LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday, February 26, 1975

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

QUESTIONS

DIRECTOR OF LANDS

The Hon. C. R. STORY: For some months, since the retirement of the previous Director, the position of Director of Lands has not been filled. Can the Minister of Lands say when that position will be filled?

The Hon. A. F. KNEEBONE: As the honourable member probably knows, there has been an Acting Director of Lands. There has not been a permanent appointment because a committee has been looking at Government departments, but this does not mean that there will not be a permanent appointment of Director of Lands; I am sure that there will be. When the committee was looking at the structure of the Public Service, a direction was issued that no permanent appointment be made at that stage. This is the situation at present. I am informed that the committee's report will be available soon, and I hope that the permanent appointment of Director of Lands will be made very shortly.

LOXTON NORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON: Will the Minister of Agriculture ask the Minister of Education for a current report on progress made toward building new toilets at the Loxton North Primary School? There has been considerable correspondence on this matter between the school and the Minister of Education, but I will not go into it here.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague and bring down a reply.

PLASTIC WRAPPINGS

The Hon. R. A. GEDDES: In yesterday's *Advertiser* there was a report on plastic wrappings for food. Will the Minister of Health ask his department to make a clear and concise report to the Council and the public as to which plastic wrappings for food may be dangerous to the public, so that no confusion or misunderstanding can occur?

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD: Officers of the Public Health Department will attend a meeting of the Public Health Committee in about a fortnight to receive a report on plastic wrappings and containers for food. This report will be taken to the Food Standards Committee of the Medical Research Council, which is to meet in April. This committee will make a recommendation to State and Australian Health Ministers for regulations to be drawn up requiring that vinyl chloride used in plastics should not exceed a certain level. We are looking into this matter but, until we receive the report from the committee in about a fortnight, nothing will be available. However, I will keep the honourable member informed of the situation.

DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: I seek leave to make a short statement prior to asking a question of the Minister of Agriculture.

Leave granted.

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: My question refers to the position of Director of Agriculture, now vacant, and I preface it by saying something with which I believe that every honourable member who has had any association with the Agriculture Department will agree, in that I regret very much the somewhat premature retirement because of health reasons of the former Director (Mr. Marshall Irving), who, I am sure, honourable members would also agree has done a splendid job in his position as Director. I was pleased yesterday, at the Roseworthy Agricultural College graduation day, to see Mr. Irving and to learn from him that he is in somewhat better health since he has had the load taken off him, so to speak. I am aware that not long has elapsed since Mr. Irving formally retired and I understand that the Minister has appointed an Acting Director of Agriculture. However, I wonder whether the Minister can tell honourable members just when he expects to be able to appoint a permanent head of the Agriculture Department.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I agree with what the honourable member has said about Mr. Irving's retirement and I have already made a public statement to that effect. The position is that Mr. Irving has been in ill health for some time and there have been several Acting Directors of Agriculture during the period he has been ill. At present, the Acting Director is Mr. Walker, and I assure the honourable member that this vacancy of Director has been looked at closely by the Public Service Board, which, I hope, will make a recommendation soon.

FARM MACHINERY REGULATIONS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): I move:

That the power driven machinery (safety) regulations, 1975, made under the Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 1972, on November 21, 1974, and laid on the table of this Council on November 26, 1974, be disallowed.

In so moving, I do not wish to give the impression that I believe that regulations of this type are unnecessary. However, I believe that these regulations need to be withdrawn and redrafted because, in some parts at least, they are ambiguous and imprecise, and capable of being interpreted in different ways; this has already happened. Also, I believe that some parts of them may well be too restrictive when applied to the farming community. Honourable members are well aware that it is impossible to amend regulations. Suggestions have been made to me by primary industry people about amendments that could be made to the regulations, but I have indicated that that is impossible and that it is necessary that the regulations be withdrawn and redrafted; that is the suggestion I make to the Government in this case.

I consider that the regulations take no account of the relatively slow development of changes in farm machinery. What I call second machines (and I am willing to expand that definition later) can successfully and safely be used by primary producers for many years, especially on flat terrain. I have said that these regulations are ambiguous, that they could be described as being too wide, and that the definition could be interpreted in different ways. The official description of the regulations indicates that the Act, and therefore the regulations, apply only to employees and not to self-employed farmers.

As this matter has been ventilated by various people and there has been a considerable difference of opinion whether the regulations can apply to owner-farmers, I have taken a close look at the definitions in the regulations and the Act. The definition of "rural worker" in the regulations is as follows:

"Rural worker" means a person engaged in rural industry for hire or reward and whether as an employee or otherwise.

To my mind, "or otherwise" means that an owner-farmer would certainly be engaged in rural industry and would come within that category. The definition of "worker" in the 1972 Act is as follows:

"Worker" in relation to an industry includes any person employed or engaged for reward in that industry, whether or not the person is so employed or engaged under a contract of employment.

I suggest that both those definitions would tend to bring all owner-farmers within the scope of the regulations. The other point I should like to make relates to whether or not owner-farmers come within this definition. It is well known that many farmers throughout South Australia have, for very good reasons (either in relation to taxation, probate or maintaining a property), formed themselves into private companies.

I imagine that the many so-called owner-farmers who have formed private companies would be regarded in law as employees of such companies, and presumably they would be deemed not to be self-employed. I therefore consider that all owner-farmers would be dragged into this net. Although that is, of course, the opinion of a layman only, it is substantiated by advice I have received from my colleagues who are professionally qualified. I therefore believe that the regulations will affect a much greater number of people than has been suggested.

I should like also to refer to some of the regulations and their effects. I do not intend to go through the whole lot, although others will have to be amended. If alterations are to be made, it will be necessary for the regulations to be withdrawn and redrafted, as I have said. I refer now to regulation 7, which provides:

(1) No occupier of premises on which a tractor is being used in a rural industry, and no driver of such tractor shall employ or permit a rural worker to ride on the tractor as a passenger unless—

(a) there is provided for each passenger on the tractor—

(i) a seat of adequate strength, either fitted with a back rest or so shaped as to prevent a person from slipping from the seat; and

(ii) adequate and convenient foot rests and handholds; and

(b) that rural worker is sitting on a seat so provided.

(2) No rural worker shall ride as a passenger on a tractor being used in a rural industry unless the tractor is provided with, and he is sitting on, a seat for passengers.

I ask any honourable member who knows anything about tractors just where such a seat will be provided. If it has to be put on the mudguard of a tractor, and the farmer is required also to have a cabin on the tractor, it will be impracticable, and indeed unnecessary, to fit such a seat. I refer now to regulation 8, which provides as follows:

No occupier of premises on which a rural industry is being carried on shall employ or permit a rural worker under 17 years of age to drive a tractor being used in that rural industry, unless that rural worker—

(a) has received a sufficient training in driving the tractor, or tractors of its class; or

(b) is under adequate supervision by a person who has a thorough knowledge and experience of the driving of the tractor, or tractors of its class.

I would like to know what is meant by "sufficient training in driving a tractor", who is going to provide the instruction, and how it is to be determined. Other honourable members may know, but I do not know, of a tractor driving school other than the hard school of experience which is undertaken by every farmer, and perhaps his son and his employees. Many young people under 17 years of age, particularly on owner-farmer properties where there is only the farmer to do the work and possibly also his son during school holidays, have become extremely competent in handling tractors on agricultural land. I query those two regulations, because I believe they are impracticable and probably should be omitted altogether when the regulations are redrafted.

