amended from time to time in several ways, and one of these relates to certain

interpretations which are also used in the Victorian Act. Clause 2 of this Bill provides for the amendment of these interpretations in the Victorian Act in a corresponding fashion.

Paragraph (a) of the clause amends the interpretation of "Dried currant" in section 3 by substituting the words "three per centum by number" for the words "five per centum."

This amendment will remove any doubt whether the allowable percentage of currants with seeds is by weight or by number. Clause 3 provides for the amendment of subsection (1) of section 22 of the Act in a manner corresponding to the amendment of the interpretation of "Dried currants." These amendments have the approval of the Victorian Dried Fruits Board and the industry at large, and their necessity is obvious so I do not propose to spend time giving lengthy explanations of the reasons for them.

Clause 3 of the Bill also provides for the doubling of the penalties in sections 23 and 27 of the Act. Both of these sections relate to the operations of dried fruits packing houses. Section 23 provides the penalty for using an unregistered packing house, and section 27 relates to the penalty for the marketing in Victoria in excess of the proportion of the output determined by the Minister. The respective restrictions in these sections are key points in the control of marketing of the dried fruits crop and adequate penalties for a breach of the restrictions are essential. The existing penalties date from 1928 and obviously need revision. The proposed penalty corresponds approximately to twice the current value of a ton of dried vine fruits. The penalties in the remainder of the Act can be incurred by a wider section of the community and are generally in line with the penalties provided in other Acts for offences of a similar nature. The Bill therefore does not propose any change in these penalties.

Mr. Balfour.

A word of praise is due for the work of the Victorian Dried Fruits Board, and the Australian Dried Fruits Control Board in helping to maintain stability in the industry. In particular, Mr. A. E. Woodward, who was appointed chairman of the Victorian Board by the Government, has proved a fortunate choice. Although he had not previously been associated with the industry, he has rapidly acquired a sound knowledge of it and has greatly assisted the operations of the Board. I commend the Bill to the House.

On the motion of Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned till Thursday, November 25.

WATER SUPPLY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from November 17) on the motion of Mr. Darcy (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—I congratulate the honorable member for Brunswick East on his contribution to this debate on the subjects of water storage and distribution. Apparently he has carried out much research, and the information he obtained abroad should be passed on to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. A cheaper form of water distribution by means of pipelines throughout Victoria should prove of immense value, and would eliminate much of the evaporation and seepage that now takes place, more particularly in the north and north-western parts of Victoria, with a consequent increase in primary production not only in Victoria, but throughout Australia.

I relate my remarks to the Twelfth Part of the Schedule concerning compensation to property owners for land that will be inundated by the construction of the Chowilla dam. I

realize that these works are being carried out by the South Australian Government.

Mr. BOLTE.—Under the Victorian Water Act.

Mr. WHITING.—That is so. I am not certain whether compensation will be paid by the Government of Victoria or of South Australia. The Bill provides an amount of £900,000 for compensation to property owners whose lands have been acquired for the construction of the Buffalo river dam. Honorable members are aware that negotiations are in progress for the acquisition of land in the Chowilla area, and all of that land on the Victorian side of the dam is in the electorate of Mildura. Some landowners are concerned about compensation because they will need to purchase other properties or find other employment. A large area of land will be acquired.

There are some misunderstandings between the valuers of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the landowners. I am hopeful that, in the next few weeks, these misunderstandings will be resolved. It was stated that possibly advances would be made to these people to enable them to re-establish themselves elsewhere. There is some doubt as to amounts and the conditions under which the money will be provided. I ask the Minister of Water Supply to examine this aspect. I have discussed the matter with the estates officer of the Commission, and he has assured me that he will ascertain the position and advise me as early as possible. Compensation should be paid before the land is inundated. It is often found that projects are completed but the haggling goes on for years with no satisfaction to anyone.

Mr. BOLTE.—Some landowners do not want early compensation. They are usually given the option.

Mr. WHITING.—That is so, but unless the landowner intended to retire, he would have to purchase a property elsewhere in order to carry on his normal pursuits.

Mr. BOLTE.—I do not want to break into your speech, but what we do here for these people——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The honorable the Premier may make a speech later.

Mr. BOLTE.—I wouldn't be bothered, because the honorable member should know.

Mr. WHITING.—I had hoped that the Premier would be able to give me some interesting information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but as you have ruled against that——

The DEPUTY SPEAKER.—I am not ruling against the honorable member obtaining information from the Premier; I am ruling against the Premier making a speech while the honorable member is on his feet.

Mr. WHITING.—I hope that the Premier will give us this very valuable information at a later stage in the debate. Under item 6 of the Second Part of the Schedule, money is provided for waterworks districts generally and, in particular, for the extensive Wimmera-Mallee supply system. I believe the time is rapidly approaching when the question of pipe-lining all of this distribution system must be given serious consideration. It is interesting to note that in the Millewa waterworks district, which encompasses the far north-west corner of the State, pipe-lining is under consideration by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission because most of the installations in the area are obsolete and maintenance is costly. Although pipe-lining is very expensive, I am certain that, after the initial cost, the saving in water alone, as well as in money spent on maintenance, will more than justify such a project.

I trust that the Government is being conditioned to give consideration to this type of water supply, not only in the Millewa waterworks district but also in the Kooloonong–Annuello district. I have had correspondence with the Minister over the last twelve months about the re-opening of discontinued water

channels in that area. The Commission investigated the project, and I hope that it will produce a plan for the laying of pipe-lines in this area and that, after discussion with settlers, a pipe-lining scheme may be implemented. It has been found that the initial cost of such a system is too great for small groups of settlers desiring a better type of water supply. It usually amounts to about 15s. or £1 an acre. In areas where the holdings are of 3,000 to 4,000 acres and the land is not particularly good, the cost of a better type of water supply is a great consideration, particularly when the existing channels are in existence and, in most instances, sufficient water is available once every year.

I do not know just how this problem can be overcome, but I believe it is one which should exercise the minds of the Minister and the Water Supply Commission, so that a better type of water supply may be provided to this district. I was interested in the remarks of the honorable member for Brunswick East on the new type of concrete cast-in-place piping, which is said to be considerably cheaper than the ordinary concrete piping methods or other types of piping which the Commission uses at present.

The fifth part of the schedule to the Bill provides for money to be made available to the First Mildura Irrigation Trust and the Mildura Urban Water Trust. Both of these bodies have done excellent work. The First Mildura Irrigation Trust is gradually implementing a system of pipelining in areas where there have been only earthen channels. The earthen channels create a drainage problem which, in turn, is costly to overcome. It is to be hoped that Loan Fund money will be made available so that the work can be speeded up and that, as one probelm in the supply of water is overcome, another is not created in the need to spend money on drainage. Honorable members will know that the Mildura Urban Water Trust has had a water filtration plant installed. This was very necessary. It has become so popular in the area that residents in the outlying parts of the city, and from as far away as Irymple, some four miles distant, are seeking to be connected to the system. Considerable sums of money are involved in providing the service which has been so much sought after since the installation of the filtration plant.

Mention has been made of sewerage trusts. In his second-reading speech, the Minister commented that a new sewerage scheme had been put into operation at Redcliffs during the past financial year, bringing the total number of towns in the State now sewered to 56. This is very satisfactory. New schemes are under way and being planned. The residents of Merbein, not far from Mildura, hope that a sewerage plant will be installed in that town in the not too distant future. The citizens have already held several meetings, and I understand that application has been made to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission asking that the project be placed on the waiting list of towns to be sewered.

Robinvale is another township seeking the same consideration in the near future. It is expected that a suitable plan for Robinvale will be submitted to the Commission for its consideration.

The provision in the twelfth part of the schedule will cover work on the Chowilla reservoir. The sooner this storage is completed and is actually conserving water, the sooner the problem of water restriction, such as have been implemented this year and may be in force again next year, will be overcome. I am perturbed because I believe that the need for conservation this year reflects only the conditions of the first year of a two-year drought. If sufficient rain does not fall between now and next May or June, the storage reservoirs will be very depleted and even more severe restrictions may be required in the irrigation season which will commence some twelve months from now.

I believe that Victoria's decision to pay a share of the cost of the building of the Chowilla storage will have a very beneficial effect on food production in this State in the future.

Mr. PHELAN (Kara Kara).—I do not propose to speak at any length on this measure, but I was interested to hear the remarks of the honorable member for Brunswick East, who suggested that the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should be given the right to go on the open market to raise its own loan funds. It should be appreciated by the House that this would not improve the State's overall loan raising capacity. The existing practice is that Victoria, through the Loan Council, is granted an overall authority for loan raising and the various State instrumentalities are given their allocations. By going on to the open market for funds for the water Commission, the Government would deplete the amount already available for its instrumentalities and at the same time would increase the cost of servicing loans, as the rate on the open market is higher than that charged through the Loan Council.

Therefore, the adoption of the honorable member's suggestion would mean that the cost of providing water for primary production would tend to increase. We know from figures provided in the Budget that something in excess of £5,000,000 is provided at the present stage as the cost of providing finance for works in this State, and I believe that any move by the Government to go onto the open market for loan funds at a higher rate of interest would have a devastating effect on the finances of the Commission, quite apart from the fact that it would not improve this State's overall loan raising capacity.

Mr. FENNESSY.—The Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works does very well, and it goes onto the open market for funds.

Mr. PHELAN.—Of course it does, but it is in a different position from the water Commission. The Board strikes a rate at a level high enough to cover its costs. I do not consider that the two cases are parallel.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—The need to present a water supply loan application Bill annually provides opportunity to members to keep up with the State's water conservation programme, the development of water supply systems for towns, and the development of sewerage authorities throughout Victoria.

Mr. BOLTE.—You can practise your speech for to-morrow.

Mr. TREWIN.—To-morrow the Premier and the Minister of Water Supply will travel to Myrtleford for the opening of the first Buffalo river dam, and I will have the privilege of being on the platform with them and making a few comments on the local position concerning the development of this very necessary and wonderful project. At last the Buffalo river has been harnessed, and whilst it is a tributary of the Ovens its harnessing will enable a large quantity of water to be stored and used as required. The local people are indeed pleased to see the development that has taken place.

Work has commenced on the Nillahcootie project, and this will please not only the residents of the Broken valley, but also people living farther down in the Murray valley who will receive some benefit. It will be a very fine, although not a very large, storage; it is placed in a natural position for a water conservation project. The efforts which the local people made in collecting and collating evidence to induce the Government to undertake this work is a story well worth recording. Many people went to a great deal of trouble over many years to agitate for the building of this storage, and in that way made a contribution to the project. During his 25 years in Parliament, my predecessor as the member for Benalla never failed when the opportunity presented itself either inside or outside the House, to mention the word "Nillahcootie" to interested people.

Just prior to the opening of the building project, I made a reference in the House to one or two features in which I was greatly interested. I was eventually taken to task by Commissioners of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and also in correspondence by the Minister for what I had said. However, after studying the position further I feel I was justified in making the comments I did. Whilst the situation will not always be appreciated in a similar manner from both angles, I feel that whatever I said was put forward in the interests of the landholders and also in the interests of those, who, in the future, will be concerned with the question of land compensation.

At the moment not all the landholders concerned have been compensated in connexion with the Buffalo dam project, which shows that long procedure is involved. Next week I understand that a meeting will be held before valuers and representatives of the six remaining people who have not had their claims discharged. These discussions will determine whether an arbitrator will be brought into the picture in court proceedings. I hope that reason will prevail on both sides so that the action contemplated will not eventuate.

Mr. DARCY.—I hope so, too.

Mr. TREWIN.—It is worth recording that one person who intended taking a claim to court had it settled out of court at the request of the Commission. I think only three cases of compensation have been finally settled in the courts, but on many occasions the Commission has accepted a claim just prior to entering court. This is taking action on the doorstep, so to speak. Not many people like to be embroiled in litigation, and I am sure the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has the same attitude. Therefore, they have raised their sights when the occasion has demanded it.

This is a matter of concern to anyone who has reason to negotiate with the Commission. No doubt, when a landholder is given notice to treat, he submits a valuation for his property in his own interests, which is quite natural. Invariably, these valuations are submitted to the Commission, which then makes its own valuations of the properties in question. Perhaps it could be said that the Commission should have an over-all valuation prior to the issue of the notice to treat.

The fact that the Commission has knowledge of a landholder's valuation gives it a certain advantage over the landholder. The Commission says, in effect, " This valuation submitted by the landholder is probably loaded by about 25 per cent. ; in making our valuation, we will bear this in mind ". Quite often, the Commission's valuation on a property is as much as 50 per cent. below the initial valuation of the owner. I should like to know whose responsibility it is in such circumstances to start increasing or lowering the relevant valuations. In one case of which I have knowledge the Commission's valuation of slightly over £100,000 was subsequently increased by more than 20 per cent., and the case is not yet settled. An increase in a valuation to the extent of £20,000 represents a fair amount of money in any language. Why should there be disparities between the various valuations that are made?

