

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 4 October 1983

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairman:

Mr G.T. Whitten

Members:

Mrs J.E. Appleby
 Mr E.S. Ashenden
 The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy
 Mr R.J. Gregory
 Mr T.R. Groom
 Mr G.M. Gunn
 Mr K.C. Hamilton
 Mr I.P. Lewis

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I must inform the Committee that changes involving substitutions of other members during the Committee hearings can only take place at the end of a vote, at 1 p.m. or at 6 p.m. Questions will be directed to the Minister and not to his officers. The Minister will, if he wishes his officers to answer questions, refer such questions to the officer concerned. Questions will relate to the vote under discussion and not to matters of policy. By that I mean I do not want second reading type speeches or grievance debates taking place during this Committee's hearings.

I suggest that the member for Kavel, the Minister and I meet at 1 p.m. to arrange the time to be taken for each vote. Officers are required to be present, so if we have an indication of how long each vote will take those officers will not be unnecessarily detained. A quorum will consist of four members. Members who are not members of the Committee (and there is one sitting on the back bench at the moment) may be acknowledged by the Chair and given an opportunity to ask a question. However, I suggest that Opposition members wishing to do this confer with the member for Kavel first. If I am advised by him that they wish to ask a question I will see that they are provided with an opportunity to do so.

It is my intention to allow the member for Kavel to make a short opening statement and, so long as it relates to mines and energy matters, he may say what he wishes. I will then give the Minister an opportunity to reply. I suggest that these opening statements be limited to not more than 15 minutes. After those speeches are completed I will ask the Minister to introduce his officers and the member for Kavel may ask the first question. He will be allowed three questions. It has been my habit, also, to allow supplementary questions, when necessary. The questioning will then pass from members on one side of the Committee to members on the other.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It is an unexpected pleasure to have a quarter of an hour to put a few things on the record that I would certainly like to say; that is, the major Opposition Party—the Liberal Party—is particularly concerned with what is happening in the area encompassed by mines and energy in South Australia. When we were in Government it was one of the areas in which there was an unprecedented level of activity to the benefit of all South Australians. It is with a great deal of concern that we view

some of the activities, or lack of activity, in this area. I will mention some of them.

We were particularly concerned to see the Honeymoon and Beverley projects halted in their tracks. After the Honeymoon venturers had spent \$10 million, had a pilot plant built and were ready to start operation, they were told that they could not go ahead. Likewise, we were concerned when the same fate befell Beverley, which, I understand, represented an investment of about \$500 million over the life of that project in this State. If that had been some kind of secondary industry development it would have been hailed as an enormous development, but it was stopped in its tracks.

We were pleased that the Government seemed to have sorted out its policy so that the Roxby Downs development could go ahead, which made all the more puzzling to us its decision in relation to these lesser ventures. Nonetheless, we are concerned at the moment in relation to the policy on Roxby Downs because obviously that mine has no future if the companies cannot write export contracts well into the next century. If we look at what is happening at Ranger in the Northern Territory, and if the proposition is that they be denied further contracts and that they be phased out, then obviously Roxby Downs will have the same fate if the same policy stands. I understand that it will not be decided for a month. This has all caused very great concern to the Liberal Party, which was in office when some of these major developments were coming to fruition and which fought hard to get them.

We are also particularly concerned about the future of uranium enrichment in this country and in this State. The former Dunstan Government set up the committee in 1973 (from memory); the Liberal Government in 1979 strengthened the committee somewhat and carried on that initiative. We got to the stage where the Federal group UEGA had recommended the technology to be used, which was the Urenco technology—the consortium of British, German and Dutch. It was narrowed down to two States: South Australia and Queensland. In my view, South Australia had it in the bag if we pursued sensible policies and continued negotiations with that consortium, which knew us well and was certainly interested in this State. So, it is a great concern to us to read that the policy of the Government is such that we hear statements that there is no need for that in South Australia. The fact is that the conversion and enrichment is about the safest part of the uranium cycle anyway. So, we are particularly interested to see what will happen there.