I come now to regulation 6 and regulation 10. Although the regulations, generally speaking, were to come into vogue on January 1, 1975, these two regulations will not come into force until October, 1982. Briefly, the regulations require tractors to be fitted with a metal cab or frame extending above the driver's seat, and they set out the details of the cab and the strength required. I understand that, in the Eastern States, those cabs are required to be made by the manufacturer to definite specifications. However, in South Australia it is suggested that these tractor cabs can be made by the owner, if he so desires, on the property. That is a rather foolish suggestion.

The Hon. R. A. Geddes: Have they laid down specifications as to the type of steel and so on?

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS: Specifications have been laid down in considerable detail but, although it is technically possible to make one's own cab, the only way in which a cab so made can be tested to see whether it meets the requirements is for it to be done on the tractor testing station at Werribee, in Victoria. I am open to correction there, but I believe that to be the case. This is a regulation that is not advisable at present. Regulation 10 refers in some detail to the guarding of machine components, and both regulations refer to machinery at present on the property; in other words, the machinery now on the property has to meet these requirements by 1982. The other regulations, to which I have previously referred, were to come into vogue in January 1, 1975.

In referring to regulations 6 and 10, which are not due to be operative for several years, it may be thought at first glance, especially by people not on the land, that it does not matter, that it is seven years away, and by that time the machinery will be of little value, worthless, or obsolete. That may be a fairly logical thought for people not very conversant with the land. However, I earlier referred to "second machines" and am well aware that many South Australian farmers have a main plant doing the bulk of the work, and they have a second machine such as a second combine, a second tractor or a second header. These second machines are probably brought into service only for two or three weeks a year, either at the height of the seeding season or the height of the harvesting season. Many farmers have had such plant, still in good condition, for over 20 years. Such reasonably new equipment on farms now could last well beyond 1982 and still be efficient. Under these regulations such machinery will be uneconomic to upgrade and have little resale value. As a result of these regulations, such machinery will not only be useless: it will be completely unsaleable in 1982.

Not only do I instance the position relating to second machines, but I also refer to small farmers who use such machines on level terrain for only a couple of weeks a year on their properties. Farmers expect their machines to last for many years. Certainly, with such a low resale value, farmers cannot afford to upgrade them, especially with the expense of the alterations required under the regulations, but such farmers cannot afford to purchase expensive new machines either. More than once the Hon. Mr. Chatterton has expressed his concern about small farmers whose financial position forces them to buy secondhand machinery. I would hope that he would be as concerned about these regulations as I am. These are often efficient

farmers, yet by purchasing such secondhand machinery they will be disadvantaged as a result of these regulations as they stand.

I have received certain representations from the farming community. One of my colleagues has been kind enough to provide me with a copy of comments by the subcommittee of the Stockowners Association inquiring into the rural industries regulations. That subcommittee indicated that it objected to regulation 4 (1), which brings the regulations into force, other than regulations 6 and 10, to which I have already referred. Regulation 4 brings the regulations into force on January 1, 1975, but the subcommittee suggested that the earliest date for the introduction of the regulations should be January 1, 1977.

The subcommittee also suggested that the word "accidental" should be inserted before the word "contact" in each case wherever occurring throughout the regulations. Certain other suggestions have also been made. I believe it to be permissible and quite understandable for people outside this Council to suggest that certain amendments be made to regulations. Of course, they must be made aware that the only way for this to be done is to have the regulations withdrawn and redrafted in a more acceptable, and certainly a less ambiguous form than they currently are.

What I have said about these regulations also applies to a considerable degree to the motion that I shall move after the debate on this motion has been adjourned. I shall therefore not speak at length on my second motion. Should these regulations come into force, the question of policing them concerns me. The rural regulations would be almost impossible to police properly. What is the use of putting legislation on the Statute Book if we cannot see that it is properly put into effect? It would be almost impossible to police it properly unless we were to appoint another army of inspectors, with which no doubt the Socialist Government would be fully in accord. These regulations are not clear and need redrafting. As they stand, they would certainly cause much confusion. Because of that and because some parts of the regulations are unduly restrictive, I seek their disallowance.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I second the motion *pro forma.*

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON secured the adjournment of the debate.

POWER DRIVEN MACHINERY REGULATIONS

The Hon. M. B. DAWKINS (Midland): I move:

That the Power Driven Machinery (Safety) Regulations, 1975, made under the Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act, 1972, on November 21, 1974, and laid on the table of this Council on November 26, 1974, be disallowed.

My reasons for moving this motion are similar to those applying to the rural industries regulations, which tie in with the power driven machinery regulations, which are directed more particularly at manufacturers. There may be one advantage in connection with policing the power driven machinery regulations in that it may be possible to police them more satisfactorily than the rural regulations. Because the power driven machinery regulations have defects, they should be withdrawn and redrafted.

The Hon. G. J. GILFILLAN (Northern): I second the motion *pro forma.*

The Hon. B. A. CHATTERTON secured the adjournment of the debate.

PETROL TAX

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE (Northern): I move:

That, in the opinion of this Council: (1) the Government should urgently consider promulgating regulations under section 35 of the Business Franchise (Petroleum) Act, 1974, to remove the burden of the petroleum tax on fuels, with the exception of petrol, used by primary and secondary industries; and (2) the Government should further consider the promulgation of regulations under section 35 of the Business Franchise (Petroleum) Act, 1974, to remove the burden of the petroleum tax on any fuels used in primary and secondary industries.

My motion is in two parts, thereby giving the Government the option of adopting one part, which would remove the impost of 6c a gallon on fuel, which was legislated for in November. By the time we have finished this debate we will know how much money the Government has and, if it becomes necessary, we will consider requesting the Government to remove the tax on all fuel used for primary and secondary industry. The purpose of the motion is to bring to the notice of the Government my belief that the Government has not been sincere in its request for this impost and in its administration of the impost. When the legislation was being considered, the Premier strongly indicated that he was not happy about introducing the legislation and that he would avoid the impost if possible. He said that, if he was able to obtain sufficient money from the Commonwealth Government, it would not be necessary to impose this tax, which was to raise $9 000 000 in the current financial year and $19 000 000 in a 12-month period. This estimate has since been revised, and it seems that the tax would raise more than $10 000 000 in the present financial year and $24 000 000 in a 12-month period. This is a large sum to bolster the sadly lagging State funds, which are in the most chaotic situation in which they have ever been in the history of this State.

Despite the fact that this Council did its utmost to help the Government by accepting the measure, shortly after the introduction of the legislation the Premier granted a paid holiday to the Public Service. It is hard to estimate what that paid holiday cost the State; $7 000 000 has been suggested as the cost of the holiday. It was a costly move, especially when this Council and Parliament generally had bent over backwards to assist the Government in its plight. The Premier said that, if he was able to obtain sufficient money from the Commonwealth Government, the first thing he would do would be to remove this fuel tax. A newspaper article dated January 31, 1975, and headed "5c fuel tax first to go" states:

The 5c a gallon petrol tax would be the first to go if South Australia received more money from the Federal Government, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, said today. Mr. Dunstan leaves this afternoon for the A.L.P. Federal conference to press the Federal Government for funds to lift the extra petrol tax. "The Federal Government must provide sufficient financial grants to the States to allow them to reduce taxes and charges," said the Premier. He did not expect to hear its final decision until the Premiers' Conference in Canberra on February 14. Mr. Dunstan would not say today how much he would need to enable him to remove the petrol tax, but Government sources said it would be nearly $20 000 000.