In his own interests, a landholder will endeavour to keep his valuation to what he considers to be his just right. I appreciate that tobacco land has created certain problems, which will not apply in many other cases. Unfortunately, in order to retain a negotiating margin, the Commission takes advantage of the opportunity of valuing land at a rate that is too low. Why should not all valuations be placed on an even footing so that landholders will be treated justly?

In order to illustrate how valuations are worked out, I should like to refer to a property, which was recently sold, in the Broken Valley.

Two valuers from the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in Melbourne inspected the property. These officers would have insufficient local knowledge to enable them to make a just valuation. Generally speaking, when inspecting a property, the Commission's valuers take into consideration such facts as the selling price of neighbouring properties. The valuers would question a landholder concerning his own valuation of the property, and if he replied "I do not have to supply that information", they would still be able to obtain it. This illustrates how the Commission's valuers arrive at valuations. Of course, if the Commission believes that that is the right way to do its business, it is not for me to tell it otherwise, but I am entitled to be critical of some of the valuations which have been made by these methods. After all, I represent the people who live in the area and will be lodging claims for compensation with the Commission. I am therefore able to look at the position from the other side of the fence, so to speak.

I should like to deal briefly with water trusts in small towns. I am pleased to be able to inform the House that a small one in which I have been interested for more than four years will be opened in about two weeks' time. When I first raised this matter in Parliament, it was a small political issue in my own district. The Labor and Liberal candidates, as well as myself, promised the local residents that we would do what we could to obtain a water supply. It was my privilege to be able to assist in providing the small township of Goorambat with a water supply, which will relieve the situation which has existed there for many years and, at the same time, assist in the development of the township.

Water trusts throughout the State, which receive a considerable amount of money from the Government, have a specific task to do. I do not know whether there are any set plans under which water trusts must carry out the physical work required of them. The engineer of a trust may have certain ideas, for example, of the methods that should be used in controlling erosion, but I believe certain basic plans should be laid down under which the engineer should operate. From my observations in connexion with the three or four trusts with which I have had dealings, it appears to be the engineer's responsibility to determine what action should be taken. In some circumstances, if the floodwaters come down when they are expected, everything may be all right, but in other instances, there is room for improvement.

Mr. DARCY.—The local representatives on the trust would know the local conditions.

Mr. TREWIN.—That is so. I contend that the work that is sometimes carried out and the structures which are provided are not always the most suitable for the district in question, particularly in view of the fact that some soil types react differently from others in flood times. Furthermore, the length of time between floods, when the banks of a stream dry out, must also be taken into consideration. I agree that loan moneys, whether used for capital works, or for other purposes, should be made available to the Commission. Wherever the water of the State is concerned, it must be distributed, both physically and financially, in the most economic manner so that the greatest value will be derived from it. It is well-known that Australia is a very dry continent. In fact, I understand that the total flows of the rivers in Australia represent only about one-half of the flow of the Amazon river in South America. Consequently, large areas of land in Australia depend solely on the distribution of water. One of the greatest challenges that we have to face is in ensuring that conservation projects are undertaken to the fullest extent and that water is distributed in the most efficient manner in order that the irrigation districts of this State may continue

to develop. Water is such a necessary part of our make-up that it cannot be dispensed with. We support the Bill.

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD (Rodney). —In the electoral district of Rodney there are some of the greatest irrigation areas in Australia. This Bill seeks authority for the expenditure of £15,125,000 on works for water supply, irrigation, drainage, sewerage and river improvements over the next twelve months. Part of the £15,000,000 is a re-vote of amounts authorized for works listed in the 1964 Act, on which the money has not yet been expended. It includes commitments in respect of contracts, orders for materials and land resumption payments.

Last night the honorable member for Brunswick East made an excellent contribution to the debate. He has travelled extensively throughout the State with the Public Works Committee and is familiar with problems associated with water supply to-day. During his speech he stated that water shortages will occur in the State, but I do not think honorable members generally are fully aware of the effect which these shortages could have on productivity this year. This week I received a letter from the Goulburn and Waranga Water Users' United League, which sets out the position that will occur this year. The letter is in the following terms:—

> I am instructed by the Executive of the United League to inform you of the anticipated position irrigators in the Goulburn-Murray irrigation district will find themselves by mid-January, 1966.
>
> This anticipated position will be that, as a consequence of the 110 per centum allocation of water rights for the current season, most water rights will be expiring by mid-January.

The reason for that anticipation is that there has been a dry season and many crops have failed because of the insufficient rainfall. Some of them have been cut and turned into hay. In the irrigation districts the season was under way a month earlier than normally, and consequently it will finish early in the new year, to the detriment of production. In the past, many irrigators throughout the State have been able to obtain their water rights, plus 80 per cent. sales and even higher, but that position will not obtain this year. To reinforce my assertion in that regard I shall quote some figures which have been supplied to me by a farmer from Lockington.

In 1964 on his property of 194 acres he received the ultimate water right of 138 acre-feet, 8.8 acre-feet for stock and domestic use and sales of 80 per cent. of the ultimate to the extent of 112 acre-feet, giving him a total of 258.8 acre-feet. This year his ultimate water right is the same with a 10 per cent. sales quota of 13.8 acre-feet and 8.8 acre-feet for stock and domestic purposes, giving him a total 160.6 acre-feet as against 258.8 acre-feet last year. That bears out also the statement made by the honorable member for Brunswick East in regard to shortages.

The man to whom I have just referred will receive nearly 100 acre-feet less water than he received last season, and he has informed me that he will have to cut down on production. He has already sold his stock because he will not be able to carry it on his property, and he cannot see any prospects ahead to enable him to obtain sufficient water to keep his pastures going. Other farmers throughout the irrigation districts are in the same position, and I believe there will be tremendous repercussions early in the new year. The bouyancy of the economy caused by money flowing through the area will be affected and farmers will be forced to retrench. They will have to restrict their spending and this will have an adverse effect on the whole State.

Of the Australian production of dairy products, 60 per cent. comes from the irrigation districts of Victoria, but this year that proportion will be considerably reduced. Some of the farmers who are unable to get sufficient water in the future will have to give serious consideration to the installation of some type of spray system to make greater use of the water they receive than can be made

under the normal gravitation method of watering land. Along the River Murray there are many pumping units, the majority of which are used to supply spray irrigation plants, and the results achieved have been quite good. The Commonwealth Government has given farmers an inducement to instal this type of irrigation system by making provision for the total cost of the plant to be written off over five years for taxation purposes.

The honorable member for Brunswick East referred to the fact that it will eventually become necessary to pipe water in order to economize, but I do not think I will see the day when that will be competely the case. Large storages must be contructed, such as those at Kow Swamp and the proposed storage in the Green's Lake-Lake Cooper area, where it is proposed to construct large storages to augment the main water supply. The water from the Green's Lake-Lake Cooper storage will be pumped into the main western channel and this will be a means of augmenting the water available. The widening of the western channel has been deferred at this stage, because it will be more economical to channel the water across from Kow Swamp, lift it, and run it to Tragowel Plains. This will get the water through quicker and will save a capital cost of £3,000,000, because it was estimated that the capital cost of widening the western channel would be £7,000,000. The main objective is to continue constructing these large storages so that water will be delivered to those farmers who are in the full flush of the irrigation season and who have insufficient water at present.

In recent times the production from farms in Victoria has been at an all-time high, because over the years the farmers have developed their farms in accordance with the quantity of water available to them. It will probably be found, however, that this year will be one of the worst years irrigators have experienced for a long time. This will be brought about by the restrictions which the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission has had to impose because the storages are so low. The Hume weir is low and the commitment to South Australia has to come from Eildon weir and transported down the River Murray so that it can be delivered in South Australia. When the Chowilla dam has been constructed in South Australia, there should be some relief for Victorian irrigators. On various occasions I have spoken to the Commissioners of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission on this matter, and they assure me that they cannot see any relief in the allocation of water rights until 1970. I take it that that will coincide with the completion of Chowilla dam.

In the big flood run-offs this water can be held in South Australia for that South Australian commitment, and Victoria will not have to send so much water through for the State's allocation. Consequently more water will be available in Victoria. More and more pumping stations are being placed along the River Murray under private schemes, because people must have water for their properties.

I know of several people who are in the same position as the farmer at Lockington whose case I quoted. I know of another example at Dhurringile. One man can see people all around getting more water than they know what to do with, while he is not entitled to any more water. There are two or three titles in the register. At some stage he will run out of water, to the detriment of his farm. This year will be a very bad one for many people. Normally, as many people "scream" about the drainage problem as about water, but this being a dry year, drainage will have a spell in this regard and people will be looking for more water.

As the Minister of Water Supply is aware, drainage is essential and is complementary to irrigation. Road construction has changed the land surface to such an extent that what was once natural drainage no longer

exists. There are a number of drainage problems in the area I have been discussing, at places like Dhurringile, Murchison, Lockington, and others. The mosquito depression is gradually finding its way back.

Of course, with drainage one does not see very much for the money that is spent, and little benefit is derived until the scheme is completed. Over a period not many dry years are experienced. There has been a run of good seasons, and this tends to spoil people, as does a plentiful supply of water. It is only by looking at farms and seeing how highly developed they are, and discovering how high their production is that we realize what a wonderful contribution farmers are making to the State. The State may not benefit directly in taxation, but the Commonwealth does. We appreciate the wonderful effort that has been made by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to assist municipalities in respect of water supply and sewerage throughout the State. Plans for water conservation must be continually extended to cater for the development and growth of the State. Dry periods can arise at any time, and provision must be made for storages for the metropolis. We have been informed how the population of Melbourne will increase, and forward planning to provide for this must be made.

Mr. STEPHEN.—Surely you are not suggesting that planning is not already being undertaken.

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD.—I would like to know where it is being done. The honorable member is aware that the Public Works Committee submitted a report and recommendations to this Parliament, but nothing has been done. Too many reports are submitted on which no action is taken. Of course, we cannot stop the growth of Melbourne.

Mr. STONEHAM.—We can slow it down.

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD.—With this natural growth, essential services must be provided. Provision must be made to provide water and sewerage for the increase in population. It is only by taking action at the right time that this can be done. I was interested in the remarks of the honorable member for Benalla concerning the payment of compensation. I know of a case in which a man at Tatura had a house which was located along the route of a channel. The Commission wanted him to move the house, but he told the Commission that he would be happy if it moved his house and cowshed. However, this was not done and a channel was built around the house, with provision for access to it. Now his farm is on one side of the channel and his house on the other side, with consequent depreciation of the value of the house. Each time he has consulted the Commission, the amount of compensation has been raised, but no finality has been reached over seven or eight years. I told him that he should seek an interview with the Minister. In the past he has not been able to do so; he has been fobbed off.

Mr. DARCY.—If he writes to me, it will make a big difference. I receive my mail direct.

Mr. R. S. L. McDONALD.—I thank the Minister. I shall invite this man to do so. These cases should not be allowed to drift on for so long. I suppose this man feels that if the matter goes on for 20 years he will receive the compensation that he should have got in the first place. It must be embarrassing for the Commission to have to carry forward in its books each year some amount of money to provide for this man's compensation.

My party supports the Bill, which will contribute to the development of Victoria. It will also assist the growth of the city because when things are good in the country this affects the whole State.

Sir HERBERT HYLAND (Gippsland South).—This is the usual "gimcrack" Bill which each year we receive in this House from the State

Rivers and Water Supply Commission. The average man has no idea what it really means. An explanatory memorandum is provided with the measure, but it does not provide sufficient information and detail. One could not possibly send it to a waterworks trust or any local government body or anyone else and expect them to know what it means. Naturally they would assume that they would receive the greater proportion of the money set out in the schedules to the Bill. However, although we have complained time and time again, we do not get anywhere with the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. I have been told, "If you fight the Commission, it will take it out of your hide". I invite it to do so. This is the forum where I shall fight the Commission at any tick of the clock if it is not prepared to act fairly. I recall that, as Co-ordinator of the Latrobe Valley development, I called a meeting of heads of all Departments and chairmen of boards and commissions. They were invited to attend and state their intentions in regard to the development of the Latrobe Valley. The only chairman who did not attend was Mr. L. R. East, of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, who sent along his deputy, Mr. McCay. I told Mr. McCay to his face that he was a "no" man.

