

or four blocks in his horse and cart before he would alight and serve somebody else. That system put a great strain upon his time and energy, and consequently he does not want to see its return, in the same way as the milkman does not want to go back to conditions that previously existed in his industry. The master baker does not want the old order to return because to-day he has the guarantee of supply and the absence of competition and, in one instance that I previously quoted to the House, the system operating to-day has the advantage to the master baker of a great saving in his overall wage bill.

Almost at the end of a parliamentary session, the Minister is endeavouring, by legislation, to remedy the position, and I hope that he can do so. I suggest, however, that it would have been fairer, and the Minister would have been wiser to have introduced this bill, or something akin to it, before to-day. One is led to the conclusion that although the main reason for the introduction of the measure at this stage is to improve the quality of bread generally, an important secondary reason is that the Government may, through this measure, have something to point out to the people as indicative of honouring a promise.

The bill deals with the question of quality of bread, the staple diet of the Australian people, and in this regard the Minister is tackling the problem by providing that the bags that come from the miller to the baker must carry credentials showing the quality and nutritive content of the flour that they contain. That is a good move, but it would have been more beneficial if it had been introduced in 1947. This question of bread quality is not just a matter of something that we eat—it is a basic question; and many a person in this country who has been battling over the years has had to rely to a great extent for his health and strength on the quality of this product.

*Mr. Hunter.]*

Mr. SPEAKER: As it is now 10.20 o'clock the debate stands adjourned pursuant to sessional order adopted on 15th March, 1949.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Bill returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.20 p.m.

*Wednesday, 19. April, 1950.*

#### Legislative Council.

Transport and Highways Bill—Dairy Industry (Amendment) Bill—Camperdown Cemetery (Amendment) Bill—Main Roads and Transport (Amendment) Bill. (third reading)—Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited (Reclamation and Exchange) Agreement Ratification Bill (second reading)—Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited (Steelworks) Agreement Ratification Bill (second reading)—Adjournment (Flood Damage).

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 p.m.

The opening Prayer was read.

#### TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS BILL.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

#### DAIRY INDUSTRY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Assembly with an amendment.

#### CAMPERDOWN CEMETERY (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

# MAIN ROADS AND TRANSPORT (AMENDMENT) BILL.

## THIRD READING.

Motion (by the Hon. W. E. Dickson)  
proposed:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Amendment (by the Hon. R. R. Down-  
ing) agreed to:

That the words "read a third time" be omitted and there be inserted in lieu thereof the words "recommitted with a view to the further consideration of clause 3."

## IN COMMITTEE (RECOMMITTAL).

(The Hon. E. G. WRIGHT in the Chair.)

Recommitted clause 3. (1) The Transport Act, 1930-1949, is amended—

(a) by inserting at the end of paragraph (a) of subsection one of section two hundred and four the words "or any Act imposing taxes upon motor vehicles in lieu of the taxes upon motor vehicles imposed by such Act";

(b) by omitting paragraph (a) of subsection three of the same section and by inserting in lieu thereof the following paragraph:—

(a) So far as the same is derived from the tax collected in respect of motor omnibuses registered by a Trust in payment by the Commissioner to the councils of the several municipalities and shires (within or outside the district of that Trust) in whose areas such motor omnibuses operate and to such other authorities as the Commissioner is satisfied maintain wholly or partly from their own funds roads (within or outside the district of that Trust) on which such motor omnibuses operate in such shares as the Commissioner may determine.

The share to be paid to each such council or authority shall be determined in respect of each authorised omnibus route wholly or partly in the area of that council or authority and shall as nearly as practicable be calculated having regard to—

(i) the mileage travelled by such motor omnibuses on roads, on such route, which are maintained wholly at the expense of the council or authority;

(ii) one half of the mileage travelled by such motor omnibuses on roads, on such route, which are maintained partly at the expense of the council or authority; and

(iii) the average weight of such motor omnibuses operating on such route.

Amounts paid to councils of municipalities and shires and authorities under this paragraph shall be expended by them on the reconstruction, renewal, repair and maintenance of the public roads which are used by registered motor omnibuses.

Payments by the Commissioner shall be made not less frequently than once in twelve months.

In this paragraph "authorised omnibus route" includes roads on which registered motor omnibuses are used for purposes incidental to their operation on an authorised omnibus route.

The Hon. W. E. DICKSON (Minister for Mines and Building Materials) [4.40]: I move:

That in proposed new paragraph (a) of section 204 (3) the words "is satisfied" be omitted, and there be inserted in lieu thereof the words "shall determine who".

The amendments to the bill that were made yesterday might make it necessary for the Government to make payments to Commonwealth Government departments and agencies and to take into account all operations by buses on routes leading to workshops and depots that are not on authorised routes. The amendment will give the commissioner a discretion in the matter, and will avoid unreasonable and trivial distributions.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. W. E. DICKSON (Minister for Mines and Building Materials) [4.41]: I move:

That in proposed new paragraph (a) of section 204 (3) there be inserted after the word "includes" the word "such".

This is an amendment consequential upon that which has just been accepted by hon. members.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment (by W. E. Dickson) agreed to:

That there be added to proposed new paragraph (a) of section 204 (3) the words "as the Commissioner may from time to time determine."

Recommitted clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with further amendments; report adopted.

**BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY COMPANY LIMITED (RECLAMATION AND EXCHANGE) AGREEMENT RATIFICATION BILL.**

**SECOND READING.**

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [4.47]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the bill is to ratify an agreement with the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited for the surrender of 336 acres of land owned by the company, in exchange for 257 acres of Crown lands near Newcastle. A copy of the agreement is contained in the first schedule to the bill and annexed to it is a plan marked AA, which illustrates the proposal. The lands proposed to be surrendered by the company are shown on the plan AA by blue tint, and the Crown lands which are to be granted to the company in exchange are indicated by red tint. The difference in area between the surrender and exchange lands is approximately 79 acres in favour of the Crown. The bulk of the lands to be granted to the company comprise the bed of Platt's Channel, 193 acres, and parts of the South Channel of the Hunter River, 31 acres 2 perches.