When the legislation was introduced, many people unkindly said that this was one more stage play and that we would see the Premier win the battle with the Prime Minister after a great deal of hoo-hah—

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: A good word!

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: —and be able to come back and say that he had been successful in his case with the Commonwealth Government; the Prime Minister, having granted the money, would not be unpopular, either. It seemed to be a feasible exercise. However, when the Premier was successful and received a reimbursement of $23 000 000 he then found that he could not remove the fuel tax. In fact, he said that he needed $40 000 000 to remove the tax!

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: We told him that during the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: We told him several things in that debate. I would not like to repeat the many things that have been said about the fuel tax since then. The receipt of the $23 000 000 provided an opportunity for him to remove this most iniquitous tax. The Treasurer said (and I could quote from several newspapers) that he regarded the tax as being highly inflationary. Undoubtedly, it was the most inflationary tax he could have imposed. One would have thought that, when the opportunity arose, he would reduce this inflationary burden. I refer now to the manner in which this sum has been earmarked for spending: $6 600 000 has been set aside for general revenue grants, $8 100 000 for loan and capital grants, $3 600 000 for special employment grants, $2 700 000 for road purposes grants, and $1 900 000 for semi-government bodies, totalling $22 900 000. We cannot entirely blame the Treasurer for the fact that things are going as badly financially as they are at present, although we could blame the Commonwealth Government, of which the Treasurer is a strong supporter.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: You can't put the whole blame on that Government, either.

The Hon. J. C. Burdett: Of course you can!

The Hon. A. J. Shard: If you had been there, the position would have been the same. It is world-wide, and you know it.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: It would have been worse if . they had been in office.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: It has been proved that the percentage rate of imported inflation is about 3.5 and, of course, inflation is now running at about 20 per cent; so, there is a fair gap. I now refer to the mouthing that has been done by the Prime Minister and his Deputy. On television only the other evening, Dr. Cairns said that it would be necessary to stimulate the private sector—

The Hon. A. J. Shard: He did an excellent job.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: —to get the economy once again on the road. I do not think that he did much of a job. These were only empty words, because this is a most inflationary tax, and all would agree with that statement. No part of the $23 000 000 grant has been used to reduce this inflationary tax. Unless money is spent on productive works instead of on the non-productive section of the community, it will not be possible to stimulate the economy.

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: If the $23 000 000 is spent on non-productive works that, in itself, will be inflationary.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: That is so. We hear much about the stimulus that will be meted out to the private sector of the community. Here is an opportunity for this Government, which is foremost in many things (even nude bathing), to make a stand and put into effect the promises it has made. The Treasurer said that, if he received $20 000 000, it might be possible to remove the tax, and my motion is that at least part of the tax be removed. I have worded my motion in such a way that it does not refer to petrol used for pleasure. If necessary, perhaps the petrol tax could .remain on such usage. Undoubtedly, the Government will be able to refute my figures because it has better machinery with which to process certain things. If the tax remained on petrol alone—

The Hon. R. C. DeGaris: That would amount to about $14 000 000.

The Hon. A. M. WHYTE: Yes; that sum would still be gathered from the tax on petrol supplied by the distributors and the service stations. Therefore, we would be removing less than $5 000 000 of the tax. However, by so doing, we would be assisting primary and secondary industries in no small measure. Although only about $5 000 000, it would be a shot in the arm to a falling economy. My motion is a request to the Government to make a study and, I hope, to come up with a solution more in line with its promises than appears to be the case at present.

The Hon. A. J. SHARD secured the adjournment of the debate.

MEDIBANK SCHEME

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS (Leader of the Opposition): I move:

That, in the opinion of this Council, the acceptance by the State of the Commonwealth Government's proposals under the Medibank scheme will:

(1) jeopardise the efficient delivery of health services in South Australia;
(2) seriously affect the existing efficiency of the subsidised, community and private hospitals;
(3) generally reduce the standard of health services in South Australia; and
(4) produce inequalities and inequities in the provision of health services to different sections of the South Australian community.

I realise that the State Government has not signed any agreement with regard to Medibank, but from statements that have been made and by the Government's attitude I have not much doubt that at this stage the Government intends to accept the Medibank scheme. Perhaps I should make certain general observations before explaining my motion. Socialism is that organisation of society in which the means of production and distribution are controlled, with the decisions on how and what to produce and who is to get what being made by public authority instead of by privately owned and privately managed enterprises. It is not possible, therefore, to visualise a Socialist society without a huge bureaucratic apparatus that manages the productive and distributive processes. When we are dealing with the delivery of health services, we are dealing with the distribution in the community of necessary health services. In South Australia, and indeed in Australia, there has been an accelerating rate of migration of people's economic affairs from the private to the public sector. This migration will not only affect the efficient delivery of services to the community but will also eventually bring excessive pressure on our Parliamentary institutions because of the inability of the existing institutions to handle a rapidly expanding bureaucracy. However, that is a somewhat different question on which I wish to speak, and at some time in the future I may expand on it.

As economic causes make people continue to migrate from the private to the public sector, there is a chance that the urges that favour this migration may be partially or temporarily satisfied. Thus, the Socialist movement may lose some momentum from that satisfaction. The present unfavourable political climate for the Federal Australian Labor Party, which has had its foot hard on the Socialist philosophy pedal and with the dedication it has shown in the past two years in speeding up the migration from the private to the public sector, can well be viewed as supporting the theory of momentum loss as certain objectives are achieved and public reaction demands a slowing of this accelerating rate.

Our federal masters have temporarily performed a political backflip on their proposed political beliefs. The Federal A.L.P. policies were openly criticised six months ago by the best backflipper of them all, the Premier of South Australia. This clever operator criticised Federal A.L.P. policies not because he disagreed with Socialist objectives but because it was politically expedient to do so.

I know that the greatest protection we possess against the excessive use of power by the federal authorities, with the excessive pressures that can be brought to bear because we are more and more chained to the waggon wheel of federal economic policy, is the residual power that the States have. However, time and time again, when this State has had the opportunity to give a positive lead to protect the State from the hasty, stupid, unrealistic decisions of its federal colleagues, it has meekly lain down and let the federal Socialist band waggon ride over it. The only time we hear any criticism is when a few words are breathed in the press as a matter of political expediency: it means nothing in relation to ultimate objectives. This has happened in South Australia in relation to the abject failure of this Government to preserve what I believe to be one of the best health services in the world, and I have seen a few of them. The acceptance of the Commonwealth Government's proposals (which have not yet been published although, because of all the noises that are being made regarding them, they probably will be accepted) will destroy our concept of delivery of high standard medical and hospital services to the people of South Australia.

I know that any health scheme can be improved. I am not saying that any health scheme will ever be perfect. However, the acceptance of the Medibank scheme will eventually, if not immediately, destroy many of the excellent attributes of our existing services. One of the unfortunate aspects of this argument is that the remedy for the unsuccessful application of a partially socialistic ideal does not mean that there will be fewer bureaucratic controls as a means of correcting the failure of those ideals (what I would call the half-way house), but always it' is the next step on: more socialisation. Because the system does not work, the next step is taken. As Socialist doctrine and its application fail in the practical field, the drive for correction is always more of the same dose of practical failure.