I asked Mr. McCay what the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission had planned for this area. He replied, "We cannot help you in any way. Our plate is full". I said, "Thank you, gentlemen, for attending. I will have to report back to Cabinet that the Morwell brown coal project cannot be commenced because the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission will not supply water". The State Electricity Commission said that it would undertake the work. I pointed out that the Commission had no authority under its Act to provide water for Morwell and other towns, whereupon the Commission stated that it would go ahead if the Government would assist with the necessary legislation. The point I make is that the supply of water is the responsibility of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission.

I do not intend to go through all the items set out in the schedule to the Bill. Honorable members who have taken part in this debate have mentioned local problems, matters of compensation, and so forth. What I intend to do is to write to the Minister seeking a full explanation of the items which relate to works in about twenty towns in the electorate that I represent. I have never been Minister of Water Supply, but I acted in that capacity for about six months. I have been asked why I place so many questions on the Notice Paper. The reason is that I cannot obtain replies to the letters I write to the various Departments.

I have been in communication with the Minister and the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission for some time in connexion with a proposal to install a pipe-line to the ocean from two of the biggest butter factories in Gippsland. They are prepared to contribute up to £300,000 for a pipe-line from Korumburra to Leongatha, picking up some of the sewerage from Leongatha and running down to the ocean. I have been writing letters, telephoning and interviewing the Minister and other people but no finality has been reached. The latest word I received was that a reply would be furnished in fourteen days. A period of fourteen months might elapse before an answer is received. Why does not the Minister say to the Commission, "Make up your mind now—never mind about waiting fourteen days". If a decision cannot be reached within two or three days on such a proposal, there is something radically wrong. The Commission does not realize what is involved in disposing of the whey from butter factories. These factories are prepared to provide their own finance, through the sewerage authority, to carry the waste the best part of 25 or 30 miles. A 10-in. or 12-in. main is required.

Mr. HOLLAND.—Are those factories going to meet the full cost?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—Yes; they are not asking for any contribution from the Government. They must obtain the consent of both the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission and the Commission of Public Health. The Commission of Public Health has given its approval and the matter has been referred to the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission, which apparently intends to delay a decision for the next month or so. In the meantime, the busy season is approaching, and it is now doubtful whether the pipe-line will be ready for the following season.

Mr. FENNESSY.—What is done with the whey at present?

Sir HERBERT HYLAND.—In some parts of Gippsland it is put into the streams, although this should not be done; one can see maggots all over the place. Farther downstream the water is purified and cleaned for use in town water supplies. The honorable member for Gippsland West is a director of the factory at Drouin. There is a waiting list of farmers who want this whey to spread on their land, because it is a wonderful manure. If one has to pay for the use of tankers to cart it away, its disposal can be quite expensive. The installation of a pipe-line to the ocean is the most satisfactory means of getting rid of it.

I understand that pipe-lines from the butter factories at Yarram and Archie's Creek run down to the ocean. The two factories with which I am concerned are rather unfortunate because they have a long pipe-line to put in. Nevertheless, they are prepared to do the job. All that is wanted from the Minister is a decision whether or not those concerned can go ahead with the work. Surely they are entitled to this information as soon as possible. As I said, I intend to seek information from the Minister in relation to those items listed in the schedule which affect towns in my electorate so that the people concerned will know what is intended.

The fourth part of the schedule relates to waterworks trusts, and all the information that is supplied is the name of particular authorities and the amount of money proposed to be expended. This means nothing because, it is realized that the financial provision shown in the Bill relates to more than an ordinary calendar year or financial year; it carries on until a further water supply loan application Bill is passed. All members of Parliament, irrespective of the party to which they belong, should be given full particulars of proposed works as promptly as possible. The public relations set-up of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission should definitely be improved.

We do not begrudge that the northern areas of the State are being supplied with reservoirs. I understand that the Premier will be visiting the new Buffalo dam to-morrow. However, an area called Gippsland produces a great quantity of dairy produce but only a small sum has been expended on the Glenmaggie weir and other water storage projects in that part of the State. When I recall the attitude of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission to the Morwell brown coal project and other matters, including the delay in reaching a decision on the pipe-line from the butter factories to which I have referred, I am of opinion that the Commission has little time for Gippsland.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). I do not intend to delay the House for long, but this measure is of such importance and interest to country people in particular that I feel I have something to contribute to the debate. First, I wish to join issue with the honorable member for Brunswick East in relation to some of the matters he raised in his speech. It seems that the Labor Party has adopted the policy that the irrigators themselves should be charged with the cost of building water storages and distribution works. It is part of Labor Party policy that this will be one of the charges to be added to those already borne by the

irrigators. If it is taken as a single entity and not related to the other day-to-day activities, this argument could be sustained. It should be appreciated that all Governments intervene in the economics of almost every industry in one way or another to bring about a balanced and adequate production. If these charges are placed on those people who use irrigation waters, the price of their products will increase, people will be less likely to engage in the industry, there will be fewer products for export, and a consequent diminution of overseas earnings which will adversely affect our economy.

Assistance given to these people is a means of earning export income and provides a better standard of living to those who are engaged in the production of the necessities of life. It is an old saying that one man invented an essential, and he made a living; another man invented a luxury, and he made a fortune. It is time that the person who produced the essentials got a better deal. The people who produce the essentials are no concern of the Opposition; they are interested only in the persons who produce the luxuries. That is the philosophy of the Labor Party. The Country Party implicity believes in assisting the person to produce the necessity.

The honorable member for Gippsland South referred to water storages in Gippsland. This has been overlooked in the past, but, as mentioned by the honorable member for Brunswick East, a major area of Victoria awaiting development of irrigation is in the south-eastern part of Victoria. I look forward to the day when the Government will commence work on further water storages to open up new areas. The problem of the Macalister irrigation district is the inadequacy of water available. The Minister of Agriculture has stated that it takes two acre-feet of water to ensure optimum production in that district. The Glenmaggie storage cannot sustain that supply. Areas in the immediate vicinity of the Macalister irrigation district provide ample scope for expansion, and there is potential for irrigation in country commanded by a possible storage on the Mitchell river.

I commend the excellent work done by a committee formed by landowners in the Mitchell river area in the preparation of a case to submit to the Government through the Public Works Committee, for the development of a storage on this stream. Preliminary investigations have shown that in this district there is available an excellent site on which it is possible to store 1,500,000 acre-feet of water by the construction of a wall only 10 chains in length. As the entire area to be inundated comprises Crown land, an economic storage could be provided.

I appreciate that the problems of distribution in this area are a little more difficult than in other districts because of drainage and related matters. There are few areas in Victoria, including the high rainfall areas, that would not benefit from the provision of irrigation. However, the part of Gippsland to which I refer is not a particularly high rainfall area; it has an annual rainfall of only 22 to 25 inches, which is not sufficient to sustain the perennial grasses that are best suited for dairy cows. Therefore, it is essential that existing water supplies be supplemented for the maintenance of the pastures.

I refer to river improvement trusts. I have no doubt that the Minister of Water Supply has anticipated my remarks. It is a matter of concern and disappointment that, in the four years that I have been a member of this House, I have been unable to prevail upon the Government to form a river improvement trust on the Thomson river. Thirteen years ago the Thomson river broke away and formed a new course 7½ miles in length, and in that time, 240 acres of good land have disappeared down the river.

Mr. STONEHAM.—That is Rainbow creek, is it?

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—It is what is known as the Rainbow creek breakaway. It is a tragedy. Two dairy farms are virtually gone. They cannot be restored. The soil on which they were based has disappeared down the river and is lodged in the Thomson and Latrobe rivers and in Lake Wellington. It will never be used again. That may not worry us, but future generations would have been glad of the production from those farms. That has happened, that is in the past, but nothing is being done to prevent this sort of thing.

The past ten or twelve years have been good years, but with only moderate rainfall and none of the severe flooding which can occur in that part of the State. That period was an ideal time during which to stabilize raw eroded banks and put the breakaway section into a condition which could be managed. But this work has been neglected while people have argued about whether their particular interests would be served by the formation of a river improvement trust.

I am disappointed that the council of the City of Sale should have adopted such an obstructive attitude. Quite erroneously, in my opinion, the council believes that its water supply sources could be adversely affected if a river improvement trust were to be formed to manage the Thomson river. It is my contention that, unless a river improvement trust operates soon, the water supply system of the City of Sale will be completely blocked by silt washed down the river.

During the four years I have been a member of this House I have done everything possible to draw the attention of the people concerned, including that of the Minister, to the need for action in this regard. I recently asked the Minister a question concerning objections raised to the formation of a river improvement trust in that area. I also asked whether he thought a trust was necessary. I was disappointed when he replied that, until he had examined the objections raised, he could not make up his mind whether a trust was necessary or not. The Minister should not have had to consult with anyone on that; he should have been prepared to express his opinion on whether a river improvement trust for the Thomson river was desirable. If he had wished, he could have qualified his statement by saying that, even though it were desirable, other conditions may make it impossible to set up the trust. However, I cannot envisage any such conditions.

I repeat that it is a tragedy that good soil in this State is allowed to be washed down our streams and that not a thing is being done by the Government to prevent it. I urge the Minister to use his powers under the Water Act to have a trust formed. It is possible that there will be a few more good years during which the trust should do the work necessary to protect this very valuable land.

The matter of water supply for the Orbost Waterworks Trust may be regarded by honorable members as a parochial question, but I suggest that to some extent the whole State has a responsibility in this connexion. The trust has reached the limit of the capacity of its source of supply in its present system, the Rocky river, and is faced with difficulty in obtaining additional water. The problem has beeen aggravated by the effects on the lower reaches of the Snowy river of the work of the Snowy Mountains Authority. When the Snowy Mountains agreement was made, the responsibility for the lower reaches of the Snowy was left with the State Government. The Authority has no obligation to correct any of the troubles created by the reduced supply of water coming down the Snowy.

Because of reduced summer flows in particular, salt penetration has moved a great deal farther upstream in the Snowy. Many landowners along the lower reaches of the river, who previously had access to fresh water, now find that the water is too salt for their stock and for home consumption during the summer period. Quite rightly, the Orbost Waterworks Trust believes it has a responsibility

to provide a water supply for these people. In addition, the holiday resort of Marlow is growing, and it is obviously necessary to supply sufficient water to that resort. Therefore, I am pleased to see an allocation of some £15,000 for the Orbost Waterworks Trust and I hope this money will go a considerable way towards meeting the problem at Orbost.

I felt it my duty to draw the attention of the House to some of the side effects of the large schemes undertaken in this country. These effects are not always obvious to people not in day-to-day contact with them. We all appreciate that the tremendous Snowy Mountains scheme is of great benefit to the continent of Australia, but we must also appreciate that, while good is done for the vast majority of people, there are a few who are adversely affected. It is little enough to expect that Governments and the people who receive great advantages should help to ameliorate the difficulties which the victims of such schemes encounter.

The sitting was suspended at 12.58 *p.m. until* 2.5 *p.m.*

Mr. WILTON (Broadmeadows).—I wish to make some comments on this legislation and also to reply to some of the remarks of the Deputy Leader of the Country Party. He made reference to the fact that Opposition members should be more conscious of the section of the community which produces the essentials of life and not worry so much about those who seem to be making substantial profits out of the production of luxuries. I feel that the honorable member has not done very much home work on this legislation and is not very familiar with the history of water supply loan application Bills introduced in this House over the years.

Figures substantiate the statement that the Labor Party, during the period in which it formed the Government of this State, has done more for the advancement and development of the water resources of Victoria and more for that section of the community which derives its livelihood from primary industry than any other Administration in a similar period of time.

On the first page of the explanatory memorandum supplied with this Bill the following information is set out:—

Expenditure authorized in previous Acts and actual expenditure in recent years are set out hereunder:—

Water Supply Loan Application Act.

	£
1961	11,300,000
1962	11,300,000
1963	13,400,000
1964	15,125,000
1965	15,125,000

Actual Expenditure.

	£
Financial year 1961-62 ..	8,341,000
Financial year 1962-63 ..	8,465,000
Financial year 1963-64 ..	8,899,000
Financial year 1964-65 ..	9,317,000
Amount allotted 1965-66 ..	9,315,000

The Government seems to think that, in presenting Bills of this nature, it is really doing something about the development of the State's water resources. However, I point out that in 1954 the then Minister of Agriculture, now the Leader of the Opposition, introduced a water supply loan application Bill allocating £15,150,000, and that the actual expenditure in that year was £9,500,000. That was more than ten years ago.

Mr. BOLTE.—What did that Government spend on education—£3,000,000?