If hon. members refer to the plan AA attached to the agreement, they will see that Spit Island is separated from the mainland by Platt's Channel. With the exception of the eastern extremity of 13½ acres, which is Crown land, Spit Island is owned by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. By reclaiming Platt's Channel and joining up Spit Island with its mainland holdings, the company will have a considerable area available for expansion of its existing plant and activities. Under the agreement, the company is also given the exclusive right for a period of

ninety-nine years to construct wharves and other facilities for the loading or unloading of goods along the frontage of the Spit Island lands, to be acquired by it where the width of the South Channel is greatest. In consideration of this right the company will pay the Crown £200 per annum, subject to re-appraisal at the end of every twenty-five years by the local land board, or the Land and Valuation Court on appeal by either the company or the Crown. Negotiations for this exchange have been proceeding for a considerable time, and all aspects have been fully investigated by a committee appointed by the Government for the purpose. This committee consisted of representatives of the Department of Lands, the Maritime Services Board, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Railways, Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, and the Newcastle City Council.

The agreement that has been entered into has been drafted by the Crown Solicitor in accordance with the recommendation of the committee, which went very thoroughly into the matter. Adequate provisions to protect the public interests have been included in the bill and the agreement. In this regard, I would mention that under the direction of my colleague, the Minister for Public Works, an expert investigation has been made of the lower Hunter River to ascertain what effect the reclamation of Platt's Channel would have on the flow of the river. I am pleased to be able to assure hon. members that the opinion of the Public Works Department is that the closing of Platt's Channel will have no appreciable effect on flood levels in the river upstream nor will it cause siltation.

Hon. members will note that the inclusion of the two small areas of South Channel, which are numbered (2) on plan AA in the area to be granted to the company, will provide a suitable alignment for construction of the wall to close off Platt's Channel for reclamation purposes. The alignment of the South Channel will also be improved by

The company surrendering to the Crown part of Spit Island, numbered (8) on plan AA. That part of the island represents a bulge into South Channel. The excavation of this bulge by the company, in terms of the agreement, will widen South Channel and assist the flow of water in this channel.

As I have already indicated, the lands to be surrendered by the company to the Crown total 336 acres, and are shown by blue tint on the plan AA. The greater part is contained in an area of 293½ acres at Birmingham Gardens, which is numbered (7) on the plan. The land is admirably suited for residential purposes, and consideration is also being given to whether it might be used to further improve educational facilities in the Newcastle district. Practically the whole of the remaining lands being surrendered by the company are required for public recreation, railway purposes, and roadways. Certain areas required for similar purposes are also to be excepted from the lands to be granted to the company. These are shown by yellow, purple and green tints on the plan AA.

It will be readily agreed that the importance to our economy of the steel, iron and other products produced by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited warrant every possible encouragement to the company in its plans to further extend and expand the scope of its operations, and its output. During the critical years of World War II this country was faced with the need for an ever-increasing local production of arms and ammunition to equip its fighting forces. That this need was met was due in no small measure to the efficiency and output of our steel industry. In addition to our own requirements munitions made from Australian steel were sent overseas to Britain and to the British and American armies in the Middle East and the Pacific Islands.

It is worthwhile noting that the price for Australian steel compares much more than favourably with

overseas prices. Figures made available to me indicate that Australian domestic prices are lower than British domestic prices by as much as from £5 to £10 per ton, according to the type of iron or steel. The difference in comparison with American prices, ranging from £11 to £17 per ton, is even more markedly in favour of the Australian product. The average landed cost in Australia of British iron and steel is about double, and of American two and a half to three times that of the Australian domestic price a ton. I will not risk wearying hon. members by quoting precise figures in support of this fact, but they are readily available. I should like to add that Australian prices are substantially less than those of France, Belgium and Germany.

The establishment of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited works at Newcastle began in 1912, when the Newcastle Iron and Steel Works Act of that year was passed by a Labour Government. The Act ratified an agreement between the company and the then Premier under which an area of 88 acres of Crown lands at Port Waratah was sold to the company. An area of 34½ acres was also vested in the company under the agreement for a term of fifty years from 6th December, 1912, at an annual rental of 5 per cent. of its value. This lease and a further lease of 9 acres granted to the company in 1919 under the Crown Lands Acts, were originally mangrove swamps, which have now been reclaimed. These two leasehold areas are included among lands it is proposed to sell to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited for £100,000, and in respect of which a separate bill is with this Chamber. The Broken Hill Proprietary plant is situated on these two areas and the company's freehold lands.

Returning to the agreement to be ratified by the present bill, hon. members will have noted that it is a lengthy document, containing forty-three clauses and seven schedules. Many of the clauses are of a machinery nature, and various provisions to safeguard the public interests have been inserted in others,

such as those relating to erosion protection, drainage, easements and shipping of coal. Hon. members will agree that it is as much in the interests of this country as it is in the interests of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited that this exchange should take place. I believe that every section of the community must benefit from the expansion of the iron and steel industry which will result from this bill, particularly as the local products are the cheapest of their kind in the world. All sections of the community appreciate the use that could be made of the potential output of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company in building up Australia's national economy.

A bill drafted in technical terms can better be explained in detail at the Committee stage if any hon. member is in doubt concerning certain provisions. It will be noted that most of the clauses provide the machinery to give effect to the proposed agreement. Certain provisions of the Public Works Act and of the Local Government Act are affected by this measure. I assure hon. members that all departments concerned and the Newcastle City Council have exhaustively considered the proposals contained in the agreement and the bill and are satisfied that it complies with the recommendations of the committee which exhaustively examined the proposals. I commend the measure to the House in the confidence that it will meet with ready acceptance.

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG [4.59]: I am pleased to support the motion for the second reading of this important measure moved by the Minister and I heartily congratulate him upon the lucid explanation that he has given of it.

The Hon. A. W. McNAMARA: The hon. member is becoming a socialist.

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG: I shall deal with free enterprise later and enlarge upon the most wonderful example of it in Australia as provided by the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. This bill, together

with a subsequent measure, will assist the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited to venture further in the development of the iron and steel industry in Australia. These two matters, Platt's Channel and the purchasing of the freehold have been before the Government since about 1934. It remained for the dynamic Minister for Lands, Mr. Sheahan, to bring this scheme to fruition and I congratulate him upon the work that he has done on behalf of the people of the State. It has been said that where there is no vision the people perish, but this State will never perish while the present Minister for Lands and the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited have the vision that they possess to-day. I am sure that after the Minister's lucid explanation every hon. member will give his whole-hearted support to the measure.