The other area that I want to mentioned in my introductory remarks relates to energy and gas supplies for this State. My top priority as Minister of Mines and Energy in Government was to ensure that we had adequate supplies of energy, particularly in relation to overcoming a problem with the natural gas supplies. We were well down the track in terms of legal advice, and the options available to us to rationalise the 1987 contracts, and that effort seems to have died in the hole. We certainly have not heard anything during the 10 or 11 months of the present Government as to what the state of those negotiations was. There is no more pressing problem, in my judgment, than that we rationalise those contracts which sell gas to New South Wales until 2006, whereas ours terminate in 1987, and we have not been able to find sufficient reserves even to fulfil the Sydney contracts.

The other problem of which we were acutely aware involved the price of gas. The Adelaide contracts which were negotiated during the life of the Dunstan Administration dictate that, if agreement is not reached in relation to price, the producers are entitled to ask for a price increase every year. If agreement is not then reached an arbitrator is appointed. If the producers and the State (in this case, the

Pipelines Authority is charged with control of the negotiations on behalf of the State) do not reach agreement, they can ask a Supreme Court judge to appoint an arbitrator. In 1982 agreement was not reached. Justice Roma Mitchell appointed the Hon. Mr Lucas from Queensland, a retired judge, as arbitrator and on 9 September 1982 he came down with an arbitration dictating an increase in gas prices of 80 per cent. It was a legally binding judgment, and the only grounds on which it could be challenged were that he made a mistake in law. To get some strength to our arm in law, or to give strength to the Pipelines Authority, a challenge was made to the Supreme Court. That gas price is retrospective to the beginning of the year. Producers were granted an 80 per cent increase to the beginning of January 1982. The Sydney negotiators were far smarter. If they do not reach agreement they appoint an arbitrator each. The price increase is not retrospective and each contract is for three years. Such contracts are much smarter and better. The Liberal Government was acutely aware that Sydney negotiators would delay their arbitration as long as they could to delay the price rise and that it would be for three years; and there was the possibility that their arbitrator, because they chose one each, would come up with a different figure from the arbitrator from Queensland, who was arbitrating for us.

We obtained legal advice that it was possible to equalise those prices and we obtained Crown Law opinion to this effect. Indeed, we were well down the track in terms of equalising those prices and any difference in price, any extra paid by New South Wales, would flow to the South Australian Treasury to the benefit of taxpayers in this State. About three weeks ago the Premier stated that he hoped to have—there were several options—the matter settled. The Opposition is interested to know what is the Government's stand. The only way that we will come to grips with this problem is to stand up and take on the New South Wales Premier and see that Sydney pays the same price for its gas as we do. I believe the means are there. These are all matters of concern to us.

The other matter that I wish to refer to is the operation of the land rights legislation. The clear memory of the then negotiators, the Government team and I as team leader, was that there would be no excessive demands made over and above those normally applying in regard to the right to explore Pitjantjatjara land. In the event, more than \$2 million was demanded by the negotiators for a proposition by B.H.P. to spend \$30 million exploring Pitjantjatjara land. After a year of protracted negotiations with representatives of the Aborigines, lawyers and anthropologists, the company withdrew and now that money is used, I understand, for oil drilling off-shore China. Some members of the Committee might be aware of recent television advertisements wherein B.H.P. is saying what it is doing for Australia by drilling off-shore China. That money could have been spent in South Australia if agreement could have been reached on a sensible accommodation for oil exploration in that part of the State.

The former Liberal Government would not resile from the fact that those minerals and that wealth belonged to the Crown—everyone in the State—and that reasonable compensation would be paid to the Aboriginal community. It appears to us that the present Government is unable or is not disposed to grasp problems firmly and make decisions when they need to be made, and that is promptly. These matters are of much concern to the Opposition. Thank you, Mr Chairman, for the opportunity to make an opening statement. It was a welcome and unexpected pleasure.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I suppose one suitable way of beginning would be to refer to the Deputy Leader's concluding remarks. He said that the Government does not appear to be able to take decisions when they need to be

taken, and so on. I point out that my Party has been in Government for something like 11 months, while the Deputy Leader's Party held the reins for three years and did nothing, really, to resolve some of the problems that he just mentioned in relation to future gas supplies for South Australia. In fact, the Deputy Leader came into this Chamber today and said that negotiations were, to use his own words, 'well down the track'. The actual detail or specification of what 'well down the track' means is now available to me as the present Minister of Mines and Energy, because I am in a position to have read the files and have access to the officers concerned who were involved in some of the negotiations, including the legal officers mentioned by the honourable member.