Mr. WILTON.—There is ample evidence on record showing the mess the present Government has made of education, so there is no need for me to deal with it in detail. There is widespread dissatisfaction right throughout the State with regard to the Government's handling of education. The sum of £9,500,000, on water supply was actually spent by a Labor Government in 1954, and the authority sought was for £15,150,000. What was the purchasing value of the £1 in 1954 as compared with to-day? To do the

same amount of work that was done in 1954 by the expenditure of £9,500,000, an allocation of the order of £25,000,000 to £30,000,000 would be needed to-day and that sum would provide scope for increased development.

It is nonsensical for the Country Party to claim that it is the only party which endeavours to do anything for the farming community. Any honorable member who closely examines the position would appreciate that an orderly marketing system for primary products is one of the most important requirements in the agricultural world to-day, but the Country Party has done nothing along these lines.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! The matter to which the honorable member for Broadmeadows is now directing his attention is not relevant to the Bill.

Mr. WILTON.—I appreciate its irrelevancy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is a good analogy to use in emphasizing the insincerity of the Country Party, which claims to be the defender and champion of country districts. Despite all the opportunities that the Country Party has had down through the years to do something really worth while for the farming community, its efforts represent only a miserable attempt in odd places here and there to start something which it has never been able to finish.

I believe that the financial allocations that will be provided under this Bill will be hopelessly inadequate to meet what is required in Victoria to-day. Ten years ago, the Labor Party was advocating the expenditure of more money on this type of development than the Government is spending on it to-day. The Treasurer at that time did not have at his disposal anything like the amounts of loan funds or revenue that are available to the Treasurer at present. There is nothing in the Bill of which the Government could be proud. The financial provision, which is inadequate, will scratch only the surface of requirements so far as the State's water supply works are concerned. Victoria has a great potential.

An examination of the representatives of the various organizations that are looking into the question of food production and the country's needs in years to come reveals that more imaginative projects must be undertaken so far as the development of the State's water resources are concerned. During the next ten to fifteen years, there will be a great need to increase the existing rate of production from land which is already under cultivation. It will also be necessary to bring new country into development and to irrigate further areas of land. What is the Government doing in this regard? The estimated actual expenditure for the current financial year, namely, £9,315,000, is less than the amount allocated in 1954. Of course, if the Government lasts long enough, it might eventually reach the 1954 figure, but it will take a long time.

The Government should discard the pinchpenny attitude that it has adopted in regard to water supply works; it should allocate sufficient money to the water authorities of the State to meet the level of production that is required, not in the distant future, but now. I hope that in the immediate future, increased allocations of finance will be made available for urgent water supply projects.

The motion was agreed to.

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

WATER LICENCES AND PERMITS BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 26) on the motion of Mr. Darcy (Minister of Water Supply) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. STONEHAM (Leader of the Opposition).—This Bill contains a variety of provisions, the main one of which seeks to clarify the position

as affected by section 204 of the Water Act, in relation to long-term diversion licences. The present provision is that these licences may be granted in respect of a stream or other natural watercourse which is flowing through, situated upon or bounded by Crown land, or the bed or banks of which are vested in the Crown.

As was mentioned in the debate on the Water Supply Loan Application Bill, the Thomson river in Gippsland is one example of where a breakaway has occurred. In this case the breakaway has become known as the Rainbow creek and a number of licences have been granted to draw water from it. However, it has been found that these licences have been issued illegally and this Bill seeks to validate what has been done in respect of the Thomson river. It will also apply in any future instances. The Minister mentioned the possibility of cases occurring in respect of the Ovens, Buffalo and the Kiewa rivers. We on this side of the House are in favour of this provision.

The second amendment relates to the fixing of a scale of quantities of water to be deemed to have been diverted through the continuous watering of any land according to the area, nature and use of such land, and the manner of watering. In his second-reading speech the Minister set out the reasons for this provision and said that its purpose was really to protect licencees from being placed at a serious disadvantage as against irrigators. Again, we find we are in agreement with the provision.

The Bill also authorizes the Commission to sell land other than by public auction to the Commonwealth, the State of Victoria, the Minister of Lands, the Minister of Education, to any statutory corporation, including a municipality, and it also provides for the sale of land other than by auction if the value of the land in question does not exceed £500. That seems to me to be a reasonable provision.

The next amendment will permit the Commission to delegate to selected officers the right to enter into contracts on behalf of the Commission for amounts up to £2,000. The remaining provisions relate to the improvement of control by the Commission of recreational areas on the foreshores of its reservoirs. Members of the Opposition have studied the Bill carefully, and we cannot fault it. Consequently we wish it a speedy passage.

Mr. WHITING (Mildura).—This measure, which contains a number of amendments to the Water Act, some of which will have far-reaching effects, and others which are of a mechanical nature to assist the Commission in administering its duties under the Act, is supported by the Country Party. I shall refer first to the proposed new sub-section (1) of section 204A which provides—

> The Commission may prescribe by by-law a scale of quantities of water to be deemed to have been diverted during the continuous watering of any land according to the area nature and use of such land and the manner of watering.

This provision could affect private diverters in several areas to such an extent that private diverters in my area have formed themselves into the Sunraysia Private Water Diverters' Association, and have made submissions to the Commission suggesting improvements or alterations to the present system. Fortunately, a number of those suggestions have been accepted by the Commission and that has obviated the need for several representations to the Minister to try to have them included in the Bill.

In his second-reading speech the Minister referred to the volume of water taken by persons authorized to divert water and this mater is causing concern particularly to the diverters downstream from Lake Boga who are diverting water from the River Murray. The type of production in which they are engaged necessitates that a sufficient amount of water be applied to the crops, but the amount applied has to be watched carefully in order to avoid watering to excess,

which creates drainage problems. Private diverters in this area are quite adamant that they do not use anything like the 36 inches of water per acre per annum to which they are entitled. In fact, they believe they are using only 30 inches per acre per annum. Those growing citrus fruits and vegetables are using considerably less.

They therefore believe that, perhaps, there is no necessity for this assessment, and in their opinion the officers of the Commission who have experience in this field know that the 36 inches per acre per annum is not being exceeded. This provision has been a condition of licences for many years but only this year is it being policed. This is propably brought about by the fact that severe restrictions are now being imposed on the use of water.

Whilst all private diverters agree that there is a need for this control in areas where more than the water right is being used, they believe it should be limited to specific areas. The suggestion has been made that, because of the difference between the type of production engaged in downstream from Lake Boga and that undertaken in areas above Lake Boga, there could be some difference in the by-laws that are to be implemented under proposed section 204A.

I suggest that the Minister should request his officers to examine this point to determine whether it possesses any merit. I am sure the honorable gentleman will appreciate that there is a big difference between flood irrigation on a heavy type of soil growing pastures and spray irrigation on light, sandy soil, which is usually associated with the growing of citrus trees and vegetables. I am somewhat concerned that the proposed new sub-section gives the Commission power to prescribe by by-law the scale of quantities of water deemed to have been used. I take it that the by-law will have to be approved by the Governor in Council, but that it can be altered at any time without reference to this House. This is another instance of the power of Parliament being eroded away on points which are comparatively minor, but which are important to those affected, because they feel their rights are being taken away. In this instance, they feel that executive action is being taken by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission but that very little redress is available to diverters.

Sub-section (2) of the proposed new section states that the scales prescribed by by-law shall apply, not withstanding anything in any licence or permit, to any diversion of water or irrigation. Of course, this gives the people concerned some reason to feel that these over-riding provisions may sometimes affect them adversely. Honorable members are aware that at present the Commission plans to review all private diversion licences in 1970. I should have thought that if the present licence provides that certain conditions shall be adhered to this would give the Commission an opportunity to review the licence at this stage and to amend anything that is unsuitable or unworkable, without there being any need to insert an overriding provision such as this in the proposed new sub-section with application to any licence.

The other point about this subsection on which I wish to comment is that the by-law is to apply in cases where the Commission is satisfied that the water has not been accurately measured by meter or other instrument. At present, diverters are expected to install meters at their own expense. If for some reason the meter fails to operate correctly, the Commission will revert to the formula that it has devised to assess the amount of water which has gone through a particular pump. Everyone knows that a meter can become defective and measure water or any other commodity inaccurately, and the proposed provision could be onerous to a diverter. I hope the Commission will use it with discretion.

The Sunraysia Private Water Diverters' Association fails to see why the Commission cannot provide the meters at its own expense. As I have pointed out, the diverters are convinced that they do not use more than their water right and that the meter operates solely for the benefit of the Commission. The State Electricity Commission and almost every other instrumentality provides meters at its own expense, and we cannot help wondering why in this instance the diverter is required to provide his own meter. This applies to the areas below Lake Boga in which water is diverted from the River Murray. According to the organization I mentioned, the prevailing situation will apply only until metering is 100 per centum satisfactory. Because of the installation of some meters already and an instruction that diverters shall give three clear days' notice before commencing irrigation, the Commission has employed an additional fifteen men to carry out the policing. I should have thought that, as these men are available and as there is a comparatively small number of conversion meters, there would have been ample time for the Commission to provide meters, service them, and read them at regular intervals. However, we have been informed that this is not to be the case, and for the present, at least, the diverters will have to pay £100 odd for the installation of a meter.

I point out that in most instances private diverters of water from the River Murray are in somewhat isolated circumstances. Because of present development under group settlement schemes, these diverters live considerable distances from the main centres of population, and thus have freight costs tacked on to their cost of production. They feel that this metering and regimentation by the Commission is another bugbear designed to harass them at every stage.

Clause 4 amends section 34 of the Water Act and permits certain lands to be sold by private treaty. I am at a loss to understand why the Minister has found it necessary to satisfy, in particular, the Minister of Lands for the purposes of settlement, also the Minister of Education and his successors for the time being who are administering the Education Act. Paragraph (*a*) of proposed new sub-section (4) of section 34 of the Water Act provides that these rights are to be available to Her Majesty in the right of the Commonwealth or the State of Victoria. It appears to me that this provision would cover any Government Department, and I fail to understand why these two particular Departments have been mentioned.

Paragraph (*e*) of proposed new sub-section (4) of section 34 of the principal Act provides that any land vested in the Commission which does not exceed 30 acres in area and of which the value does not exceed £500 may be sold by private treaty. This provision could lead to some difficulties, because it is not specified how the valuation of £500 shall be arrived at. I presume that not many sales of such land would occur, but it would be interesting to learn whose valuation would be applied in those instances.

A further provision in the Bill is designed to give the Commission power to allow committees of management to enter into contracts for various items up to the value of £2,000. Apparently, it is required in relation to committees of management of recreational areas, and so forth. The provisions contained in the remaining clauses have not a great deal of effect on the diversion of water or the application of water throughout the State.

One final point is that I cannot find clause 3 in the Bill. I presume that the Minister will explain the omission and will move an appropriate amendment in Committee.

Mr. B. J. EVANS (Gippsland East). —This Bill has two separate purposes, the first of which is to facilitate the issue of licences to divert water from streams which are

not flowing through Crown land. Particular reference has been made to the diversion of water from that portion of the Thomson river known as the Rainbow creek, to which I referred in the debate on the previous measure. The people who live along this creek are experiencing difficulties from several different quarters. I mentioned one difficulty in my previous remarks on this subject. In addition, the licences which have been issued to these people are of doubtful legality, and, further, the unusual situation arises in which many of the people who are diverting water under these licences are in fact pumping water underneath the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission channel.

To people not acquainted with all the ramifications of this problem on the Thomson river and the supply of water available from the area, it may seem strange that there should be a fairly substantial irrigation channel passing through a person's property while, at the same time he is required to pump water underneath the channel to obtain water from a stream running adjacent to it for use on his property on the other side of the channel. I do not propose to go into the reasons for that state of affairs, but simply mention it at this stage.

The main point I wish to discuss is the question of the powers of committees of management of areas under the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission. It is pleasing that these powers are being made more secure—at least I hope that is the position—by the passage of this Bill. I am at a loss to understand why the Government agrees to this worthy principle in this measure and yet does not agree to it in other fields. I believe the conferring of this power is right and proper and that a committee of management should have power to grant leases or licences to any part of the land within a recreational area under its control, as proposed in sub-section (1B) of section 206A, as contained in clause 6. Proposed new sub-section (1C) provides—

> All moneys received by the Commission or the committee of management, as the case may be, in respect of any recreational area shall not form part of the consolidated revenue but shall be applied for or towards the cost of—
>
> (*a*) carrying out works and improvements in that area;
>
> (*b*) managing and maintaining that area and the improvements therein; and
>
> (*c*) providing services in that area.

That is a worthy provision, but I believe it will place natural lake areas —which, admittedly, are not under the control of the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission—at a disadvantage because the committees of management of those areas do not possess such powers. In fact, the artificial reservoirs and artificial lakes which are, or become, tourist centres will have a great advantage over the natural lakes areas. I have in mind particularly the Gippsland Lakes where the committees of management are under the control of the Lands Department.