Speaking as one who knew the steel-works site when it was virtually a mangrove swamp—I have lived within three or four miles of the area for nearly half a century—I know something of the improvements that have taken place in that area situated within the boundaries of the second city of the State. This to my mind is the result of the achievements of Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. As an illustration of the condition of the area in those early days, I remember that a firm of which I was a representative had a twenty-five-acre block of land in the centre of what now comprises the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited's works. At that time we were anxious to prevent trespassers from entering the land, which was reached by boat. I have no personal interest in Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, but I take my hat off to a company which has done so much not only for the advancement of this State, but also for the whole of Australia. In 1935 some hon. members were privileged to go to Newcastle to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the company. If those hon. members were to visit the works to-day they would see the tremendous improvement that has since been made. I read

from the foreword to the brochure that was published by the company on that occasion and it emphasises what I wish to say and does so in language more eloquent than I could use. It reads:

Scientific development of mining has at all times been a primary objective of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, and its appreciation of the basic importance of national self-containment in iron and steel is even keener.

Adventure and courage illumine the record, and Australians to-day are reminded of the immense debt owed to the far-sighted men who pioneered the steel industry, and to the conspicuous technical and administrative ability dedicated to the achievements of the company.

Within the short period of thirty-five years has been developed the most comprehensive plants in the British Commonwealth. The magnitude of equipment, range of operations and record of production vindicate the spirit that launched the enterprise.

Apart from the transcendent obligations of defence, adequate steel is indispensable to industrial capacity, a vital basis of the measureless expansion of which the Commonwealth is capable. The value of steel for all purposes of peace or war is heightened in proportion to Australia's distance from her partners in the Imperial Commonwealth.

The Minister emphasised that Australia should be grateful to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited for what it did during the war and in the years immediately following the cessation of hostilities. To many hon. members the name Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited is something in the abstract but we who have lived in Newcastle and seen its development know it as something different. I should be recreant to my trust if I failed to traverse the early history of the company. Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited owes its existence and its name to the Broken Hill silver-lead-zinc lode on which claims were first pegged by boundary rider Charles Rasp in September, 1883. This simple act started a cavalcade of events, truly amazing in their influence on Australia's future. Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited was formed on 10th August, 1885, with a registered capital of £320,000 in 16,000 shares of £20

each. To-day, the subscribed share-capital totals £16,970,545 and the shareholders number no fewer than 23,000.

The Broken Hill Lode, as hon. members will recall, gave birth to the city of Broken Hill now the third largest in New South Wales. It brought silver-lead-zinc smelters to Port Pirie, South Australia, and subsequently led to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited's transition from lead to steel. During its fifty-three years of operation the proprietary mine came to be regarded as one of the richest in the world. The mine being worked out it was closed in 1939 and to-day I am informed that the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has no connection with Broken Hill, except in name. I remember reading a powerful book prepared by the company some years ago which had as its title, "From Silver to Steel." Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1935 and a large number of the leaders of Australia, including parliamentarians from this and the Lower House took part in the celebrations. They were amazed at the growth of the steel industry.

The company entered the realm of the iron and steel production in 1913 and the steelworks were officially opened on 2nd June, 1915, by the then Governor-General Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson. The site was virtually a useless swamp. Reclaiming of the swamp began on 3rd January, 1913, and the first pile was sunk on 24th January. A total of over 45,000 piles have since been driven to a firm bearing as support for the various sections of the plant. Steel works, subsidiaries and allied industries on the southern branch of the Hunter River embrace an area of 474 acres. Events leading to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited's entering the iron and steel industry began in 1889 when the company acquired leases over iron-ore deposits at Iron Knob, South Australia. It was only in 1911 that the directors of Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited turned their thoughts to the use of South Australian iron ore

as the basis for the company's transition into a steel-manufacturing organisation. Messrs. D. G. Delprat, general manager, and David Baker, an American steel master, are two gentlemen who had much to do with its initial success. Mr. David Baker was appointed first manager of the proposed steel works and selected the "Swamp" site upon which the works now stand. He was influenced by the area's close proximity to rich coal fields, and the adjacent deep water anchorage for ocean-going steamers. On 19th January, 1915, the *Emerald Wings* arrived with 2,800 tons of Iron Knob ore. The first blast furnace was blown in on 8th March, 1915. No. 1 open hearth furnace was charged on 8th April, 1915, and on 24th April, 1915, the first rail was rolled. Truly from the acorn springs the mighty oak.

There are various aspects of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited that I should mention. The first is coal consumption and economy. As a major basic undertaking, and one of the greatest individual consumers of coal, the iron and steel industry is vitally concerned in economic coal utilisation. The Newcastle Steel Works uses 31,000 tons of coal a week. This tonnage approximates the amount of coal required weekly by the whole of Melbourne's civic and industrial activities. When in full production the Newcastle Steel Works uses over 1,600,000 tons of coal per annum, that is, three tons every minute of the night and day; and it uses eight tons of minerals each minute. The steel works consumption of coal is equal to 23 per cent. of all the coal mined on the northern district field, or 15 per cent. of all the coal mined in New South Wales. Early in its history it was realised that it would be advantageous for the company to obtain control of its sources of coal supply. In 1922 a start was made in this direction, and to-day, as a result, 98 per cent. of coal used comes from its own mines, which are the John Darling, Burwood, Lambton, Elrington and Stockton Borehole collieries.