My next criticism is of the Minister of Health, a man for whom I have a high regard. However, in this case he has failed dismally the South Australian public and this Parliament in not giving details of his Government's almost certain acceptance of the Medibank scheme. The people of South Australia are in the dark, and so is Parliament. It is obvious to anyone that the Commonwealth Government knows practically nothing of the existing systems in South Australia, because, if one read the Commonwealth Act and applied it to the South Australian situation, analysing its application in South Australia, one would see that it would be an absolute tragedy in relation to our health and medical services. That the Commonwealth Government knows nothing of the practical situation in medical and health services in South Australia is borne out by a statement which was made in South Australia by the Commonwealth Minister for Social Security, Mr. Hayden, and which has been reported to me. That such a situation can exist is a reflection on the South Australian Minister, who has been unable to put as strong a case as possible to his Commonwealth masters against the application of this scheme to health services in South Australia.

The system operating in South Australia is an amalgamation of public, subsidised, community and private hospitals, and it is unique in Australia and, I believe, in the world. I will defy any member of this Council or anyone in South Australia to point out to me any other health and medical service in the world that is delivering at a comparable cost a higher standard of health care to the public than that which is being given here. I have heard former Ministers of Health say exactly the same thing.

The system under which we operate has provided to, a concentrated city population and a sparse country population, spread over about 770 000 km^2, a quality of service which should be the pride of every South Australian and which is the envy of many other people in the world. I have no hesitation in saying that the hasty and almost clandestine acceptance of the Commonwealth Government's proposals in this State, if it eventuates, will destroy almost absolutely the basis of our existing organisation. One of the cornerstones of the success of our hospital system is the reliance placed on community involvement. I can say with certainty that we have a higher degree of community involvement in the delivery of our health and hospital services to the community than has any other State in Australia and, once again, than has any other country in the world. Also, I have heard Ministers of Health for many years make this claim when opening hospitals in outback or far country areas of South Australia. They have said that, if it was not for the involvement of people in the community in relation to health and hospital services, we could not produce the high standard of health and medical care that exists here. One thing that will be destroyed by the acceptance of this Medibank scheme will be the involvement of the community in health and hospital services.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: That's not right, you know.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: That is right, and I will challenge the Minister to deny it.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I'm denying it now.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I will prove later that what I am saying is correct. From what has been reported to me, the Minister has made similar claims. Will he deny that?

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I have said it will not stop the community effort. I have said that repeatedly, and I have said it in country areas, also.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: There is no question (and the Minister can warble as much as he likes) that this involvement will be seriously curtailed under this scheme. Let me warn you, Sir; once the step is taken to the half-way house along the line of socialised, nationalised bureaucratic medicine there is no coming back, and the public will not assist or be involved when they do not own or control their local situation. As public money comes in and as it is controlled by a massive bureaucracy, which must control absolutely, this eventually will kill community involvement in hospitals in South Australia.

Because of this acceptance in the community of a responsibility, at both the individual and the local government level, we have been able to provide high standard small hospital complexes in practically every community in South Australia. Once we move along the line of bureacratic medicine, I know what will happen. I will go back to the 1949 Commonwealth report, when all the small hospitals had to be closed in the glorious Commonwealth thinking regarding the supply of health services. That will occur. It has occurred in every country where the movement has been away from community involvement toward a central bureaucracy.

This step is the beginning of the end for small hospitals in South Australia and for resident doctors in the area, because once a hospital closes in a small country area doctors will migrate to the base work area. The New South Wales position and the Queensland position will illustrate this to anyone who studies them. Where there is a concentration and a closing of small country hospitals, with a base hospital to which people are carted 100 kilometres or 120 km by ambulance, local residents of the isolated areas involved move to the area where the base work unit is located. So, medical coverage is denied to people in the smaller areas. As the smaller hospitals are killed off by the great medical bureaucracy we are planning, the incentive for doctors to continue to practise in those areas will also be lost. One cannot expect a doctor to .practise in any area unless he or she has a reasonable work base, a local hospital.

Other related problems will develop and will stem from South Australia's meek attitude at this stage to Medibank. Those who live close to a Government public hospital, whether pensioner patients or not, will be able to achieve (admittedly, in a queue) medical and hospital services of a standard ward type for the cost of their additional taxation payments, at present estimated at 1.35 per cent of income, which will escalate at least to double that percentage.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

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

That Orders of the Day be postponed until the honourable member has concluded his speech.

Motion carried.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I thank the Council, and especially the Minister, for their courtesy in extending my time.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: The further you go the bigger the blue you are making. Keep it up!

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: So far I have mainly quoted the wise words of the Hon. Mr. Shard, who for some time was Minister of Health.

The Hon. A. J. Shard: You have not told me how the community will be frozen out of the hospitals. I cannot understand that. I am innocent, you see.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Hon. Mr. Shard need have no doubt that I will cross every "t" and dot every "i" before I have finished. I have said that the taxation payments are estimated by the Commonwealth Government to be 1.35 per cent of income.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Taxable income.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I have no doubt that that would escalate to at least double, if not treble, that percentage in 12 months. If one examines the cost of the National Health Service in Great Britain, one will see that the great bureaucratic planners estimated the cost at £1 000 000 000 for the first year of operation, but the figure was actually £3 000 000 000. The 1.35 per cent is obviously a conservative guesstimate. The patient who lives in a community where people already have made a significant contribution to the capital cost of their hospitals, and where they work unceasingly to provide a high standard of accommodation, will find himself taxed at the same rate, but he will have to maintain significant hospital and medical benefit payments as well.

I believe that many of the subsidised and community hospitals will not accept the possible blackmail tactics that will be used to dragoon them into this scheme, which they know very well in many cases will finally run them out of business. At this stage I pose a question: what does this scheme hope to achieve that could not be achieved more economically and more rationally in another way? So far, the details available to us are extremely limited, so one has to engage in some intelligent analysis to solve the problem. There may exist an area of need in the matter of delivery of health care to certain low income groups. If the Government is concerned for this group (and we are all concerned for it), any analysis that one wishes to undertake will show that the needs of that group can be met much more cheaply, more efficiently, and with no bureaucratic intrusions into the existing position simply by Government payments or subsidies on medical and hospital benefit payments to existing organisations on behalf of this group for which we all have a great concern.

Figures published in the newspapers today show that in South Australia about 4 per cent of the people are not covered by hospital and medical benefits, yet we are talking of pouring $20 000 000 into financing Medibank. I ask anyone to do a sum to find out the most efficient way to cater for a small percentage of people who may or may not have a problem in this area. Is it better to destroy the existing system, or is it better to take up the suggestion I have made to cover this area? It is fairly obvious that the motive behind Medibank is a deeper one than just the delivery of health services to an under-privileged group. The motive must surely be the eventual destruction of the existing systems, to be replaced by a nationalised health system that has proved inadequate in every country in which such a scheme operates.

This scheme will inevitably require an up-turn in taxation to finance it, and there will be a down-turn in the standard of health care in Australia. The impact on South Australia will be more drastic than on any other State, because of our existing standards related to the cost of providing that service. Ignoring the economic tragedies in the Socialist experiment in Australia so far, ignoring the wishes of the Australian people, ignoring the present inefficiencies in the British and European type of national health scheme, ignoring the advice of those who have been involved in the delivery side of health care in Australia and South Australia, our leaders are responding only to their own .political theories. These political theorists are marching ahead with a theory that can only destroy the existing health delivery service in South Australia.