I note, for example, that the Deputy Leader said that he had taken legal advice, to the effect that it was possible to equalise the prices paid for gas in New South Wales and South Australia. One might muse on the possibility that that might be something on which the Trade Practices Act could have a bearing because, being Commonwealth law, I understand that it is superior. It is almost as a matter of whimsy that I introduce that aspect because, clearly, the Deputy Leader seemed not to give any consideration to those sorts of factors that must be considered.

The Deputy Leader also stated, as I have just said, that it is not very difficult to equalise the prices. He went on to point out that an additional charge might have to be paid in New South Wales to achieve that. One could be pardoned for asking, if that were such a simple course to follow, why that course was not followed in relation to the gas price when the Deputy Leader was Minister, when the price being paid in New South Wales was less than that being paid in South Australia.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That was an arbitration decision.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Even prior to arbitration. The honourable member is trying to hang something on the arbitration system to excuse something which he did not do but which he says the present Government is not doing now, even though the situation is not dissimilar. I point out to the honourable member that, if one rushed willy-nilly into the course that he proposes, it would be reasonable to suggest that in New South Wales they might not then be very amenable to entering into gas sharing arrangements with this State, and this is, as the honourable member pointed out, another of the problems facing this State. I can only assume that that is a kind of justification for the honourable member's own failure to come to grips with the problems, which are very difficult and I make no bones about that. I am suggesting that, contrary to what the honourable member said. It is a matter not just of sailing in and shooting from the hip but of trying to examine all aspects of the conundrum to see whether that which is equitable in this matter can be agreed. Obviously, that is the first course to follow: to try to get an agreement in relation to price and in relation to gas sharing.

The second point that I would like to make regarding pricing is that the honourable member outlined how the New South Wales arbitration system came into being and the way that it is carried out, that is, that it is under South Australian law. That law provides for a 28-day appeal period. I point out that the appeal period is only just elapsing now, yet the honourable member suggested that we should have fixed it already. Obviously, if, for example, A.G.L. or the producers were going to lodge an appeal they would be entitled to have their appeal time transpire before any precipitate action took place in relation to requests from the Government.

I will leave that matter with the following remarks. Regarding future gas supplies for both New South Wales

and South Australia, in simple terms, according to information and analysis of the Cooper Basin area generally, there are proven, probable and estimated reserves of about 5 200 petajoules (and I have rounded off those figures in only the last digit or so). The total gas required to supply New South Wales and South Australia, taking into account all the existing contracts, the future contracts, the petrochemical plant, and so on, is 5 150 petajoules (also in round figures). So on the face of it there is sufficient gas *in situ*, which has already been found, which is likely to be found, and which could possibly be found to meet the requirements and needs of both the major customer States.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: From 1987?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: After 1987, through to the period for which contracts have already been written in relation to New South Wales and for further supply to South Australia. Those figures are from a South Australian Oil and Gas Corporation analysis of the situation, which I believe dates from the time of the previous Minister, just prior to the recent election. I believe that that is a far better way in which to view the situation, because there are so many bits of paper with various people's estimates in terms of petajoules, cubic metres, billion cubic feet, and so on, and it is an extremely difficult area to bring to ground. I am sure that the former Minister will agree that the penchant of some people in the oil and gas field for using units of the quantities of gas that are different to those referred to by some other parties in the matter has not helped the situation. The Government and I as the Minister are very concerned about the present price situation.

I would agree that the former Minister was faced with a difficult situation in 1982, after the South Australian arbitration came into being, and I have no quarrel with the way in which he attempted to solve that dilemma, particularly bearing in mind that it was an election period. I can understand the thinking that might have applied, but I believe that it was wrong thinking to tie the price in this State for three years when, as the honourable member stated, an arbitration was in the offing. It would seem to me that there was at least the possibility of negotiating with the producers in regard to a shorter term, with even the right to go to a further agreement.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The honourable member can say that, because he was on the spot, as it were, and I was not. However, I have had nearly 12 months exposure to all the parties concerned, including PASA and the legal officers, and I have had the opportunity to read some of the documentation. I do not intend to flaunt or produce that documentation, because much of it is confidential, but I am entitled to form impressions from that exposure. There is no doubt in my mind that that was at least a possible other course, and it might well have been worth fighting for. No-one, not even the former Minister, can resile from the fact that he was the one who negotiated the prices that he now asks this Government to fix. That is the key issue. I suggest that, in hindsight, the honourable member might also agree that perhaps he could have tried some other negotiation, bearing in mind that he was faced with an election situation (and I will say no more about that).