*The Hon. T. Armstrong.]*

Since 1926, the problem of coal usage at the Newcastle Steel Works has been the responsibility of the Combustion Department, which maintains constant control of all fuel usage, investigates ways and means of improving existing heating methods and undertakes continuous research into the many phases of fuel economy. Every endeavour is made to eliminate fuel wastage through efficient combustion, furnace design, modern equipment, utilisation of all combustible by-products, recovery of waste heat and good mechanical efficiency. The main consuming units at the Newcastle Steel Works are:—(1) Coke ovens, which convert 85 per cent. of the 31,000 tons of coal into coke. (2) The blast furnace plant, which uses the coke as fuel in the smelting of iron ore. (3) The open hearth furnaces, which convert the molten iron from the blast furnaces into steel. (4) The soaking pits and various reheating furnaces, which bring steel to the correct temperatures for rolling. There must be a continuous supply of coal, which is vital to the steel industry. Since 1926 the amount of coal required to manufacture a given amount of steel is practically 50 per cent. less than it was twenty years ago. This saving of 50 per cent. releases 1,600,000 tons of coal for consumption elsewhere. When there is such a shortage of coal supplies for all consumers, where would Australia be to-day if it had not been for this saving?

From its modest beginning the Newcastle Steel Works has developed until to-day its steel production capacity exceeds 1,000,000 tons per annum, and it has become the largest integrated iron and steel works in the British Empire. Australian iron and steel have enabled our secondary industries to grow and prosper, employment has been created, and generally it has resulted in the enjoyment of a better standard of living. Broken Hill Proprietary steel is sold at the same price in all the principal seaports of the Commonwealth: Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane. The manufacture of 1,000,000 tons of steel ingots, which is

the annual productive capacity of the Newcastle Steel Works, requires in round figures 1,500,000 tons of iron ore, 1,500,000 tons of coal, and 300,000 tons of limestone. The iron ore from the Iron Knob deposit in South Australia averages 62 per cent. of iron. I have not my hand upon the page, but I have read that a comparison between iron ore mined and used in Great Britain and in Australia shows that Great Britain uses a tremendous quantity of coal in excess of that used in Australia for a given production.

Limestone comes from Rapid Bay, 63 miles from Adelaide, and from Attunga, 200 miles from Newcastle. Magnesite is quarried in western New South Wales, 422 miles from Newcastle by rail. Dolomite comes from near Canberra, and from Mudgee in New South Wales, as well as from Ardrossan in South Australia. Bauxite, obtained from the Moss Vale district, is used for fluxing purposes in the open hearth department.

I shall now refer to the coke ovens. Under normal conditions from twenty to twenty-two train loads of coal from the coal mines arrive at the steel works daily. An average train load is 300 tons. The coal storage and coal bridge have a capacity of 200,000 tons, the maximum storage height being 26 feet. The coal storage area is 1,750 feet long and 200 feet wide. The bulk of the coal intake goes direct to the Coke Ovens Department. The coal bridge and motor weigh 400 tons. The coal bridge mechanically unloads or loads coal trains at the rate of 200 tons an hour. There were 106 coke ovens in 1930, and in 1939 another battery of 55 were erected. From one ton of coal the approximate recovery is: 13 cwts. of coke, 12,000 cub. feet of gas, 25 lb. of sulphate of ammonia, 7 gallons of tar, 3.025 gallons of benzol, .162 gallons of toluol, and .054 gallons of solvent naphtha. The 43,000,000 cub. feet of gas a day at the coke ovens and available to the works for fuel is considerably in excess of the quantity used by Sydney and suburbs

in one day. Although the by-product plant produces a little more than eight gallons of Benzol a minute, or 12,000 gallons a day, that quantity represents about 1.2 per cent. of the motor spirit used in Australia. The Broken Hill Proprietary produces more petrol per annum than do Glen Davis Shale Oil Works.

Hon. members may be interested to learn that the company has three blast furnaces. The first was blown in March, 1915, the second in December, 1918, and the third in August, 1921. One furnace takes 1,200 tons of iron ore, 700 tons of coke and 220 tons of limestone daily. One could say quite a lot about the open hearth at the works. The company, as well as using up all its steel scrap, purchases about 100,000 tons a year from all over the Commonwealth. The furnaces operate at a temperature of about 1,700 degrees centigrade, and materials capable of withstanding this temperature must be used. Therefore, the brickwork is of silica and magnesite. Those who have had the privilege of visiting the steel works know what a wonderful generating plant is to be found there. It consists of two 5,000 kilowatt turbo alternators, and two 18,750 k.w. turbo alternators. The plant has generated 21,000,000 electric units a month, and has installed 3,100 motors ranging from  $\frac{1}{2}$  h.p. to 21,000 h.p. at the peak rating. The steelworks are unique among electric power producers and consumers in Australia in that they generate and use more electric power than does any other industrial undertaking. To the layman the power plant equipment is "fearfully and wonderfully made." The most amazing aspect of the plant operation is that this mighty force is controlled by a lever and a few electric buttons.

The steelworks wanted to be self-sufficient in not merely coal production, but also in shipping. Shipping plays a very important part in the transport of iron ore from Whyalla, South Australia, to Newcastle, a distance of 1,170 miles. The need for shipping is realised



when one considers that the Newcastle and Port Kembla steel works consume almost 2,500,000 tons of iron ore per annum. On return voyages steel products are carried to interstate markets, and the Whyalla blast furnace is supplied with coke. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has a fleet of nine steamers employed in this work, and a tenth vessel under charter. The four older ships carry a cargo of 5,500 tons from Whyalla in six days, and the newer ships make the trip in four and a half days, each carrying 7,500 tons. The company is constructing four vessels of 12,500 tons at the Whyalla shipyards and the first of these is now in commission. These larger vessels will bring the iron ore from Yampi Sound in North Western Australia to Newcastle in ten days.

The wharfage at Newcastle, as will be seen from the plan, is 2,225 feet long and is sufficient to berth five or six steamers. There is a 500 feet wharf, where coke shipments are handled, a 2,500 ton coke bin, and a swinging conveyor that loads coke for the blast furnace at Whyalla.

The Australian steel industry is one of the nation's greatest sources of employment. The larger proportion of this labour force is congregated in the Newcastle steelworks and the works of the Broken Hill Proprietary subsidiaries and allied industries. Late in 1947 these works were providing employment for more than 17,000 men and women, of whom 8,500 were at the steelworks, at collieries and engaged in shipping activities. When one considers their dependent families, one realises that the steel works support directly 40,000 souls. Indirect employment in commerce and avenues which depend on the expenditure of steelworks employees' wages sustain about 60,000 people in the Newcastle district, so that half of the population of that great city are provided with a livelihood in this way. These are impressive figures, but they would be considerably increased if a full labour force were obtainable, and sufficient coal to meet requirements were supplied.