In 1968, I had the opportunity of closely examining the delivery system and costs of health care in several countries (Great Britain, Sweden, America and Canada in particular). Since the introduction of the national health scheme in Great Britain in 1947, there has been a steady deterioration in the delivery of health care in the hospital situation. So serious is the position in Britain that recently Presidents of the Royal medical colleges formed with the Deans of all British medical faculties to warn that there was a real danger of standards of health care declining to the point where recovery would be impossible within the foreseeable future.

I refer to the Australian Medical Association *Gazette* of November 14, 1974, and to an article on page 9 under the following minor heading:

The ills within the national health service are serious and, by threatening standards, threaten the health and well-being of the community. There is a real danger of standards declining to a point from which recovery will be impossible within the foreseeable future.

The article continues:

The statement warns that under-financing leads to physical limitations not only in terms of buildings and equipment but also in terms of staff. The effects of the

under-payment of professional and non-professional N.H.S. workers "over many years" had been "very serious". Many of the worst features of the present N.H.S. situation related to staff, particularly those in the lower-paid grades. Their rates of pay were lower than could be readily obtained outside the N.H.S. and the funds available were insufficient to employ all who were needed in these grades even at the low rates of pay.

The article continues:

Morale in the hospital service has fallen markedly and this is reflected in falling recruitment, the closure of wards, and reduction in various facilities. These in turn are bringing a fall in the standards of health care with inevitable inconvenience and hardship to the public and increasing frustration to all staff.

That statement was not made by a particular group of doctors; it was made by Presidents of the Royal medical colleges of Great Britain and the Deans of all British medical faculties. There is no doubt that, if we intend following the national health service pattern established in Great Britain (and we are headed that way with this half-way house), what I say is true: we will see higher costs on the one hand and a down-turn in the standard of service on the other hand.

What will patients lose under the Medibank proposals? In my opinion the following changes will apply: Private consulting rooms will be closed, this particularly applying to surgeons. Queues in out-patient departments of public hospitals will increase. The right of choice of surgeon for the patient in hospital will be lost. Continuing care by the one surgeon throughout his stay in hospital will be lost by the patient. A Government office will arrange at which hospital, and at what time, the patient will be admitted for his surgery.

With uncertainty as to a fixed date for operation and time for operation, personal inconvenience for the patient wiill be maximised. It will not be possible to fit the time of the patient's operation in with his employment. It will not be possible to make satisfactory arrangements for women to have children cared for during their absence. Direct contact by relatives with the surgeon concerned with the patient's operation will be more difficult. Follow-up management will not be necessarily conducted by the same surgeon. Because of sessional times a single surgeon will not be in charge of the patient's care throughout his stay in hospital. Non-urgent operations in the evenings, or at other times for the patient's personal convenience, will not be available. The efficiency and quiet of the private surgeon's office staff will be no longer available; nor will its privacy. Gradually, as in England, standards are bound to fall despite every effort to the contrary, so that a shortage of doctors of high quality will develop. They will prefer to work in other countries.

The health care system in South Australia is now threatened by the political theorists. I hope that the huge numbers of people who have played a part in the past in the delivery of health services to the community will not stand idly by and watch the destruction of the best system of health care in the world sacrificed because of political expediency. Why has the public not yet been told in clear terms of what Mr. Hayden's proposed scheme means in terms of choice of doctor, choice of hospital and the cost to the Australian taxpayer,

Why cannot all Australians have the advantages of private treatment? Why downgrade 70 per cent of Australians and label them standard ward patients? Why downgrade all pensioners and label them standard ward patients? I believe that the Minister of Health has said (perhaps I should say he has decreed) that country patients will get standard ward care without option.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I didn't say that at all.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: The Minister can correct me later.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I am doing that. You say I said that. Just make sure I said it before you claim that I did.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: What did the Minister say?

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I will tell you what I said when I have my say. In the meantime, I will not let you claim that I said things that I did not say.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I have information that the Minister has said that there will be three categories of patient in South Australia. Country patients will get standard ward care without option. Their isolation, if that statement is true—

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: It's not.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: —is being used as a political weapon. Secondly, I am told that the Minister said that metropolitan pensioners would get standard ward labelling, with no option, and thirdly, that he said that metropolitan non-pensioners could get free treatment (that is, standard ward care) only in public hospitals.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: Your informer is the one who started all this scaremongering against the scheme. Otherwise, you would not be getting into this.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am not a scaremonger.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: I did not say you were. I said that your informer was a scaremonger.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: I am saying, having examined health services around the world and having looked at the Medibank scheme, that it will destroy the best health delivery service in the world. That will occur, and the Minister has remained silent for six or seven months. He has given no information to the public of South Australia, but I believe he is already committed to move this State into the Medibank scheme; he has not denied that.

Having paid his share of Mr. Hayden's soaring costs, the average Australian must continue his private hospital insurance over and above that, to get the private cover he already has now. Why has the Government not advised South Australians accustomed to private care (that is, 85 per cent of South Australians) that, to continue to have private care, they must maintain private hospital insurance? If they allow their current hospital insurance to lapse in ignorance, they risk the two-month exclusion clause on rejoining. Why are union members being deprived of the private medical care to which they are entitled under the workmen's compensation legislation and the present system of health care delivery? Perhaps the Minister can answer that! Unionists are to get the "standard ward" label: they are downgraded with the rest of the community. Is it expected that Mr. Whitlam, Mr. Hayden and Mr. Dunstan, all of whom have recently demanded private medical care (I stress those words) for themselves or their families, will now accept the "standard ward" label?

Standard ward patients, on entering hospital, will lose their right of choice of surgeon or obstetrician. A pregnant girl cannot select the doctor who will deliver her baby. A person with recurrent cancer will not be able to select his surgeon or remain under the care of his original surgeon. Women with breast cancer will no longer be able to have any further surgery carried out by their surgeon. No-one wants to be forced to be under the care of another person when this involves a personality clash. Standard ward patients will not have one surgeon responsible for the entire course of their stay in hospital. If shift

work is forced upon doctors, as it is now in large hospitals, the dangers and inconvenience of "chopping and changing" arise.

Private rooms are better than outpatient queues, but standard ward patients will line up in queues to be processed before being directed to clinics in large hospitals; 75 per cent of South Australians will be in these queues if the Minister has his way. If we move into the Medibank scheme, I will challenge the Minister on these figures, because I claim that they are correct: 75 per cent of South Australians will be in queues if the Minister has his way. Many private rooms may close because there is no Government subsidy proposed to maintain these private facilities for standard ward patients. Such facilities are costly and cannot be maintained in the face of reduced doctor incomes; this leads to the queue again. The major private hospitals in Adelaide and all the country hospitals have become honoured institutions in our way of life. Many people have given freely to them. What for? For this Government to take away!