It is high time that the Government gave all committees of management the powers contained in this Bill if the areas they administer are to maintain their rightful place as tourist centres. I appreciate that it is difficult to relate my remarks to this measure, but I take this opportunity of saying that I hope the Minister will direct the attention of Cabinet to the serious inroads that the granting of powers in this Bill may have on the natural tourist watering places in the State. I believe fair treatment should be given to all and that all committees of management should be granted similar powers.

The motion was agreed to.

The Bill was read a second time and committed.

Clause 1 was agreed to.

Clause 2 (Amendment of No. 6413 s. 6).

Mr. DARCY (Minister of Water Supply).—I have noted the remarks of honorable members, to which I shall give attention. The honorable member for Mildura was correct when he stated that clause 3 was omitted. I shall have the omission rectified before the Bill goes to another place.

The clause was agreed to.

Clauses 4 and 5 were agreed to.

Clause 6 was verbally amended.

Progress was reported.

RAILWAY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The debate (adjourned from October 27) on the motion of Mr. Meagher (Minister of Transport) for the second reading of this Bill was resumed.

Mr. WILKES (Northcote).—This is the fourth of a series of loan application Bills introduced annually, and referred to by the Treasurer in his Budget speech. Reference is also made to these Bills at page 25 of the Budget Papers.

The Railway Loan Application Bill is equally important, if not more important, than the other loan application Bills. When honorable members address themselves to loan application Bills, they preface their remarks by saying that, "this is the usual type of Bill introduced annually". Perhaps they are not aware of the significance of the word "usual" as it applies to the Railway Loan Application Bill. If this measure is examined it will be found that it resembles in detail, the railway loan application Bills of previous years except for slight variations in the allocations for certain branches of the Department.

The Bill is divided into three items concerning way and works; rolling stock, equipment and machinery and other works; and construction of new lines of railway. The Railway Department is the largest public enterprise in Victoria; it has a turnover of almost £50,000,000 a year; it employs 29,000 persons; it has a capital investment of £190,000,000; and it carries 150,000,000 passengers a year on the suburban network and 5,000,000 passengers a year on the country network. It can be described as the largest public utility in Victoria.

Mr. MEAGHER.—Are you sure that your figure of 150,000,000 passengers a year is correct? The Department carries 190,000 passengers a day.

Mr. WILKES.—I thank the Minister of Transport for his assistance. The Department provides an important service to the primary producers and secondary industries, and also to the travelling public both in Victoria and interstate. Therefore, the railways should have a more prominent place in the plans of the Treasurer in the allocation of loan funds. The importance of the Department to the State should be sufficient to encourage the Treasurer to make some concessional allowance in relation to loan allocations to allow it to keep pace with the demands for the additional service it is expected to provide.

One is inclined to say, "We want more stations, more staff to man these stations, better rolling-stock, cheaper fares, and a host of other improvements". But when the financial position of the Railway Department is examined, one concludes that it would be a waste of time to bore the House with such requests.

It is not possible for the Railway Department, with the stringent allocation made available to it by this Government, to do other than it does. Yesterday, the honorable member for Scoresby suggested that, if members of the Opposition were prepared to criticize loan allocations to the various Departments, they should offer an alternative. He said that, if they had the temerity to contend that the Railway Department, the Public Works Departments or any other Department was entitled to a greater allocation of loan funds, they should be prepared to say from where the additional loan funds would come, or which Departments should be deprived of funds to make additional money available to others.

I shall examine the position as it concerns the Railway Department, and I am prepared to offer a suggestion. From 1951-52 to 1955-56 inclusive, this Department received 18.7 per cent. of the State's total expenditure of loan funds. This percentage steadily decreased in the past ten years until, in 1964-65, it was 13.6 per cent. In spite of the Department being asked to provide additional services to primary producers, for the transport of the wheat crop and the wool clip, and anything else of that nature, its share of the loan funds has decreased from 18.7 per cent. to 13.6 per cent.

The Department has been completely neglected in the allocation of loan funds. This cannot be said of other Departments. A number of Government Departments have received steadily increasing allocations of loan funds over the past ten years. Reference has been made to the Education Department. This Department has not only received increased loan fund allocations but has also received additional amounts from revenue. No doubt the Department and the Minister demanded that this should be so, and, because of the requirements for education, the increase was essential. But if additional funds are needed to provide more educational facilities more water, and more forest works, surely a greater allocation is needed for the Railway Department.

If it is necessary that revenue be directed to filling the gap caused by a lack of loan funds, surely the railways must be given some consideration because of the work the Department is expected to do. The State of Victoria did not make the railways; in many respects the railways made the State of Victoria. The railways were responsible for the development of the State, particularly in many of the outlying areas. These factors should be taken into consideration when loan fund applications are made.

The story of loan allocations to the Railway Department is shown by figures appearing at page 296 of *Hansard* of the present session. In the year 1959-60 the loan allocation to the Railway Department was £8,051,131. I can go further back than that. According to the figures of Commonwealth payments to the State, in 1951-52, a sum of £56,000,000 was made available for work in Victoria and, of that amount, the Railway Department received just less than £11,000,000. As shown at page 296 of *Hansard*, the Department in 1960-61 received £7,640,760 in loan funds. In 1961-62 the amount rose a shade to £7,712,709. In 1962-63, the allocation rose by a further £100,000 to £7,875,512. In 1963-64, it was almost the same, £7,864,895. In 1964-65, there was a reduction in the amount to £7,776,613, and in 1965-66, the amount will be £8,050,000.

These figures tell the very sad story of the allocation of loan funds to the Railway Department. Of course, not all the blame can be placed on the Commonwealth. As I have said, the State's loan allocation has increased about 50 per cent. since 1952-53, and its revenue has increased in the same proportion. But, despite the increase in revenue and the total loan allocation from the Commonwealth over the years, the Railway Department has received infinitely less in proportion. The result is that the receipts of the Department have fallen from 18.7 per cent. to 13.6 per cent. of the total loan funds allocation.

How the Minister manages to overcome the difficulties that this creates in his Department has been explained by officers of the Department and by the Minister himself. The position is certainly illustrated in the loan application Bills which have borne such a resemblance to one another during the past five or six years, and I think the position could be traced further back than that. In addition to all this, the Department has to provide interest and sinking fund payments. Its loan liability has increased from £142,000,000 in 1960 to £171,000,000 in 1965.

According to the figures on page 296 of *Hansard*, the Department's interest payments in 1964-65 amounted to £1,946,574, and its sinking fund payments amounted to £111,153. Exchange payments amounted to £74,590. The total amount provided for those three types of payment was £2,132,317 in that one year. I should imagine that those expenses would be the first call on revenue, and that would have a resounding effect on the use of loan moneys applied by this Bill.

This position reflects no credit on the Government for not equitably distributing loan funds. The Treasurer must consider whether the financial position of the Railway Department is to continue to decline steadily or whether he will provide the Department with an injection of finance to allow it to do what was intended it should, and play its role in the development of this State of Victoria.

In the Victorian Railways *Newsletter* of September, 1965, there is a report of an address by Railways Commissioner Rogan to the Institute of Planning. Under the heading, " Effective Capital Cut " he stated—

> Over the last thirteen years the loan funds allotted to the Victorian Railways have fluctuated around £7,500,000 annually. Actually the amount received in 1951-52 exceeded £10.4 million and in 1953-54 and 1954-55 exceeded £8,000,000. To receive the same amount or less in 1964-65 than in 1953-54 means a serious reduction in the effective capital available.

This is elementary. It is hard to comprehend why the railways are being allocated less loan money now than they were thirteen years ago. The Commissioner went on to say—

> But that is only a part of the story, because of the £7,500,000 received last financial year, roughly £5,500,000 was expended on work that would have been financed from a depreciation reserve fund in any business enterprise.

Of course, depreciation reserve funds rely on revenue and profits. At one stage the Railway Equalization Account was in a very healthy position, and before the dire economic circumstances I have described to the House there was an amount exceeding £2,000,000 to its credit. But of course, that money has now gone, through no fault of the railways. Money had to be found because operating losses this year due to increases in wages and conditions of employment of the staff. The railway accounts showed a deficit of £1,500,000 and the amount to the credit of the equalization account was not sufficient to cover all of this loss, so £600,000 had to be allocated from Consolidated Revenue.

An examination of the Bill and the Premier's remarks show that this was done because the true picture so far as railways accounts are concerned will not be clear until after the haulage of the wheat crop. It may not be necessary to use the £600,000 allocated from Consolidated Revenue and this may be transferred back to the Treasury. I am sure it will be if the Treasurer has any say in it. The Commissioner proceeded—

> It cannot be gainsaid that the Victorian Railways is essentially a business organization. It is certainly not part of the Public Service.

We agree to disagree with him partly on that statement. He continued—

> This concept is behind the recent legislation requiring the Department to pay the interest on loan funds allotted after 1960, but to fail to make a proper allocation for depreciation from working expenses and require loan funds to be used for the purpose, is contrary to all the canons of sound finance and accounting procedure.
>
> Actually, to-day it is customary for soundly financed businesses to transfer up to 40 per cent. or 50 per cent. of net profits to special reserves to provide against erosion of values by depreciating currency, obsolescence and/or to provide capital development of new products.
>
> To maintain the railways system in anything like reasonable shape we are provided with interest-bearing funds so that, without undertaking new works, we are increasing our interest bill by £300,000 per annum. However, even with this we are not maintaining our rolling-stock, tracks, &c., to the desirable standards.
>
> An independent authority, the Parliamentary all party Committee of Public Accounts, after hearing that an estimated

£5,100,000, that was necessary to bring aged goods rolling-stock and too light track up to standard, was £2,600,000 above the amount actually spent, recommended that increased loan moneys be made available over five to ten years to modernize rolling-stock, &c.

In the light of the deficiency of £2,600,000 annually, in essential funds, how could any Board, with any regard for financial prudence and responsibility, divert funds to an underground scheme not essential for railway operation but which is needed to make the City of Melbourne a fit place to move in?

I disagree with the last statement, but setting it apart, Mr. Rogan has given a very clear picture of the situation in the railways to-day and how the railways have been scandalously neglected and starved of loan funds, whilst other Departments have been able to get steady increases. Some of the minor Departments may not have received steady increases, but they have had some increases. Despite all this, and despite the increases in the total revenue available to the Government over the period, a major Department like the railways has been starved of any appreciable assistance. In fact, it is almost true to say that it has received no assistance at all.

To take the story further, let me examine three of the major branches covered by this loan application Bill. The Way and Works Branch is one, and there is no need for me to describe to honorable members the importance of this part of the railways system. After having been given the cold shoulder by the Treasurer, it has been necessary for the Railways Commissioners to rearrange their estimates and allocations within the Department. In other words, they have had to cut their coat according to their cloth. They must have a permanent pattern for this as they have been forced to act in a similar manner for the last ten years. It is to the credit of the Department that it has been able to juggle its funds to make more money available for its more important works. This is a tribute to the skill and prudence of the officers concerned, and no credit is due to the Treasurer, although the Minister of Transport, as head of the Department, can claim some praise.

The allocation for the Way and Works Branch in 1963 was £6,325,000; in 1964, £6,435,000, and in 1965, £6,487,000. The major item of expenditure of this Branch would be on the re-laying of lines, I should imagine, although a great deal of other work is undertaken as can be seen from an examination of pages 2, 3 and 4 of the explanatory memorandum. To deal with the major item of lines, the sum of £2,000,000 is allocated for 1965. Last year, the allocation was £2,000,000, and in 1963, it was £1,900,000. One can see the predicament of the administrators who are faced with the problem of juggling the miserable funds allotted to them in order to achieve the results they desire.

Reference to the money expended on lines by the Way and Works Branch brings me back to the 1964-65 report of the Committee of Public Accounts upon "Derailments on the Victorian Railways System". The railways must have done a splendid job in the past twelve months in reducing the number of derailments.

Mr. WHEELER.—They have followed the recommendations of the committee.

Mr. WILKES.—Because of an insufficiency of loan funds, the Department did not implement the report. Obviously, it took notice of the report in a broad sense, and it was desirous of adopting the recommendations in it. The Treasurer knew the contents of the report and the action that should be taken. Among the conclusions reached in the report concerning way and works and lines, there appeared the following under the heading, "Re-laying of track":—

In summarizing the track situation, the Acting Chief Civil Engineer stated—

This was when giving evidence before the committee—

"The most pressing need is to replace a large amount of rails, together with ballast, which has outlived its useful life in the

track. The rate of re-laying at present being carried out is not sufficient to prevent what would be a very critical situation developing, and to effect any improvement at all, a more substantial sum must be spent on re-laying each year".