In the event, that was not done and the State is left paying a higher price at the moment than New South Wales pays. Yet we now have the honourable member asking, 'Why aren't you fixing it? Do something about it.' I do not believe that I need say any more about this matter. I believe that what I have put before the Committee illustrates that the former Minister is not really fair dinkum when he takes that line. What he perhaps ought to be doing (because this problem still exists—a problem he had three years to solve and did not solve), is joining with the Government to ensure

that this matter does not become a political football. There are plenty of other areas where we can trade insults and score political points. However, when talking about a matter as vital to the future of every South Australian as is this one, what is needed is a little more coolheadedness and a little less shooting from the hip.

I will refer briefly to the earlier remarks made by the honourable member when he talked about his concern about the 'lack of activity' (those are his words, not mine) in relation to uranium in South Australia. First, in some obscure way the honourable member tried to claim credit for Honeymoon, Beverley and Roxby Downs as if they were all projects that came into being during the time of the previous Government. The Deputy Leader knows better than that! He knows they are all matters that were at various stages of consideration when the election was called. At that election the Labor Party's policy was clearly enunciated to the people of South Australia, that policy being one of full support for Roxby Downs and an examination on the merits of any other uranium project in South Australia. That examination of the merits of projects was carried out in respect of Honeymoon and Beverley and a decision taken. So, apparently we can take the decisions that the former Minister says we are not able to take.

The reasons reached for the refusal to allow the Honeymoon and Beverley projects to proceed were made public. Those reasons have never been successfully contested, except in a political sense (and even then not successfully), and no technical arguments have been advanced by anybody in relation to the reasons for not allowing these projects to proceed. I am referring particularly to sluice mining *in situ*. It is not an exact science and not a perfect mining operation. It has a number of attributes which have been recognised in recent years, but there are also problems inherent in the process—problems that have become more widely known in the United States to the extent that at least in one State no further permits are being issued for such projects at this time.

All this information can be readily obtained by members who are interested in obtaining it so that they may know the facts of the matter. I think that, on reflection, the member for Kavel will realise that the Government's position in relation to uranium is perfectly clear. Since this Government came to office there has been progress at Roxby Downs. Those matters required to occur at given times in relation to the Roxby Downs indenture have occurred. Difficulties have been encountered and the Government has taken active steps to redress such problems which were caused by the previous Government in relation to Aborigines in the area. It has now provided finance and an opportunity for a proper survey of the area to be carried out, something which ought to have been done earlier. However, that is enough of that.

I conclude by saying that this Committee, the Parliament and the people of South Australia need have no concern about the role of the Department of Mines and Energy in South Australia during this Government's term of office, nor during its further terms in office. Let there be no doubt about that. This Government will ensure maximum utilisation of South Australia's resources for the benefit of South Australian citizens.

Mines and Energy, \$13 200 000

Witness:

The Hon. R.G. Payne, Minister of Mines and Energy.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K. Johns, Director-General, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr M. Whinnen, Director, Administration and Finance, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr W. Boucaut, Chief Geologist, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr P. Hill, Director of Mining, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr D.K. Lock, Acting Principal Engineer, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr T.R. Watts, Director, Oil, Gas and Coal Division, Department of Mines and Energy.

Dr M.J. Messenger, Director, Energy Division, Department of Mines and Energy.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I know that I have had my say, but I must add that I have no argument with the Minister's statement that we have good officers in this department. Anything that I say will be a criticism not of those officers but of the Government's policy and of the fact that this Minister does not listen often enough.

I turn first to the line 'Geological Survey of South Australia' and to questions of uranium enrichment. There is no longer a special line for uranium enrichment, which is now being funded under this line and not the administration line. Members will remember that the city of Port Pirie was particularly interested in the uranium conservation industry, and a study into that industry was proposed. It is well past the time that that committee should have reported on the study. I know nothing of that report.