*The Hon. T. Armstrong.]*

It is interesting to study stock exchange figures on the progress of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, whose paid-up capital is £16,970,545. There are only three Australian companies whose capital exceeds £10,000,000. The Broken Hill Proprietary is the biggest and has assets worth more than £35,427,609. During the last nine years the dividend has been 7½ per cent., 6½ per cent., 5 per cent. for four years, 7½ per cent., 8½ per cent., 8½ per cent.—an average of 6½ per cent. From this, hon. members can see the truth of Andrew Carnegie's statement that "Steel is either a prince or a pauper." Apparently, the iron and steel industry in Australia has taken a middle course, for the returns are infinitesimal when considered side by side with the service that has been rendered to the community. No company has done so much for Australia and received so little in return.

One could say a great deal about the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited at Whyalla, on the western shore of Spencer's Gulf, South Australia. Two and a half million tons of iron ore are sent to New South Wales annually. From 1915 to 1938 only iron ore was sent to New South Wales, but in 1938 preliminary work was started on a 750 ton blast furnace, which required the dredging of 2,250,000 tons of spoil from the sea floor, and resulted in the reclamation of 74 acres of swampy foreshore. One considers what has been done at Newcastle and then what has happened at Whyalla. In 1939 the first of the 30-foot concrete piles was driven at Whyalla, and by May, 1941, 18,000 cubic feet of concrete had been placed and the blast furnace was blown in. No time was wasted by this magnificent organisation. The same remark applies to its shipbuilding, which was so vital to Australia when ships were most difficult to obtain. According to Dobson's *Digest*, in September, 1939, the directors decided to embark on shipbuilding at Whyalla. Five slipways were constructed and the first ship was launched on 12th May, 1941. From the time of the directors'

decision to the launching of the first ship only eighteen months had elapsed. That is a wonderful tribute to the management of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. Since 1941 this company has built sixteen ships at Whyalla. To show how the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has looked after its employees, one can mention that on more than one occasion a large number of employees have shared in its bonus system. At least £250,000 each year is paid in bonuses to the company's immediate employees, without taking into account employees who work in subsidiary companies and also share. In addition to building the *Yampi Sound*, the *Iron Kimberley* and other 12,500-ton ships, the shipyard has produced ships of a capacity of 22,000 tons.

As an illustration of what the company has done for Whyalla, there is now at that centre a model township, a housing scheme, and a model dairy to accommodate the expected population of 12,000. The hospital cost £120,000, of which the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited subscribed £70,000. The technical school cost £40,000 and the company subscribed half the sum. Perhaps one of the greatest benefits that it brought to Whyalla was a water supply from the River Murray, which was conveyed through a pipeline 223 miles long, starting from Morgan in South Australia. The work of laying that pipeline was begun in August, 1940; and completed in March, 1944.

When its steelworks first began to operate the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited realised that it needed an outlet for its products, and this was amply provided by the establishment of subsidiary companies and allied industries. The largest subsidiary is Australian Iron & Steel Limited at Port Kembla, 57 miles south of Sydney. It is the largest complete subsidiary iron and steelworks in Australia and can be classed with the most modern in the world. Its genesis dates back to 1908 when the Hoskins

Company had something to do with it. In 1935 the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited acquired the whole of the ordinary shares of that concern. The public had previously subscribed £1,000,000 in 7 per cent. preference shares. According to Dobson's *Digest*, during the previous nine years the ordinary shareholders in Australian Iron & Steel Limited. received only one dividend of 5 per cent. I will not weary the House with details concerning that subsidiary company, but it is perpetuating at Port Kembla all the wonderful things that have been done at Newcastle. This company operates five South Coast collieries and the Steelworks Colliery on the Lithgow coalfield. It has two blast furnaces, the first of which was erected in 1928 with a capacity of 800 tons. This plant was modernised in 1938. The second was begun in 1938 and has a capacity of 1,135 tons. In 1933 the company had seventy-two coke ovens and a further forty-eight are now under construction. It has seven basic open hearth furnaces with an ingot capacity of 750,000 tons a year.

Rylands Bros. is a subsidiary company and was founded in 1919. It has a wide variety of products, such as wire, both barbed and fencing, steel posts, nails, and so on. Another subsidiary is the Commonwealth Steel Company Limited, established in 1919. It produces steel tyres, axles and wheels and a multitude of other products. The Australian Wire Rope Works is another subsidiary established in 1925. It manufactures wire ropes with circumferences ranging from half an inch to ten inches. Some of the ropes have six strands and ninety-one wires, and weigh up to ten tons. Their breaking and tensile strains are as much as 343 tons.

In 1934 Stewarts & Lloyds was established, and their products include steel tubes with an outside diameter of three and a half inches. This organisation has a continuous process of butt welding and can handle tubes with an outside diameter of eight and five-eighths inches, made by the Bellman-Seaver.

push-bench process. This was begun in 1940. Lysaghts Works Proprietary Limited produces black and galvanised steel sheets as well as plain and corrugated iron. The Newcastle Chemical Company Limited was formed in August, 1940, and handles raw materials received from the Broken Hill Proprietary. Its products are used in many other industries in the manufacture of plastics, paints, zinc and rubber. Other Broken Hill Proprietary associated industries include the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Proprietary Limited, Wiltshire File Company Proprietary Limited, Melbourne, Rheem Australia Proprietary Limited and Structural Engineering Company of West Australia Limited.

As well as handling iron and steel the Broken Hill Proprietary has had something to do with the most precious of metals, and its interest includes Hannan's North gold mine, near Kalgoorlie, West Australia, as well as another gold mine at Cowarra, New South Wales. A further subsidiary company is the Broken Hill Proprietary By-Products Proprietary Limited. This company treats raw materials received from Broken Hill Proprietary works and produces sulphate of ammonia, ammonia liquor and naphthalene. The Titan Nail and Wire Proprietary Limited, which has concerns at both South Melbourne and Hobart, is another subsidiary organisation producing barbed wire and nails. The firm of Lysaght Bros. & Company Proprietary Limited, another subsidiary, was established in 1884 at Five Dock, Sydney, and its industry is the production of wire, wire netting, nails, and similar products. One could go on and say a great deal, but hon. members have been pleased to note that full details of the activities of the Broken Hill Proprietary and its associated companies were given by the Minister for Lands, who was in charge of this measure, in another place.