I remind the House that this report was submitted in 1964. It further states—

Re-laying of tracks consists of replacing old rail with new rail welded in 180-ft. or 225-ft. lengths, replacing poor ballast and replacing poor sleepers. If the rail is removed from service from a main line, i.e., a heavy type rail, any defective portions are removed from the end of the rail, and it is welded into 180-ft. sections for use on light lines.

In other words, in order to make ends meet, financially speaking, the Department must take up old lengths of track on main lines and use them on lighter lines. Normally, I should imagine that the Department would use new rails.

Mr. WHEELER.—Steel can be repressed and used more than once.

Mr. WILKES.—I am not criticizing the Department; I am simply emphasizing that, according to the committee's report, the rails which were being used were not sufficiently sound for carrying heavy loads.

Mr. WHEELER.—The rails were put down many years ago.

Mr. WILKES.—Of course they were laid many years ago, and that is one of the reasons why they must now be replaced. The report proceeds—

The cost of re-laying and the mileage relaid in each of the last three years was—

1961-62	£816,000,	for 76 miles
1962-63	£888,000,	for 72 miles
1963-64	£1,683,000,	for 120 miles

Attention was directed to the fact that the required re-laying of 100 miles of track per annum to restrict rail to its assumed 50 years of life has not been attained. The Acting Chief Civil Engineer in his memo stated—

"To achieve the desirable rate of re-laying would require a programme of 211 miles of track per annum for a period of at least seven years. This work, together with the associated renewal of points and crossings and further reconditioning of track which may be necessary prior to re-laying, would involve an estimated expenditure of £3,100,000 per annum or an approximate increase of £1,400,000 over the money spent on these works last year."

The amount of money that was actually spent, as the Treasurer would know, was 50 per cent. less than that recommended by the Committee of Public Accounts and by a senior technical officer of the Railway Department in order to preserve standards of safety. That is why I prefaced my remarks by saying that during the past twelve months, under the circumstances to which I have referred, the railways have done an excellent job in reducing the number of derailments.

Mr. WHEELER.—In recent months, there has not been so much publicity concerning derailments.

Mr. WILKES.—I did not ask the Minister of Transport whether there were more derailments this year than in the past; I assume that the number of derailments has not increased. It was recommended that during the next seven years an amount of £3,100,000 should be spent to improve the condition of the lines, where derailments had occurred, or were likely to occur, to such a degree that they would not be the cause of derailments. If derailments did occur after the requisite work had been undertaken, the condition of the tracks would not be the factor responsible for them.

Mr. WHEELER.—You are failing miserably to make out a good case.

Mr. WILKES.—Obviously, the honorable member for Essendon does not appreciate that, during the past ten years, the Railway Department has been starved for funds. I have referred to the recommendations of the Committee of Public Accounts concerning one facet of the railways. I should now like to refer to another facet, namely, rolling-stock equipment and machinery. I have already stated that there is a marked similarity between all loan application Bills. From an examination of last year's Railway Loan Application Bill, it is apparent that many items for which

finance was provided will again appear in this year's Bill, and they will be repeated in future loan application Bills until the Treasurer takes action concerning them.

In 1963, an amount of £4,925,000 was set aside for rolling-stock, compared with £5,365,000 in 1965. An examination of the major items of expenditure under this heading would prove interesting. An amount of £1,500,000 is required for locomotives —I presume this expenditure relates to diesel locomotives—this amount being the same as last year's allocation. An amount of £1,470,000, which is less than the expenditure last year on this item, will be needed for electric trains. For wagons, including, I presume, the new type of hopper wheat wagons for which tenders have been called and accepted for construction by Tulloch's in New South Wales, provision is made for expenditure of £1,650,000, which is the same as last year.

It is regrettable that the Department is compelled to let contracts for the construction of wagons away from Newport workshops. It has been suggested that the New South Wales firm is tooled for this work and that it would be cheaper to have the wagons constructed by it than in our own workshops. I am sure the Minister of Transport realizes that the tradesmen, who have been trained at the Newport workshops, are a credit to the Department. Since their inception the Newport workshops have been responsible for maintaining railway rolling-stock. Many brilliant tradesmen and artisans, who could take their place anywhere in private enterprise, have been trained at Newport. Because of the diminution in loan funds available to the Department, many skilled tradesmen, particularly apprentices, seek employment in outside industry. It is not uncommon to find tradesmen, who have concluded the prescribed period during which they must remain with the Department after completing their apprenticeships, leaving the service as soon as the opportunity is available. This is tragic.

Railway apprentices receive a training that will fit them for work in any walk of life. Their training is so exact that tradesmen who have completed their apprenticeships in the Railway Department may be found to-day in private enterprise all over the State. This reflects highly on the skill and ability of those who are responsible for the training of apprentices at the Newport workshops. It is regrettable that contracts for the construction of wagons must be let to firms in other States when the men, materials, and skill are available at Newport for this work. The Newport workshops can produce anything that can be produced by private enterprise. This has been amply demonstrated by the construction at Newport of Harris blue trains, locomotives and wagons of all types. Unfortunately, the Department's hands are tied and the wagons must be constructed in New South Wales and, unless more loan money is made available to the Department, this trend will continue.

Mr. MEAGHER.—They are kept busy with other work.

Mr. WILKES.—That is so, and the amount of other work they can do is governed by the amount of money made available. I am certain that the Minister and the Department would be desirous of applying more effort to maintenance if the funds were available, even to the extent of keeping the carriages and rolling-stock cleaner. As this is not the case, it is a reflection of the treatment the Department has received.

The construction of new lines is the third facet of the Bill. However, it is not significant at the present time because in recent years more lines have been closed than have been opened by this and other Governments. The significant feature of that part of the Bill dealing with the construction of new lines is that in 1963, a sum of £250,000 was allocated for this purpose; in 1964, the relevant provision was £140,000, and in 1965 it was £148,000. The major item in

these allocations in the past three years has been £50,000 a year for the proposed underground railway. So, when £50,000 a year is subtracted from the amounts I have quoted, it is obvious that there is not much left for the construction of new lines.

When the Bill authorizing the construction of the underground railway was before the House, Opposition members agreed that the railway was most desirable in Melbourne. I do not agree with the remark made by Mr. Rogan, who suggested that the underground was not important to the railways. I consider it to be most important.

Mr. MEAGHER.—I think he was speaking in a financial sense.

Mr. WILKES.—I do not want to do him an injustice. I am sure he realizes the importance of the underground in relation to the Department, because if we are to encourage people to travel on the railways, it is important that the services provided should be attractive, and an underground railway would meet this requirement. Of course, it has been established that the Treasurer will not provide increased loan funds for the construction of the railway. If he were prepared to do so, he would have been making larger sums available over the past ten years. In the meantime, large sums of money have been spent in providing car parking facilities in the Golden Mile, and one wonders what will be the position in ten years' time when many more cars will come into the city. Of course, 70 per cent. of the cars that come into the city carry only one person each, and unless an underground railway is constructed and the majority of cars are kept outside the inner city area the situation that exists at present will never be relieved.

I know that the business interests of the inner city are appalled at any suggestion of keeping cars out of Melbourne, and they go to no end to ensure that nothing is done to impede the flow of traffic into the city. Perhaps they are defending their own interests and they should be permitted to do so, but I think it is a short-sighted policy. Sooner or later the optimum in the number of cars which can be accommodated in the inner city area will be reached.

I compliment the Minister on the fight he is waging with the Premier and with the Cabinet to have the underground railway constructed at the earliest possible date. A host of figures has been quoted in relation to the cost. The first estimate made about ten years ago was £15,000,000, but that has now increased to £35,000,000. If the underground is not constructed for another ten years, the cost will probaby be in the vicinity of £55,000,000 and, in addition, there will be this cluttering up of the city by motor cars, and everything will come to a stop.

Mr. JONA.—There will be car parks and nowhere to drive the cars.

Mr. WILKES.—Exactly. The Minister has suggested that an amount of money should be made available each year, but I stress that it will need to be more than the £50,000 provided in this Bill. If a sum of £6,000,000 is set aside each year for the next six years, the job should not prove to be too difficult. I realize that £6,000,000 a year cannot be provided from loan funds, but the amount I have suggested should not be too much to envisage when it is considered in relation to forward planning.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Will not an underground railway bring more people into the city and will not this boost the finances of these big businesses to which you are opposed?

Mr. WILKES.—I am not opposed to these businesses; they have a right to carry on commercial activities in the city.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—You want to provide an underground railway to get people into the city at the expense of the suburban shopkeepers.

Mr. WILKES.—I want the underground railway constructed for the benefit of all citizens, whether they

be commercial people or others who come into the city to enjoy the facilities that are available.

Mr. MEAGHER.—Many people come into the city to work.

Mr. WILKES.—Yes. Surely no one could condone the present situation and allow it to be amplified over the next five years.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—There is not enough room on the footpaths for the people who come into the city now.

Mr. WILKES.—In other major cities of comparable size in the world underground systems are considered a must to assist and supplement public transport.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—They have not solved their problems.

Mr. WILKES.—No, but they have gone some of the way. One way in which to solve these problems is to proceed with the construction of the underground railway, but the Premier is offering no assistance in this regard. Perhaps it is because of his country interests. From what has been said to-day I assume that the Country Party is not happy about the construction of an underground railway.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—It is nonsense to say that it has anything to do with the country versus the city.

Mr. WILKES.—I have read what the Premier and the Leader of the Country Party have said about the underground railway. However, the Premier was not always of the same opinion, because he was one of the greatest advocates for it when the Bill authorizing its construction was before the House. Now he is at variance with the Minister of Transport. Surely the Premier can see that the Minister is right on this occasion. He has adopted a line relating to the interests of the development of Melbourne.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—Is Melbourne under-developed?

Mr. WILKES.—I am not suggesting that. This city is being continually redeveloped. It is obvious that something must be done in regard to the provision of an underground railway. A sum of approximately £50,000 a year is being provided for preliminary work, but the Premier and Treasurer closes his eyes to the need for an underground railway; he goes to the Lord Mayor's dinner and, wringing his hands in despair, says, "We cannot get the money. That is the end of it. We can have no underground railway because we cannot get £6,000,000 a year." The honorable gentleman has proved beyond doubt that he is not prepared to give the railways an additional penny of loan funds if he can avoid doing so. In addition, he says, "I will not assist the railways to redevelop themselves by going on with the underground railway. We cannot get the loan funds. I cannot get the money." That is all that the Premier said, but the Minister of Transport has stuck to his guns and said, "It must be built."

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—It is only a question of jealousy—because Sydney has a bit of an underground railway Melbourne wants one.

Mr. WILKES.—That is a very stupid remark indeed. As a sum of only £50,000 is allocated for the underground railway this year, a few more holes can be drilled. At least the Premier ought to concede that, if he is prepared to allocate a certain amount over a few years—an amount of £121,578 had been allocated up to 30th June this year—on experimental work and drilling, he should be prepared to do everything possible to obtain an additional £6,000,000 a year for this specific purpose. No credit is due to the Premier for either his treatment of the railways on loan funds generally or his treatment of his own Minister in regard to the approach to the underground railway itself. For the Premier to speak against his own Minister on this matter and against the best possible technical advice that can be obtained from all traffic authorities—his own and others—is too stupid for words.

Under the circumstances, having been virtually ignored by the Premier over the years in the allocation of loan funds, the railways have done a reasonably good job in providing services for the public. Certainly, in our consideration of this Bill, we can make some administrative suggestions to the Minister of Transport. From time to time, honorable members feel inclined to suggest that a railway station should be built at a certain location, but after examining the loan allocations that have been made over the years, I feel ashamed to do so. However, I shall make some suggestions on railway administration to the Government.

A number of years ago, the former honorable member for Oakleigh referred, during debates on railway loan application Bills, to the hiatus in interstate passenger services through Melbourne whereby passengers were required to wait a day before resuming their journey. The provision of the inter-capital *Daylight* express has corrected this to a large extent. However, from time to time, despite the excellent service on the new Sydney train and the success of its club car and facilities, complaints are made concerning the paucity of facilities on the *Overland* express. Sometimes one wonders why the Department does not experiment with a club car or something of that nature on the *Overland*. There may be difficulties of which I am not aware, such as the South Australian Government not being prepared to agree, but if it has not already been undertaken, some investigation should be made along these lines.

All that a passenger can do on the *Overland*, which departs later than the Sydney train, is to read in his compartment and go to sleep. On the Sydney train, passengers may go to the club car to have a cup of tea or a drink. I think this encourages people to use rail to travel interstate, and I have heard people express this view. I do not know whether my proposal would be economic, but I urge the Minister to investigate the possibility of altering the method of payment for services given in the club car on the Sydney train. It has been suggested that, instead of paying for drinks as they are served, the customer should be handed a chit for the amount to pay as he leaves the car. This system is adopted in most places in Melbourne to-day.