Hospital boards will lose effective control; voluntary work, which has been a proud vocation for many, will be lost. Hospitals built expensively for sophisticated surgical work will be downgraded to rest homes, which would not cost half as much if built for that purpose. All the voluntary effort of countless thousands of ladies' auxiliaries, etc., will be snapped up by a thankless Government. The special place of the local hospital in the hearts of country people will be depersonalised. Country people will be deprived of the right to elect for private care. The Government will restrict each city hospital to a certain number and list of doctors. The citizen will not have the combined choice of doctor and hospital even if he pays for private insurance.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You are wrong.

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Patients will have to queue up at the post office to fill in forms to get rebates; this may not be factual, but I believe that it is unlikely that most pharmacists will act as agents for Medibank. I believe that the Government will finally resort to post offices. Waiting will increase as the rate of frivolous over-usage of the so-called free scheme rises, as it has done under all similar schemes overseas. Already the Commonwealth Government is spending $1 500 000 of the taxpayers' money to convince the public that it is getting a free service; 1.35 per cent of people's taxable income is being taken, and this will escalate threefold in the next two years, if the oversea pattern is followed. The very rigidity of the red tape surrounding standard wards will leave no place for a patient to select an operation time to suit his family, his work, or simply his wishes. He may be called in for an operation when he is away on holidays and miss his chance; this kind of situation occurs in England. He may not feel inclined at such a time to go for his operation.

There will no longer be any incentive for surgeons and obstetricians to provide a service to country people in a country town by travelling to that town. There is no doubt that doctors will leave the country because of a lack of job satisfaction, and replacements are unlikely to rush a situation where dealing with a major car smash throughout the night is regarded by Dr. Deeble as being for "part of the salary". Patients will not get individual care, because the motivation of doctors to provide this in a bureaucratic structure will disappear. Panels of doctors will multiply.

The Hon. D. H. L. Banfield: You haven't got much faith in doctors, have you?

The Hon. R. C. DeGARIS: Why does the Government not spend its money in developing proper accommodation and care for the elderly, who have contributed so much to Australia in their time, instead of wastefully wrecking a health care system with which South Australians are more than satisfied? Why replace what has developed to meet the local needs of South Australians over the years with a depersonalised, inappropriate, Canberra-sponsored nightmare?

Let me come to the question of cost. We have heard much about the cost of the scheme and the 1.35 per cent of taxable income. A firm of responsible actuaries was recently commissioned to examine this matter. The actuaries estimate that for 1975-76 the cost of the Medibank scheme will be $1 680 000 000. This figure should be compared with the budgeted cost to the Commonwealth Government of supporting the existing health care delivery service, which is about $575 000 000.

It can be seen that an increase of more than $1 000 000 000 will be required from the taxpayers of Australia to meet the cost of the proposed scheme. The average Australian can work out for himself what the scheme will cost. It cannot result in an improvement in health care delivery of any magnitude. Indeed, I believe there will be a decline, as has occurred in other countries. The proportion of taxable income will need to be of the order of 6 per cent, not 1.35 per cent. An article in today's *Advertiser,* headed "A.M.A. action 'disgraceful'", states:

The Australian Medical Association was conducting a "disgraceful campaign" against Medibank, the Premier (Mr. Dunstan) said yesterday.

The Premier and his colleagues are now reverting to the well-worn path of group denigration to sell their philosophy to the public. I will cite the disgraceful campaign by the Premier and his colleagues, armed as they are with all the means to get a message through the media channels across to the public (which means many others have not got), of denigrating in the public mind land agents and business agents. That was a disgraceful campaign if ever there was one. Group denigration of those people in South Australia was done to provide the Government with a lever with which to force through a piece of legislation which, I think, has had serious repercussions on the business structure relating to brokers, land agents, etc., in South Australia. But that is the Government's tactics. Whenever there is any opposition to its views on any matter, the Government reverts to what I call group denigration, and that is what the Premier is doing now.

He is seeking to denigrate this State's medical profession and to create a suspicion of the profession to enable a movement to the Medibank scheme that will destroy, if not immediately then eventually, a health delivery service in this State that is the envy of many places in the world. The same tactics the Premier has often used are now being used against the medical profession. The Commonwealth Government will be using $1 500 000 of taxpayers' money to bolster its case for the scheme. Although I carry no particular brief for the medical profession, I do care about the interests of patients and sick people in the community and for the health care system, which will be wrecked by the advocates of political theory that has been shown world-wide as being unable to produce a system of health care delivery that satisfies the demands of the consuming public.

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

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATIONS: MITCHAM

The Hon. C. R. STORY (Midland): I move:

That the regulations under the Road Traffic Act, 1961-1974, relating to traffic prohibition in the city of Mitcham, made on October 24, 1974, and laid on the table of this Council on October 29, 1974, be disallowed.

I move my motion in the name of the Subordinate Legislation Committee, which took certain evidence and which communicated with the Road Traffic Board in connection with this matter. The regulations, which were laid on the table some time ago, deal with certain streets in Mitcham. As on so many other occasions, the committee's attention was drawn to this by-law by Mr. G. L. Howie, who has appointed himself as an unofficial watchdog over the rights of the individual, particularly with regard to by-laws under the Local Government Act and the Road Traffic Act. Remarkably, Mr. Howie is so often correct. I think it fortunate that there is a citizen in the community who is keen enough to become an unpaid watchdog for the community generally. But this only highlights how much slips through, so to speak, because this man, in a voluntary capacity, could not possibly catch up with everything that gets through in the form of regulations and by-laws and, quite probably, in areas of legislation that actually passes both Houses of Parliament.

Over the years, Mr. Howie has pointed out to the City Council, particularly, errors in its by-laws that have been in existence for many years. At times, certain by-laws have had to be withdrawn and redrafted and special clauses inserted to the effect that any action taken under the old by-laws would be valid. The by-law we are now discussing is a typical example. Mr. Howie's letter, dated October 31, 1974, to the Subordinate Legislation Committee, states:

I suggest the regulations under the Road Traffic Act, 1961-1974, made on October 24, 1974, and published on page 2766 of the *Gazette* of the same day be disallowed for the following reasons.

(1) There is no road named George Street in Kingswood.

(2) There is no road named Victoria Terrace in the city of Mitcham.

(3) Such prohibitions are unduly restrictive and unnecessary.

In a letter to me dated August 7, 1972, the Town Clerk of Mitcham stated, in relation to Victoria Terrace:

> In reply, I have to advise that the name was changed to Belair Road in October, 1971.

I have intended to draw your attention to cases where subordinate legislation made recently has been incorrectly worded, including one case where a by-law specified a penalty greater than that permitted but I have not had time to correlate the details.

The letter highlights several things: first, that, in the hustle and bustle of the methods used today, people do not have time to check detail on many matters; they take on far too much in the time available and they are dilatory in attention to detail. They give their certificates far too lightly regarding the correctness of certain things that should be checked not only by one person but by several people. The Road Traffic Board has obviously examined this matter, as has the Mitcham council. A certificate of validity has been given by the Crown Solicitor, who must also have examined it carefully. Although that certificate refers to the validity of the regulations under the Act, and especially to that portion which relates to the Road Traffic Board, surely in examining this matter someone would have picked up these defects, particularly those so intimately concerned with the roads to which I have referred. It is astonishing that, although it is important enough to prohibit the movement of traffic on a certain road, those concerned would not take the trouble to look at a map in order to ensure that they are taking the correct action when imposing prohibitions.