I should now like to speak from personal experience. About six months ago a company in which I am interested

wished to obtain steel rails, and made inquiries from the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited at Newcastle. That company quoted 82 lb. B section Australian standard rails at £16 4s. 6d. a ton plus tax, and fishplates at £19 12s. 6d. a ton. An English quotation was also received which showed that Dorman's British Standard 80 lb. R rails were £36 0s. 6d. a ton, Sydney, and fishplates for same £42 16s. 9d. a ton. I have a statement comparing British, American and Australian prices for foundry pig iron, merchant bars, plates and heavy rails. Australian foundry pig iron is £9 17s. 6d. a ton, but American is £32 2s. 2d. That is a difference of £22 11s. 8d. a ton. The Australian price for merchant bars is £17 17s. 8d. a ton, and American is £46 16s. 9d., a difference of £28 19s. 1d. Australian plates cost £18 7s. 4d. a ton, and American £53 14s. 3d., a difference of £35 6s. 11d. a ton. Heavy rails in Australia are £17 12s. 6d. a ton, but in America £45 6s. 8d., a difference of £27 14s. 2d. a ton. The facts that I have given offer conclusive proof that this Parliament should do everything possible to assist this wonderful undertaking in its work not only for this State, but also for the Commonwealth. In another place, the Minister and his Newcastle colleagues spoke in glowing terms of the high standard of efficiency of the company. I congratulate the Minister for Lands for seeing that these two matters were not shelved, as they were for years, and that what the bill proposes will soon become an accomplished fact.

I propose now to refer to the Platt's Channel and the Birmingham Gardens exchange. I shall have nothing to say on the other measure because the remarks that I have made are applicable to both bills. To provide for the extensive expansion of the steel industry, a proposal was placed before the Minister for Lands that Platt's Channel should be reclaimed together with a minor portion of the South Channel and Spit Island, owned by the company, except for a reserve of nine acres which

*The Hon. T. Armstrong.]*

is owned by the Crown. A committee consisting of outstanding public servants was appointed, and every aspect of the question was examined. Those gentlemen did a wonderful job for the State. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has received no concession, and has paid a fair price for the transfer.

Much has been said about the depth of water in Platt's Channel. I examined the plan, which showed a depth of water in many parts of Platt's Channel of only 3, 4 or 5 feet. The area to be surrendered by the company at Birmingham Gardens is 293 acres, at Tourle-street 3.6 acres, Ferry-road 19.5 acres, and at Ironbark Creek one acre. The total of the land proposed to be surrendered is 317.1 acres, for which in exchange the company will get 266.2 acres, forty-eight acres of which must be reclaimed. That is a splendid exchange, seeing that the Crown receives 1,307 acres for every acre that is given to the company. As the Minister for Lands has said, we are receiving a wonderful area of land and giving away shallow water and mud. I endorse the sentiments expressed by hon. members in another place, and hope that Birmingham Gardens will be used either for a university or a teacher's training college. It would be a good idea if the £100,000 that the company is giving to the Crown for 55½ acres of freehold land could be spent on such a building, and the name of the company should be associated with the institution as an example of what free enterprise can do.

I agree that the people of Maitland, if expert advice is worth anything, need have no worry about flooding. The hydrographic survey of the area from Newcastle to Hexham has disclosed that even with floods, there would be no danger. The Minister for Lands in another place said that the influence would be negligible, perhaps a 1½-inch rise at Ash Island, and it would not be measurable at Hexham. It would have no effect at Maitland, and the flood waters

will be much easier to control when the Glenbawn Dam and other works are completed, and the waters "just keep rolling along" the stream like Ole Man River.

If the Platt's Channel area is reclaimed, it will open an era of greatness for the development of Newcastle as an industrial centre. Today, Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, its subsidiaries and allied industries occupy 474 acres. A continuation of that area to the various islands, Dempsey Island, Moscheto Island and Ash Island would make an additional 6,500 acres available for development. When road and railway facilities were taken from the mainland to the islands, this vast area would be available for industrial expansion—thirteen to fourteen times the area now available for this purpose. Already Courtaulds have their representatives in Newcastle, and will develop the Tomago district. In the light of what the Minister has said and the remarks that I have made, I am sure that the House will do nothing less than give its blessing to the bill. I trust that the industry will prosper, and that in the days ahead this company will demonstrate that private enterprise is what this country needs.

The Hon. S. C. WILLIAMS [5.48]: I congratulate the Minister for the lucid and able manner in which he explained the bill, and thank the Hon. Mr. Armstrong for his interesting speech and for his painstaking research on the progress of Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, which has expanded over an area from 88 to over 400 acres. Though at all times I do not see eye to eye with the policy of the company in the industrial sphere, I acknowledge that it has done a great work for this State and the Commonwealth. I should have liked to have in this Chamber a map of Newcastle Harbour so that hon. members could see for themselves that any future expansion of the Newcastle District must take place up the river, as in the Newcastle district proper there is no further room for expansion of wharf and other facilities for

the handling of cargo. This measure is the first move towards the beginning of industrial development up the river, where Courtauld's factory is also to be situated. I pay tribute to the Minister responsible for the introduction of this bill, which is a monument of statesmanship. A tremendous amount of work had to be done in preparing the measure, which will have excellent results.

The proposal embodied in the bill will not be shelved. The Broken Hill Proprietary Company, Limited will go ahead with its plans in the same way as it did at Whyalla, when it decided to build ships. As the Hon. Mr. Armstrong has said, the first ship was built by the company in eighteen months after its establishment. The work envisaged in this measure will not be finished in eighteen months, but because of our knowledge of the activities of the company in the past we believe that immediately the bill is passed it will begin reclamation work in Platt's Channel and take action to develop the area. That will be the first move in the reclamation of the Hunter River so that industrial activities may be greatly expanded. A link will be provided with the railway and also with the harbour. The construction of the Glenbawn Dam and the damming of the lower weir on the Upper Hunter will regulate the flow of water into the river to such an extent that there will be no danger of flooding. Instead of eddies and swirls in the river, there will be a natural scour in it and in the harbour, with the result that the dredging that is now necessary will be curtailed.