Mr. B. J. EVANS.—It would save a few tips, too.

Mr. WILKES.—I am not suggesting that it will eliminate that—the tipping can take place when the account is paid—but at least it would correct a lot of anomalies, with stewards going backwards and forwards for change, people disputing charges, and so on. Anything that will improve the facilities on our interstate trains is worth investigating. No doubt members of the Country Party will have suggestions to make in regard to country trains, which I do not have the necessity to use on many occasions. Probably facilities on various lines can be improved. In conclusion, I stress that if the railways are to maintain the services that the State demands, and to improve them, a fairer allocation of loan funds must be made by the Treasurer—a much more equitable allocation than has been the case over the past ten or fifteen years. Consideration must be given to reaching a firm basis in regard to the underground. Obviously, the provision of an underground railway would inject life blood into the passenger train services around Melbourne. It is badly needed to relieve congestion, and to improve railway finances and facilities for the public. The Opposition does not oppose this Bill.

Mr. TREWIN (Benalla).—To my mind the railways are best described as bands of steel that bind the nation together. The Victorian railway network extends in all directions from Melbourne, binding the State together, and providing the means of transporting to the metropolis the produce that is grown in even the distant corners of the State. The

metropolitan railway system was at one time second to none in the world. However, time has taken its toll, and for a number of years passengers have had to put up with discomfort, the tracks have become dilapidated and rolling-stock outmoded. Recently, a committee of this House conducted an inquiry and submitted a report to enable certain plans to be developed by the Railway Department.

The Commissioners cannot see any bright future ahead for the railways. Although the State has continued to prosper, the railway system has deteriorated to an alarming extent. By the provisions contained in this measure, endeavours are being made to restore the railway network to the top level so that it may fulfil the function for which it was originally designed, that is, to assist in the development of the State as a whole. Irrespective of the merits or otherwise of an underground railway for Melbourne and whether it is desirable to eliminate a level crossing at a particular locality or renew a particular section of track, the railways will always be faced with a working expenditure in excess of that of any other Department. A sufficient work-force must be employed to cater for the needs of all sections of the railways. The lack of care or the lack of maintenance, and even the decision to dispense with train examiners at some depots contributed to some of the problems which the Railway Department faces through the depreciation of rolling-stock. I believe the depletion in the number of staff employed was largely instrumental in lowering the condition of the rolling-stock.

The Railway Department faces a challenge. This Bill will make available to the Department a certain amount of money with which to maintain rolling-stock, tracks, and so on, and also to introduce progressive developments, so that the whole system may be brought up to the required standard. Apart from loan moneys, the railways depend to a great extent on income obtained from the carriage of produce from the rural areas. It can be said that country freights carry the railway system of this State. The revenue obtained from the carriage of the wheat harvest represents a considerable proportion of railway revenue. It is of great concern to the Commissioners and to the Minister that this year's harvest is expected to be much less than last year's. If the harvest is reduced by one-third, there will be a corresponding reduction in railway revenue.

Some endeavours are being made by the railways to improve transport facilities. As an illustration, I refer to the interest displayed by the Grain Elevators Board in the new wheat trucks which are being made available and which no doubt will prove to be a wonderful acquisition to the Department in shifting the wheat harvest. Much of the rolling-stock used is of a pretty old vintage. I realize that it is not possible to scrap trucks merely because they are old; when repaired, they may be used for many more years. The same may be said of the railway tracks throughout the State. The honorable member for Northcote referred to the re-laying of certain lines with old rails taken from other areas. This is being done on the Yarrawonga–Benalla line. The old rails, which were laid 82 years ago, are being replaced by a heavier track, and are to be sold for scrap or used for other maintenance purposes. The replacement of the rails on this section of line will enable a 100 per cent. increase in the speeds and carrying capacity of the trains, and will ensure added comfort in travelling.

In recent years, there has been a change-over from steam to diesel locomotion. This has resulted in staff movements from locomotive depots and maintenance stations, and has involved rolling-stock crews and permanent-way men. Overall, it has not reduced the number of railway men living in the country towns.

There is a need for better amenities at locomotive depots and railway

stations. The Benalla railway station was built 80 years ago. At this station there is a guards' room and a porters' room, but they always seem to be dingy. Stand-by crews use these rooms for long periods. Although the rooms are painted from time to time, drab colours are used, and this does not lift the morale of the employees.

Mr. MEAGHER.—The old colours were used to prevent discolouration from brake dust. Brighter and more modern colours are now being used.

Mr. TREWIN.—That will lift the morale of the men who, over the years, have given wonderful service to the Department. The best cannot be obtained from employees if they are required to work under drab conditions, notwithstanding that they might give of their best. I often travel on the evening train from Melbourne to Benalla. There is the usual refreshment room tussle—the first person out of the door is served first. I feel sorry for the elderly people who cannot elbow their way through the crowd. They become most agitated nearing the departure time, and they often leave the refreshment room without obtaining a meal. I do not know the answer to this problem. At one time, a buffet car was provided on this train, but it was taken away because of the high running expenses. There was the necessity to staff the car and to provide a change-over crew.

The summer season is now upon us, with the consequent irritation of flies. It is a constant battle in the refreshment room to keep the flies away from the food. I hope the Department will consider the re-introduction of a buffet-car service on this train during the summer period. In passing, I might state that recently I had a meal in that refreshment room and the menu contained an extra dish; it was a welcome addition to the steak and kidney and "snags" and potatoes, which is the usual railway fare. I thought then that the railways were looking up.

I hope that the reorganization of the Melbourne Goods Yard will result in the more expeditious clearing of goods. I recently ordered some superphosphate, and I had to send the empty bags to be refilled at Geelong. I was told that ten days would elapse from the time of delivery to the local railway station until the arrival at Geelong. I do not know what causes the delay. Admittedly bags are not perishable. However, it is always understood that there will be a ten-days period from the time of delivery of the empty bags at the local station to their arrival at Geelong. That is too long. Better deliveries would encourage greater use of railway transport by people sending certain classes of goods.

I can make no complaint about the turn round of stock loadings. There may be delays now and again, but it is rarely necessary to complain about the slow handling of livestock. This is because of the consideration now given by the Department to this type of loading. I suppose that two-thirds of this traffic has been lost to road transport, and that is probably irrecoverable because of the flexibility of road transport. An attempt has been made to regain some of this business by making concessional rates available in certain areas. The proposition is not altogether acceptable to the average primary producer because, to avail himself of it, he must indicate that he will send all his stock by rail. The buyers who despatch stock from Shepparton, Wangaratta, Wodonga, and such places are able to take advantage of the concessional rates, and rightly so. I am sure that, because these buyers are able to avail themselves of the concessional rate, the Department receives business which would otherwise go to road transport.

I hope that our railway system continues to serve the community in the way in which it was intended it should. The present Minister of Transport inherited a legacy or two,

but I consider that, with the Commissioners, he is making progress in overcoming some of the lag in railway affairs which existed a few years ago.

Mr. HOLLAND (Flemington).—Like my colleague, the honorable member for Northcote, I believe the Railway Loan Application Bill is an important measure. This is not merely because of what is contained in the Bill, but particularly because of the impact of the works envisaged on a system on which, broadly speaking, our transport throughout Victoria largely depends. The interesting analysis made by the honorable member for Northcote of the financial position of the railways and his indication of the amounts allocated to the Department over the past few years disclosed two things. The first is that most of the deficiencies apparent in the railway system to-day exist because the Department has been for a long period without the funds it needs, and not because of any lack of ability to plan or any lack of technical know-how. The second is that the Department is in no different position from any other undertaking in this State in that it cannot do many of the things it wants to do because Victoria receives an insufficient allocation of loan funds. It is of no use members of the Government saying that different priorities should be suggested or asking from where the money will come. The important point is that this State does not receive the necessary allocation of loan moneys required to carry out capital works.

I do not wish to traverse the ground covered by the honorable member for Northcote. In a practical and general sense, he has stated the attitude of the Labor Party towards the Victorian Railways. I wish to discuss a few of the items mentioned in the Bill, primarily those which concern my electorate, and to amplify, to some extent, the honorable member's remarks about the underground railway. I refer to sub-items 105 and 106, particularly the latter, which deals with grade separation at level crossings. For some time, efforts have been made by both the Melbourne City Council and myself to have various crossings within the Melbourne city area, including two in my electorate, eliminated. This matter has been taken up with the Interdepartmental Committee on the Abolition of Level Crossings on several occasions, most recently in July of this year, when the Melbourne City Council Traffic and Parking Committee gave the inter-departmental committee a series of facts about delays at certain crossings. At each of two crossings in Macaulay-road, Kensington, two observers, equipped with "delay meters", were stationed. Delay meters are something of which I had never heard before, but they are electrical meters which record the number of vehicles delayed and the time for which they are delayed.

At the first crossing in Macaulay-road, a survey was taken from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and it disclosed that the gates were closed for 94 minutes, that 1,383 vehicles were delayed and that 2,830 vehicle minutes were lost. At the second set of gates in Macaulay-road, those near Kensington station, a similar survey over a period of nine hours revealed that the gates were closed for 123 minutes, that 1,238 vehicles were delayed, and that a total of 2,212 minutes were lost. I am aware that the inter-departmental committee cannot immedately deal with the many crossings which exist, but the figures indicate lengthy delays to a large number of vehicles. Macaulay-road is becoming a much used route between the city, North Melbourne, and Footscray, and greater consideration should be given to this matter. When these facts were presented to the inter-departmental committee, the chairman, Mr. Reynolds, replied—

> In connexion with your letter of 25th January, 1965 (reference 60/2013/123) dealing with delays to traffic at various level crossings in the City of Melbourne, I desire to advise you that any grade separation scheme at Macaulay-road, Kensington, Macaulay-road, Macaulay, and Arden-street, Macaulay, would be very expensive because

of the built-up areas adjacent to the crossings and the complex trackwork adjacent to the crossings and, in the latter two, because of the proximity of Moonee Ponds creek.

Moreover, any planning of grade separations in this area is affected by road reservations made in the Melbourne Master Plan which would alter considerably traffic volumes in these areas.

The next paragraph concerns other places I had mentioned. The letter concludes—

In consequence, at the present time, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Abolition of Level Crossings is concentrating on crossings which are of higher priority.

That is very laudable and I do not disagree with the fact that the committee must have regard for the crossings that are of the highest priority. As a result of that letter, the Traffic and Parking Committee wrote to me stating that it was still concerned about the matter, as it considered that the existing conditions at these crossings were far from satisfactory. It also said that the Railway Commissioners had been requested to keep the matter under review.

So far as I am concerned, two important points emerge. I do not believe that one should attempt to have one's own requirements taken out of what is their reasonable priority. I think it is only logical that the crossings of the highest priority should be dealt with first, whether that affects my case or not. I am not suggesting that, as a result of the requests to which I have referred, the crossings I have named should be given higher priority than they deserve. Nevertheless, I suggest that the inter-departmental committee is merely using words that have little meaning when they reply in the fashion I have indicated without giving any indication when the crossings concerned will be placed on a priority list. I consider that people generally would be far more satisfied if, in reply to these requests, the committee gave some indication of what the priority was, even if it had to state that it might be one, two or three years before anything was done. That would give the people concerned some idea where they fitted into the scheme of things and would allow them to keep the position under review. If conditions got worse, they could take further representations to the authorities concerned.

Mr. MEAGHER.—The difficulty is that these priorities change annually and anything that is stated along the lines you have indicated is taken as a promise.

Mr. HOLLAND.—What the Minister of Transport says may be true, but I consider that any reply should indicate what the priority is at the moment. It could be stated that the priority list was subject to review every twelve months and could definitely be altered for reasons which would be explained. Mr. Reynolds, in his letter, also referred to the influence of road reservation projects under the Melbourne master plan. What he said was merely a statement of opinion, and I do not know whether it would have any effect.

If the crossings concerned have to wait until those reservations are made under the Melbourne master plan, it might be 20 or 30 years before the inter-departmental committee would even look at them. Therefore, I should like some further information regarding where the two crossings I have mentioned fit into the priority list. This information would also be of interest to the Melbourne City Council. There are certainly other areas in which similar problems arise and if the people concerned have had the same treatment, the situation would appear to be hopeless. I hope something along the lines I have suggested can be worked out without anybody being thought to have given a firm promise.