If these regulations were permitted to pass (I hope the Council supports the motion to disallow them), people could be summoned as a result of these regulations and could pay up, just as has happened in the past. Because court fees are far too high and it is too expensive to defend an action, many people could be inconvenienced and convicted when, in fact, they were not guilty of the offence because the regulations were invalid. Until someone challenged an action in court, injustices would continue to occur. However, the committee has discovered these defects and has informed the board accordingly. The board has agreed that what I have said is correct. Indeed, the descriptions of these roads and their locations, as set out in the regulations, are incorrect. When short cuts are taken in any matter, trouble occurs.

I believe the function of the Road Traffic Board is solely to regulate and make recommendations regarding traffic flows. We should go through the laborious procedures enumerated in the Roads (Opening and Closing) Act, 1932-1946, so that people will at least know that the flow of traffic in a certain road is to be impeded or that that road will be closed off in some respect. Those people will then be warned that they must take appropriate action. However, the first information that people get regarding a regulation such as this is a barricade that is erected at the end of a road next to which a sign "No through road" is placed.

In those circumstances, the only right a person has, if he has a good member of Parliament, is to appear before the Subordinate Legislation Committee. There, often as a lone voice, a person must fight a cause against the well-organised Highways Department, which has all the technical information at its disposal. I do not believe it is right that people should have to advance a case in this way.

Under the Roads (Opening and Closing) Act, to which I have referred, provision is made for Parliament to examine the matter; it can be debated in Parliament, and members are then obliged to consider the matter and exercise their vote on it. This is a much better idea, as the public knows what is happening. If someone does not know that the regulations are being amended, they can just slide through and become law. The public is ignorant in relation to its rights regarding legislation of this kind. Although I realise that it is never the object of Ministers, irrespective of their political persuasion, to give themselves more work or to encourage people to be critical of the way in which their departments are being administered or of the way in which they are handling themselves, the Government (which, after all, has the money) is obligated to advise people of the proper procedures that are available to them regarding such things as at present exist in the Unley council area.

I refer to a major operation financed by both State and Commonwealth Governments. The person most interested is the one who owns a house with a 20 metre street frontage and who suddenly finds that he can enter his street from only one end. For a long time, such people have to put up with others turning in front of their properties at odd hours of the day and night in an attempt to extract themselves from the narrow street into which they have driven and which for the previous 30 or 40 years had been an open street. This is not good enough and, as soon as possible, the Minister should consider not impeding the work of the Road Traffic Board in its advisory capacity. Rather, the public should be given more consideration than it has been given in the past.

The Hon. D. H. L. BANFIELD secured the adjournment of the debate.

WHEAT DELIVERY QUOTAS ACT AMENDMENT BILL (COMMITTEE)

In Committee.

(Continued from February 25. Page 2511.)

Clause 4—"Composition of Advisory Committee"—which the Hon. C. R. Story had moved to amend by striking out "three" and inserting "five" in new subsection (1); and by striking out "one member who" and inserting "three members one of whom" in new subsection (1) (a).

The Hon. T. M. CASEY (Minister of Agriculture): When this matter was previously before the Committee a small problem was encountered. Some honourable members believed that the Commodity Section of United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated should have a majority of members on the committee. I see no reason why this should not take place, and I have placed on file amendments to put the matter in perspective. The amendments will provide that two members can be nominated by United Farmers and Graziers, with the result that only one member will be nominated by the Government. The commodity section will therefore have a majority on the committee. This is what was required, and if the Hon. Mr. Story will obtain leave to withdraw his amendment I shall move my amendments to resolve the situation.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: Although it took a little while to get the message through, it was worth the effort. I have at last convinced someone that there should be a majority of producers on a committee dealing with a specific commodity when the growers of that commodity have asked for the legislation to be put on the Statute Book. This is my opinion and also that of other members of my Party. As the legislation stands, the producers have a majority, and my aim yesterday was to maintain the *status quo.* During the second reading debate, I foreshadowed an amendment, the purpose of which was not to build up a big committee at this stage but to have in limbo a committee of three, with two additional members to be nominated if and when the legislation again became operative.

My greatest difficulty was not so much with the Minister as with the Parliamentary Counsel. I think the function of the Parliamentary Counsel is to put into legal terms and proper verbiage the thoughts and wishes of honourable members. It is then up to the members themselves to fight their cause on the floor of this Chamber, and it is for the Parliamentary Counsel to advise the Minister either that the amendment is a damn fool idea or that perhaps it is *ultra vires* of the Act, or something else, but not to make it impossible for members to have an amendment drafted to do what they think is in the best interests of their constituents and of a South Australian industry. That was the predicament in which I found myself, and that is what took up most of the afternoon in yesterday's donnybrook.

The Minister has suggested an alternative which leaves the number of committee members at three but gives the producers a majority so that, if and when the legislation again comes into operation by proclamation, as provided in section 4 of the Act, the producers will have a majority. Those members could then alert the United Farmers and Graziers to the amendment required to the legislation and see that the Minister, as well as the Parliament, was informed of the situation. I see no reason why five is not a better number than three. If the number remains at three, one person the Minister has in mind will not be able to go on the committee as the Minister's nominee. Unless United Farmers and Graziers puts that person on, which I rather doubt, his services will not be available. The Minister has informed me whom he had in mind to put on the committee, and I believe that person would be a desirable member. Five members would give additional flexibility, especially as my amendment would allow the Minister to set the remuneration. The Minister has told me that he is keen on the proposal. I should like to hear the views of other members before I decide whether to press my amendment or whether to accept the Minister's counter proposal.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: My foreshadowed amendment achieves what the Commodity Section of the U.F. and G. set out to do. Whether the number is three or five is immaterial; the argument was that a majority was wanted. The original figure put to me by the U.F. and G. was three. The Hon. Mr. Story has described this committee as being in limbo, while I have said it would be a holding committee. However it is described, it will have nothing to do except to record transfers and sales of property. This would provide a complete and up-to-date record if and when quotas were reinstated throughout the Commonwealth.

Despite what the Hon. Mr. Story has said, there is no way in which I would commit myself to make a judgment on salaries and expenses. That in the past has been the prerogative of the Public Service Board, which is usually alerted to such things. Its advice has been sought in the past and will continue to be sought in the future. I have no quibble with the producers having a majority on the board. In the past I think the board has been on the side of the producers, because it has worked closely with them. There is no reason why that should not continue. If it is the wish of the Committee that the position should be spelt out in more detail, I will be happy to do that If the Hon. Mr. Story will withdraw his amendment we can proceed with the amendments I have placed on file, which cover the situation admirably.

The Hon. J. C. BURDETT: With some reluctance, I am willing to go along with the Minister's suggestion and, if the Hon. Mr. Story withdraws his amendments, I will support the Minister's amendments. However, reducing the committee to three members without any proviso regarding the seasons when quotas will again apply is not exactly what we were talking about yesterday. The Hon. Mr. Story wanted the committee to be limited to three members during seasons when quotas did not apply, and he sought to have the committee comprise five members during quota seasons to give it more flexibility, as he said, so that there could be useful persons on the committee other than growers, but with a majority of growers during seasons when quotas did apply.

I cannot see any reason why this could not have been done. The act spells out what are quota seasons and what are not quota seasons. It is perfectly clear when quotas do apply and when they do not apply, and I can see no great difficulty in drafting an amendment to provide that the committee should be comprised of a certain number of members during a quota season and a certain number during a non-quota season. I agree with the comment of Sir Arthur Rymill yesterday that the committee is not a holding committee. The Bill does not say that this is so: it says that the committee is an advisory committee that fixes quotas. Unless and until the law is changed again, that will be the position.