Hon. members are indebted to the Hon. Mr. Armstrong for his research and his resume of the activities of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited since its inception, but it must be remembered that the company also has its own interests at heart. Though Australia is deriving vast benefits from its activities, this agreement is not altogether one-sided. Though it must be conceded

*The Hon. S. C. Williams.]*

that the company is doing a valuable job for Australia, it is also doing good work for its shareholders. I congratulate the Government upon bringing down the bill which provides for the advancement of Newcastle by the opening up of a new area. Although some hon. members may not live to see the ultimate development that will take place in the Newcastle area, I can visualise the wonderful progress that will result from this beginning made by the Government. I commend the bill to hon. members. I congratulate the Minister for the lucid way in which he explained the measure, and the Government for the manner in which it has dealt with the matter. The bill will be of great benefit to the people of Newcastle, to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, and to the people of the Commonwealth as a whole.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time and reported from Committee without amendment; report adopted.

#### BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY COMPANY LIMITED (STEELWORKS) AGREEMENT RATIFICATION BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [6.2]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The object of the bill is to ratify an agreement entered into by the company with the Minister for Lands, on behalf of His Majesty, for the sale to the company of certain lands at Newcastle, and for the granting to the company of an exclusive right to obtain leases for wharf sites along the frontage of the lands to be sold. The background to this bill is provided by the Newcastle Iron and Steel Works Act, 1912; which ratified an agreement between the then Premier and the company, under which an area of about 88 acres of Crown lands at Newcastle were sold to the company, and an area of 34½ acres leased to it for

a term of fifty years from 6th December, 1912. In 1919 an additional area of about 9 acres of Crown lands was leased to the company under special lease tenure by virtue of the Crown Lands Consolidation Act, 1913, for a term which expired on 31st December, 1948. The company's progress since commencing operations at Newcastle in 1912 is well known, and it is not my intention to refer to it in detail. I am indebted to the Hon. Mr. Armstrong for the figures which he quoted to show the immense scope of this undertaking. Though one realised its splendid record, one was nevertheless impressed by the hon. members lucid account of the company's history.

I would point out, however, that the vast expansion which has taken place has resulted in a substantial part of the company's undertaking being erected on the two leased areas to which I have referred. The 55½ acres that it is proposed to sell to the company are shown by red tint on the plan, marked 'C', attached to the bill, and if hon. members refer to the plan they will note that the red tinted area is divided into seven parts, numbered 1 to 7.

The area numbered 1 comprises the 34½ acres of Crown lands at present held by the company under the vested lease granted by the Newcastle Iron and Steel Works Act, 1912. This lease would have expired on the 5th December, 1962. The area numbered 2 comprises the 9 acres 32 perches of special lease lands to which I have referred. The areas numbered 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 comprise miscellaneous lands—a closed public road and remnant areas of Crown lands and railway lands—totalling, in all, about 12 acres. The price to be paid by the company for the land is £100,000. This is the value that has been placed on the land by the Surveyor-General and the Valuer-General. The area within which the company is to be granted exclusive rights of leasing for wharf purposes is shown by blue tint on the plan marked 'C' attached to the bill. It represents a strip 5,000 feet long, and hon. members will

see that it comprises land below high-water mark along the frontage of the land to be sold. The total area is just over 5 acres. Some of the company's existing wharf sites are situated within the strip.

Under the agreement, the right to take out leases will exist for a period of ninety-nine years from the date of the agreement. The annual rental for this right is £250, and this amount is subject to re-appraisal by the local land board every twenty-five years. Both the Crown and the company have the right to appeal to the Land and Valuation Court if dissatisfied with the board's determination. Hon. members will note that the agreement, which forms a schedule to the bill, comprises thirty-seven clauses. It is not my intention to refer to these clauses in detail. Many are of a purely machinery nature, and others have been inserted to adequately protect the public interest. There are provisions for drainage, easements for electricity transmission over the land, and restrictions on the use of the land for the shipping of coal. Other conditions require the company to carry out certain public works, including completion of the construction of the public road, indicated by brown tint on plan marked C, and the construction of specified railway works in the vicinity.

Before entering into the agreement with the company, the Government set up a committee to investigate the matter. The committee comprised the Surveyor-General, who was the chairman, and representatives of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, the Maritime Services Board, Railways Department, Public Works Department, Valuer-General's Department, and Mines Department. The draft agreement was prepared by the Crown Solicitor, and gave effect to the recommendations of the committee. The achievements of the company in the State and national interests, and particularly its contribution to the war effort, are recognised by all, and this bill, by giving the company a secure title to its lands, will materially

assist its future operations. The local products of iron and steel are the cheapest of their kind in the world, and all sections of the community must benefit from this bill in some way.

I commend the measure to the House for its approval.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES [6.15]: The comprehensive explanation of the bill given by the Minister leaves no doubt that this measure should receive the support of the House. I wish to ask the Minister a question. I assume that the consideration of £100,000 for the disposal of this land will go to the credit of consolidated revenue if the usual procedure is followed. Under normal circumstances it would be a capital item.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: Not altogether. It is apportioned in the bill, and the Railways Department will receive some of it.

The Hon. A. D. BRIDGES: I had not noticed that. I intended to suggest that as the normal procedure would be to apply the money to capital purposes, it might be advantageous to hypothecate the sum received to provide amenities in the district rather than use it to reduce a State deficit. Obviously it is a matter entirely for the discretion of the Government, but since the money is received in the district it is proper that it should be expended in that district.

The Hon. T. ARMSTRONG [6.16]: I spoke at length on the previous measure, and in deference to the feelings of hon. members I do not propose to address myself to this bill. The Minister has given a clear explanation. I wish to say something about the executives of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, particularly in the light of the words of Andrew Carnegie, when he was speaking about Mr. Morgan, who was a leader in the coal industry. He said:

Mr. Morgan buys his partners; I grow my own.

I emphasise those words "I grow my own," for they illustrate the policy of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited. Its present general manager rose from the ranks, and that fact speaks volumes for the way in which the company encourages and promotes its employees.