I now wish to refer to the allocation under sub-item 108 of £50,000 for staff amenities, and I commend the Minister of Transport and the railways for what is being done in this connexion. Three or four years ago, when there was industrial unrest in the railways, certain members of the Opposition made a tour of some of the workshop areas, and at that time,

they found that the amenities provided were, to say the least, primitive in the extreme. Perhaps not as a result of our visits but as a result of further examination by the Commissioners, there has been a marked advance in this type of facility, and I think that each year for the past four years the sum of £50,000 annually has been provided out of railway loan funds to effect improvements to staff amenities. This leads to very good employer-employee relationships, and I certainly commend the railways for their action.

Sub-item 114 covers an allocation of £50,000 for the provision of wash docks for livestock vans, including the acquisition of land at Brooklyn, and sub-item 302 covers an allocation of £8,000 for the Tottenham to Brooklyn railway. I mention these two items because they are of some interest to my electorate and will be of considerable interest to some organizations in the future. It is inevitable that at some stage some Government will remove the Newmarket sale-yards from their present location, and I am interested to see these projects now going on as part of the provision of the general facilities needed for stock transport in the Derrimut area. Up to date, it has been contended that the removal of the Newmarket sale-yards would involve expenditure of this nature. Now the railways are doing this work because of the necessity to provide facilities in the area at the moment. This will mean that when a Government gets around to removing the Newmarket sale-yards, if the transfer is to Derrimut basic costs only of removal will need to be met because the rail facilities will have been provided.

I now refer to the question of the underground railway which was touched upon by the honorable member for Northcote. I am rather confused, to say the least, as to whether the railways regard the provision of an underground railway as something which they are vitally interested in or not. In 1960, the late A. J. Fraser, who was acting in this House for the Minister of Transport, in a second-reading speech on the City of Melbourne Underground Construction Bill, as reported at page 2545 of volume 260 of *Hansard* stated, *inter alia*—

> Public transport is required by old people, very young people, pensioners and those who are unable to drive motor cars, who prefer not to use them or who cannot afford them, and in the main, by people travelling to and from work. Every large major administrative city of the world relies upon public transport for its commuter traffic. More than 80 per cent. of the people arriving in the centre of London, New York, Chicago, and Melbourne use public transport at some point in their journey. It would be impossible for an administrative capital city to function if all the commuters had to travel by motor car. If public transport were eliminated from Melbourne, the requirements in road space and vehicle parking space would be five times as great as they are at present, and even now the roadways and parking spaces are insufficient.
>
> Obviously this Government, and future Governments, will have to be guided by the whole needs of the State in terms of education, roads, housing, hospitals, and so on, but the time has now arrived when it is necessary for the community to authorize the railways to proceed with the development, improving and speeding up of the suburban railways in order that it may be integrated into an underground system—

This is the important point—

> or, alternatively, to decide that no further sums of money should be spent upon improving and speeding up suburban railways because even the present expenditure cannot be justified if the people are to be brought to only two railway stations in the expanding city area.

That was in 1960, when the importance of providing an underground railway for Melbourne was recognized by the Government, and seemingly, by the Railways Commissioners. In 1963, the Minister of Transport brought in an amending Bill relating to the financing of the underground system. The original legislation outlined the process for financing the railway, whereas the 1963 amending measure was designed specifically to deal with the financial implications so far as the Melbourne city area was concerned. Of course, since then, the Premier has stated

that, because of the huge cost involved, the underground railway system is not likely to be provided in the foreseeable future.

My colleague, the honorable member for Northcote, referred to a statement by Mr. Rogan, a Railways Commissioner, to the effect that the underground railway was of no significance so far as the railways were concerned.

Mr. MEAGHER.—I discussed that matter with Mr. Rogan who said that his statement meant that the underground railway was of more significance from the point of view of the public rather than that of the Railways Commissioners.

Mr. HOLLAND.—If that is so, Mr. Rogan should clarify his statement and indicate that the railways support the construction of an underground railway. The necessity for an underground rail system is highlighted by a publication entitled *Network* issued in September, 1965, by the Commonwealth and State railway systems of Australia. The publication, which refers to the annual report of the London Transport Board, reads—

> "It is clear that whatever improvements can be made on the roads, it will be necessary in the long-term to rely still more heavily on the railways, with their inherent advantage of an exclusive track for peak-hour passenger travel" says the London Transport Board in its 1964 Annual Report. "An urban underground railway has the great advantage that it can carry several times more people than a multi-lane motorway, at less cost, while causing much less disturbance and loss of amenity."

It is well known that not only in London, but in almost all major cities of the world, there is an increasing tendency to revert to the use of public transport. Of course, this is closely related to the question of finance, concerning which this House would like some clarification.

In the *Age* of 3rd December, 1963, which was after the Minister introduced the amending legislation, there appeared an interesting article which stated—

> The State Government still faces the problem of financing the £32,000,000 project. Victoria will put a detailed proposal for financing the underground to the Federal Government early in the new year.
>
> The Premier (Mr. Bolte) has already indicated it will be impossible to build the railway in the next few years without Federal aid.

I do not know whether the Premier has submitted a case to the Federal authorities for assistance in connexion with the financing of the underground railway. If the honorable gentleman has done so and assistance has been refused, this House should be informed.

Five years have passed since the original underground railway legislation was enacted, and each year it has become increasingly evident that the facility is essential. I do not wish to deal with the technicalities of constructing an underground railway system, but it is clear that the statement of the Leader of the Country Party and his general attitude concerning the underground railway for Melbourne is stupid in the extreme. Obviously, this project should be accorded first priority. An examination of the relative merits of providing an underground railway system as compared with the construction of freeways reveals that the underground railway facility is paramount in importance.

The financial aspect of the proposed underground railway must be considered in detail. Originally, the Government envisaged three-fifths of the total cost being provided by the Golden Mile.

Mr. WILCOX.—How do you interpret the Golden Mile?

Mr. HOLLAND.—Broadly speaking, it is the area bounded by Flinders, Spencer, Latrobe and Spring streets. Strictly speaking, it is the area which will be involved in the payment for the underground railway system. Originally, the Government was thinking in terms of three-fifths being supplied by the Golden Mile on the basis of the unimproved capital

valuation rate. Later it revised its thinking in this regard and decided that only two-fifths of the cost, based on a combination of the unimproved capital valuation and net annual valuation rates, should be provided by the Golden Mile. The enabling legislation, which was passed in 1960, provided that this money should be collected by the Land Tax Commissioner, and everybody presumed, after the protests had died down, that the underground railway for Melbourne, which had been contemplated for 40 years, would at last become a reality. I know that certain interests in the city and the Melbourne City Council have been trying, as they are legitimately entitled to try, to bring about an alteration in the method of financing the project. I consider that if some method of financing a project, apart from the normal method, must be devised, those persons who will benefit most from it should be required to meet the cost.

The greatest benefit from the underground railway system will be derived by those who are in the area to which the existing legislation refers and who will be expected to contribute towards the cost of the project. It is clear that when the underground railway is established, land values will be greatly enhanced. If the underground is not provided, because of the resultant traffic chaos which will be inevitable, there will be a steady decline in the value of city properties. I hope the Minister of Transport and the Government remains firm concerning the proposed method of financing the underground railway. Suggestions have been advanced that payment for the project should come partly from increased land taxation and partly from a subsidy by the City of Melbourne.

There have also been other suggestions. For instance, it has been said that the money should be raised from residents of the whole of the metropolitan area, but members of the Labor Party would strongly resist any such proposal because we believe the residents of Melbourne, apart from those living in the area delineated on the map, are paying their contribution in the form of municipal and Board of Works rates and fares on public transport. I certainly hope no attempt is made to change the formula. If the Government intends to persist with the construction of the underground railway, it is time that it stated how it proposes to finance it and whether the present formula will remain.

I take issue with the Minister concerning his reference to the attitude of the Melbourne City Council in regard to the provision of parking facilities in the inner city area. I do not at this stage wish to enter into a long debate on parking facilities generally, but I am prepared to do so on a more suitable occasion. However, I emphasize two points that have been overlooked when the Melbourne City Council has been criticized in regard to the provision of car parking facilities in the Golden Mile. It must be realized that those facilities are being provided only because within an immeasurable period of time—it will be a short period at that—all parking in the streets of the City of Melbourne will be banned. Because of the need to keep as much traffic as possible flowing through the road system, it will definitely be necessary to ban parking in the city area. To provide against this day, the city council has been constructing parking facilities at various locations in Melbourne.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Christie).—Order! I have some difficulty in relating the honorable member's remarks to the Bill.

Mr. HOLLAND.—In a previous debate in which parking, transportation and the underground railway

were referred to, the Minister criticized parking facilities in the City of Melbourne. The city council is well aware of the difficulties that are apparent and realizes the need for the construction of an underground railway. However, it cannot necessarily say that the underground railway will solve all of its problems; therefore, it must pursue a policy of providing parking facilites against the inevitable day when the parking of cars is banned in the streets of Melbourne. I emphasize that point, and I am prepared to take it further on a more suitable occasion.

The most important part of the Bill is that infinitesimal section which relates to further exploratory work for the underground railway. I believe the Government should inform the people whether or not it has tried to obtain funds from Canberra for this purpose, whether its request has been refused, whether it has an alternative scheme, or whether it has thrown up its hands in dismay and does not propose to proceed with the construction of the underground railway. It should put everybody in the picture so that we will know whether we can forget all about the underground railway for another 40 years.

On the motion of Mr. SCANLAN (Oakleigh), the debate was adjourned.

It was ordered that the debate be adjourned until next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

ALLEGED CRITICISM OF COUNTY COURT JUDGE.

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.

Mr. RYLAH (Chief Secretary).—I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. TURNBULL (Brunswick West).—Yesterday, the House, in my view, witnessed a most improper action by the Attorney-General when he made a personal attack upon Judge Rapke, who is one of the most reputable members of the County Court Bench and of the Victorian community. It ill behoves a Minister to use the forms of this House to attack a Judge who is unable to defend himself. After all, in criminal proceedings both the Crown and the defendant are parties, and when a Judge makes a finding adverse to one of those parties it is only natural that there must be some criticism. However, it disgusts members of the legal profession to hear the leader of that profession in this State make an unwarranted attack on one of Her Majesty's Judges. I have studied the position in *May*, wherein it is definitely stated that the forms of the House prohibit anyone making a personal attack upon various people, including County Court Judges, unless there is a substantive motion before the House.

Unless the Attorney-General is prepared to do something to correct this matter, I intend to use the forms of this House to place a substantive motion before the Chair to the effect that Judge Rapke possesses the full confidence of this House and of this State. In addition, I ask the honorable gentleman to withdraw his reflection.

Mr. RYLAH (Attorney-General).—It is a little difficult to remember one's exact words unless one has a copy of *Hansard*, but, so far as I can recall, the only comment I made about Judge Rapke was that he made some comments about the Police Force in somewhat extravagant language.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Is not that an attack on his character?

Mr. RYLAH.—I rather suspect that His Honour Judge Rapke is not nearly as sensitive as is the honorable member for Brunswick West. I propose to carry this matter further and to place before the House the facts of what actually did happen in this case.

Mr. TURNBULL. — You cannot attack a Judge here.

Mr. RYLAH.—I am not going to attack any Judge, and so far I have not done so, but I think this House is interested to know whether the statements made by Judge Rapke were related to questions of fact and whether or not they were true. No one is his wildest dreams could imagine any member of this House criticizing what a Judge says in his position as Judge, when he is commenting on evidence, but surely members of this House would be interested to know whether or not His Honour did say one or two things which do not accord with the facts. At this stage, I am not suggesting that is the position. Unlike the honorable member for Brunswick West, I do not feel disposed to rush into this until I have seen the transcript and the full police report. I do not propose to make any further comments, other than that I am unaware of this so-called attack, although I do admit using the words "in somewhat extravagant language."

The motion was agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.52 *p.m., until Tuesday, November* 23.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, November 23, 1965.

The PRESIDENT **(the Hon. R. W. Mack)** took the chair at 4.25 p.m., and read the prayer.

WATER SUPPLY LOAN APPLICATION 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.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

WARRAGUL–ORBOST LINE: REVENUE FROM PASSENGER AND GOODS TRAFFIC: LIVESTOCK TRUCKINGS.

The Hon. R. W. MAY (Gippsland Province) asked the Minister of Agriculture—

(*a*) What amount of revenue was received by the Railway Department in each of the last three years from Warragul and each station east of Warragul from passenger fares and general freight, respectively?

(*b*) How many railway trucks of livestock were despatched from Warragul and each station east of Warragul at which loading facilities are available in each of the last three years?

The Hon. G. L. CHANDLER (Minister of Agriculture).—The answers include a good deal of detailed information, and I seek leave of the House to have them incorporated in *Hansard* without being read.

Leave was granted, and the answers were as follows:—

(*a*) and (*b*) The particulars requested are shown in the following statement.