The Minister's proposed amendment is not exactly what we were talking about yesterday. There was considerable merit in what the Hon. Mr. Story was seeking, namely, that during a quota season there should be a flexible committee of five members, and during other seasons the committee

should comprise three members. If the Hon. Mr. Story sees fit to withdraw his amendment, I will support the Minister's proposed amendment.

The Hon. C. R. STORY: I am thinking not about this year or next year but about the future. The wheat situation looks good for the next four or five years, even if we get bumper harvests throughout wheat-producing areas. I am thinking not of the personnel the Minister will appoint to the committee now but of what will happen in four or five years time. One of the committee members appointed by the Minister may be transferred to another State to take up a higher position in head office, and we might find the greatest drongo under the sun from another State will come to fill his place. This is why I seek some flexibility in the membership of the committee. However, half a loaf is better than no bread, so I will accept what the Minister proposes. I seek leave to withdraw my amendments.

Leave granted; amendments withdrawn.

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

In new subsection (1) *(a)* to strike out "one member who" and insert "two members one of whom"; and in new subsection (1) *(b)* to strike out "two members" and insert "one member".

Amendments carried.

The Hon. T. M. CASEY: I move:

In new subsection (2) to strike out "*(b)*" and insert "*(a)*"

This amendment is merely to correct an error.

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (5 to 7) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL (CONSOLIDATION)

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 25. Page 2506.)

The Hon. F. J. POTTER (Central No. 2): I support the second reading of this Bill, which is another measure arising from the consolidation of our Statutes under the Acts Republication Act. The Bill includes, as a result of that work, several necessary amendments to the Public Service Act. I had a good look through the Bill, and I believe it contains nothing abnormal or likely to excite any controversy. I am happy to support the Bill, which in one or two respects makes some desirable administrative changes.

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

KINDERGARTEN UNION BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from February 25. Page 2507.)

The Hon. C. M. HILL (Central No. 2): This Bill converts the Kindergarten Union from its present constitutional status to that of a statutory body. The measure was first introduced in another place in November, 1974, and since then it has run the gauntlet of a thorough investigation by a Select Committee of the other place. Although invitations were issued through the press for people to appear before the Select Committee to give evidence, no-one took advantage of the opportunity.

This highlights the lack of interest that has developed in matters surrounding the Kindergarten Union in recent years. As a result of the Select Committee's deliberations, a considerable number of amendments have been incorporated in the Bill. I intend to vote in favour of the Bill, but I will do so without any enthusiasm, because the case of the Kindergarten Union is another example of an area of voluntary fund raising for which the public has lost enthusiasm; the Hon. Mr. DeGaris referred to the example of health facilities.

As a result of the loss of public enthusiasm, State control and Socialism have cast their heavy hand over this whole organisation, and I do not believe that that is in the best interests of the people or pre-school education. I freely admit that costs and the need for expansion of kindergartens and pre-school centres have increased more rapidly in recent years than they did formerly. However, had the Kindergarten Union been able to continue to operate on the principles on which it operated for many years, a great new army of volunteers in outlying suburbs (most of them mothers of the children attending kindergartens) would have involved itself in this worthwhile community interest. As a result, sufficient money could have been raised to enable the union to continue.

Unfortunately, I do not think the clock can be turned back. The previous method of financing began in 1905. The raising of money through voluntary effort by many committee women was a commendable community service. Some of the leading women who involved themselves so well in charitable work in South Australia played a significant part in the Kindergarten Union's history; the names of Lady Bonython, Lady Jacobs, Mrs. R. K. Wood, Mrs. Gillman, Mrs. Trevor Taylor, and the late Mrs. Denton spring readily to mind.

Some men, too, took a special interest in the Kindergarten Union and gave a tremendous amount of voluntary service to it. Evidence of change and frustration can be seen in the following paragraph from the report of the Administrator, Mr. R. Bennett, in the union's annual report for 1973:

The hoped-for expansion for the union did not eventuate in accordance with any defined pattern, and we spent a major part of the year in a state of uncertainty. Internal difficulties tended to slow down decision-making and we spent the second half of the year waiting for the Commonwealth and State Governments to make up their minds on who was going to make the major contribution to pre-school education in the future. This situation still exists at the time of writing this report. The much publicised and long awaited Fry report did not reach the Senate table until December 11, and as a consequence, the Commonwealth Government was unable to act upon it. The one decision which they should have made to enable pre-school education to continue to develop in 1974, was to allocate the promised $10 000 000 to the States, and make some direct move towards the final promise of pre-school education for all in six years. The stand-off-and-wait attitude was also adopted all the way down the line to the parents, who now firmly believe that Governments, State and Commonwealth, have accepted the major responsibility and have consequently absolved the parents from having to find very large amounts of money from the community. There has been no expressed wish by parents to withdraw completely, and indeed there is probably renewed parent interest in pre-school education, but not for fund raising. The nature of the Fry report which enshrouds pre-school education in child care has also led to some amount of confusion in the minds of parents. Local government bodies are being heavily pressured by the Commonwealth Government and offered strong enticement to develop child care schemes applicable to a restricted few, rather than pre-school education for the benefit of the larger number. There is no doubt that full-day child care must be properly provided for needy working parents. There is some doubt that all those who wish to have child care should receive Government assistance. The Kindergarten Union has always been deeply concerned and involved in child care, and was responsible in this State for the development of regulations which later became part of legislation in the new Community Welfare Act to see that children were properly looked after in child-minding centres. In 1974 the union will be faced with some

very difficult policy questions concerning its part in the total child care programme because of the nature and implications of the Fry report.

It seems that there was a move in 1974 for the Kindergarten Union to be completely absorbed within the provisions of the Community Welfare Act. However, representations were made to the Minister and, as a result, the union is to remain under the Minister of Education.

It is interesting to note in the Minister's explanation of the Bill that the union and the Education Department will be subject to the Childhood Services Council in connection with approval of capital and recurrent expenditure. So, considerable change has taken place, and I have grave doubts about whether that change will be for the good.

I believe that an investigation should be made to see whether local government throughout South Australia should be given the function of developing and administering child-minding centres. There are doubts in the public mind about what the functions of local government really are in the modern world as regards community services. In local government areas the Community Welfare Department is impinging on councils in many respects.

If the investigation proves that local government should develop and administer child-minding centres, local government should be given that opportunity. I do not know what the final result of this measure will be in practice in the years to come. From my reading of pre-school education planning in other countries, it seems that some of those countries are most advanced with their planning (particularly England and Sweden), but in practice not a great deal has been achieved.

One of the reasons for this is that Governments talk much about pre-school education but, when it comes to cutting up the financial cake and establishing priorities at Budget time, pre-school education seems to be left behind.

I hope the plans that the Government has laid down in the Bill will achieve the result we all certainly hope will be achieved: in other words, improved, better and expanded pre-school education for South Australian children, but time will have to pass before one can judge. The point I particularly make is that it is a great pity that so much Government control will now be exercised over what has been basically a voluntary community institution in this State that has given splendid service to the State since its inception. I support the second reading.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.40 p.m. the Council adjourned until Thursday, February 27, at 2.15 p.m.