I could raise about twenty different points in respect of the Minister's description of what the company will do. To my mind, it is not a question of "Thou shalt not," but of "Thou shalt." Many of the proposals in the agreement prove conclusively how well the Government has been protected by its responsible officers. Not one aspect of the matter has been overlooked, and a remarkably good price is being paid to the Government for the land. I well recall that years ago the 25 acres about which I have been speaking were sold for £10,000, so the Government is doing well in selling the area for £100,000. The price at which this land was valued in 1934 or 1936 was something over £30,000. As the Minister has pointed out, more than £250,000 has been spent in erecting modern loading and discharging equipment on the waterfront.

I give the bill my blessing because I believe that it will do something for the advancement of our great Commonwealth and the port of Newcastle.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON [6.19]: I have listened to the eulogies of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, and I realise what it has done in the interests of its shareholders. This measure is a demonstration of the wisdom of the Labour Party's policy. The wealth of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited has come from the ore that has been taken from the soil, and the soil belongs to the people. I hope to see the nationalisation of this industry so that the huge profits that go into its coffers might be diverted to social amenities, to the provision of more advanced educational facilities, and to the enlightenment of Australian citizens.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [6.20], in reply: I perhaps misled the Hon. Mr. Bridges by saying that the £100,000 is apportioned only as between the Crown and the Railways Commissioner. The Commissioner gets only £5,000, the amount agreed upon by his representative. That is provided in paragraph 37 of the agreement, which is a schedule to the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

(The Hon. Mr. SPICER in the Chair).

Clause 9.

(2) Upon acceptance by the company of a Memorandum of Transfer in its favour of the land described in the Fourth Part of the Schedule to the said agreement containing covenants on the part of the company, its successors and assigns in accordance with the provisions of subclause (c) of clause twenty-seven of the said agreement such covenants shall bind such land and every part thereof into whosoever hands the same may come and bind all persons interested therein, and the Registrar-General may make such endorsements upon any Crown Grant or certificate of title comprising such land or any part thereof and such other entries in the register book or otherwise as he may think desirable in consequence thereof.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [6.23], I move:

That in subclause (2) after the words "Fourth Part of the" there be inserted the word "First".

The amendment makes it quite clear that the land is described in the First Schedule.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment; report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

FLOOD DAMAGE.

Motion (by the Hon. R. R. Downing) proposed:

That this House do now adjourn.

The Hon. T. P. GLEESON [6.27]: I wish to bring before the House the serious situation that has arisen following recent widespread flooding throughout the State. I impress upon the Government the need to accelerate deliveries of locally-manufactured commodities that are urgently needed, and if necessary to ask the Federal Government for permission to import a quantity of wire netting to meet the situation. Throughout the State fences have been devastated. Crops are ready to be sown on fallowed land, but unless the land can be fenced the owners will not be able to sow their crops. This will adversely affect not only the landholders, but also the economy of the nation. I am aware that at present committees under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture are touring flooded areas and making reports on local needs. However, I should like everything possible done immediately to afford relief so that grave losses to crops, lambs and wool may be averted. In my district we had 1160 points of rain in four days following an abnormally wet season. Hon. members will realise the extent of the devastation that it has wrought. It is necessary that supplies be made available quickly to those who have suffered from the floods.

The Hon. G. D. BASSETT [6.29]: I support the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Gleeson and speak of the Macquarie Valley and central west where devastation has followed the recent floods. Also, I join with the hon. member in impressing upon the Government the need for manufacturing companies to make wire-netting and steel posts available as quickly as possible. The landholders can pay for them, but there is a delay



in their manufacture. Both of those commodities have been out of production for a year or two, but if the Government makes appropriate representations the material could be made available. Thousands of miles of fences in the river valleys have been completely washed away. If wire-netting is not provided immediately the rabbits will take possession of the rich river valleys and of other lands to which the Hon. Mr. Gleeson has referred. The destruction that has been caused presents a depressing picture. The Macquarie and Lachlan Valleys have been plastered with two or three inches of soil which has killed thousands of acres of lucerne. I had 1,600 acres covered with mud, but I will be able to meet the difficulty. I should like to see the necessary materials made available as fast as the factories can produce them.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Minister of Justice and Vice-President of the Executive Council) [6.31], in reply: The Government is aware of the desperate plight in which a number of land owners have been placed following the recent disastrous floods. My colleagues, the Minister for Agriculture, and Mr. Dickson, have made an arrangement with the suppliers of the materials concerned to make a special allocation to flooded areas. This is being done with the consent of the manufacturers because there are no controls over the distribution of those commodities today. The suppliers have co-operated magnificently, and have shown a fine public spirit in doing so. Though the allocation might not be sufficient to repair all the damage that has been caused by floods, I assure both the Hon. Mr. Gleeson and the Hon. Mr. Bassett that every effort is being made by the Government to assist those who have suffered damage.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 6.32 p.m.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 19 April, 1950.

Questions without Notice—Bread Manufacture and Delivery Bill (second reading)—Bills Returned—Dairy Industry (Amendment) Bill—War Service Land Settlement and Closer Settlement Validation Bill (second reading).

Mr. SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.30 p.m.

The opening Prayer was read.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

#### LETTING OF ROOMS.

Mr. TONGE: I ask the Attorney-General whether the racketeering of some landlords and landladies in the letting of rooms has been brought to his notice? If so, will he consider the advisability of bringing those persons' activities within the scope of the Landlord and Tenant Act? Also, will he consider fixing the maximum rent of a room without meals at £1 a week?

Mr. MARTIN: My attention, and that of my colleague, the Minister of Justice, who administers this matter, has been drawn to the racketeering that is undoubtedly taking place in the letting of rooms. Indeed, I have evidence that it is occurring in my own electorate. I am pleased that the hon. member has brought the matter forward in this House and he may rest assured that I shall take it up with my colleague at once with a view to arriving at some means of overcoming what I regard as a manifest social evil.

#### AUSTRALIAN JOCKEY CLUB STEWARDS: TREATMENT OF JOURNALISTS.

Mr. LANDA: I ask the Colonial Secretary whether his attention has been drawn to the action of the Australian Jockey Club Committee in calling before it for questioning at a race-course meeting a journalist named David McNicol? Is it a fact that this person