Also, I ask what is happening in relation to the uranium enrichment committee. It is being funded by a couple of obscure lines. I want to know what it is up to and why the Government is wasting taxpayers' funds on this committee if it thinks that a uranium enrichment facility in this country is unnecessary. I am glad that the committee is continuing, but I cannot understand the thinking of a Government which says that it does not want uranium enrichment in this country but which continues to spend South Australian resources to keep that committee going. Are we likely to see an annual report from that committee?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Deputy Leader asked what stage the uranium enrichment conversion study has reached. It has reached a stage where, at a meeting of the uranium conversion joint venturers group, it was decided that there would be an approximate 12-month period during which only minimum activity would take place. That decision was taken by the group, which consists of Broken Hill Associated Smelters, which has a 35 per cent interest; British Nuclear Fuels, which has a 30 per cent interest; Roxby Management Services, which has a 30 per cent interest; and the South Australian Government, which has only a 5 per cent interest.

The decision of the group was that in the ensuing 12 months there is not likely to be a requirement for active work on the part of the group, and I received that information only within the past seven or eight days (I am speaking from memory). I think that the honourable member went on to ask, if we had got some expenditure on this, why we are wasting our money since we have a policy which is troubling him. First, I cannot understand why he wants to have two bob each way all the time. He is exhorting us to get into the uranium act in every direction possible and he has said that again already today, but then, when we are providing expenditure on it, he asks why we are doing that.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I cannot understand your hypocrisy.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There is no hypocrisy in this at all.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Eyre will have his say on the matter later. He is out of order.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Government's attitude on this matter relates directly to its policy. Members of the Opposition quite commonly get up in the House—as distinct from in the Committees—and delight in reading from our policy on all sorts of matters. They do not seem to have time to read any of their own books, or perhaps they do not have any, because their policy seems to be somewhat variable from time to time. But, when they do that, one would have thought that at least some of it would be retained in their memories. If they had a look, they would find that the continual gathering and dissemination of accurate information is part of our policy in relation to the nuclear fuel cycle as a whole. So, clearly, there is a sensible reason behind the Government's staying and maintaining its interest in this area to the extent of the 5 per cent interest that was held.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Does the Government intend to make public the report of the Uranium Enrichment Committee, as has been the practice in recent years? The committee has been well advanced in terms of negotiations with Urenco for the establishment of the facility here. The Minister is going on with nonsense in relation to gathering information: the Government has been gathering information since 1973 to the stage where there is a concrete proposal which could be put to Urenco if both the State and Federal Governments could sort themselves out in relation to their policy. The Liberal Party's policy certainly has not changed in relation to this, but the Labor Party has continued to vacillate. What I want to know is whether the Government intends to make that committee's report public.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Government does not have the report of the Uranium Enrichment Committee available to it yet. I do not know what the Deputy Leader was going on about—that it is overdue or whatever. All that I can say to him in relation to that matter is that Sir Ben Dickinson, who heads the Enrichment Committee, indicated to me only recently that he expects to have the report finalised in December of this year. So, I would assume that that answers the Deputy Leader's question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I want to pursue a number of other matters there, but I will leave that for the moment. While we are talking about reports, when can we anticipate that the report of the Department of Mines and Energy will be available?

The CHAIRMAN: I take it that that is a supplementary question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Yes.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not clear on what information the honourable member is seeking.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I asked when the report of the Uranium Enrichment Committee would be available. The Minister indicated that that would be in December. I am asking now when the report of Department of Mines and Energy will be available. I think that past practice was that before the report proper was printed a copy was made available to the Parliament—I think in roneoed form last year. I think it was made available before the Budget—I may be wrong on that detail—but I am certainly very interested in the annual report of the Department of Mines and Energy so that I can see what the Department has to say about the levels of activity, not in the Department, but in the mining, petroleum and energy areas in South Australia.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I thank the Deputy Leader for clarifying the matter. The report of the Department will be available in November; I do not have an exact date, but I am advised that it should be available then.

Mr GREGORY: Under 'Mining Division—Mining inspections', can the Minister tell us why this line shows a reduction in expenditure when large projects like Olympic Dam are in the development stage?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I would like to assure the honourable member that it is not really a diminution of effort in respect of that area, because high priority continues to be given to the more specialised tasks associated with large-scale underground mining such as is now taking place at Olympic Dam, and to ensure compliance with the codes of practice in respect of the mining, milling, etc., of radioactive substances. The line concerned includes the allocation for the inspectorial staff employed at Coober Pedy, Andamooka and Marla.

One matter which the honourable member may not have noticed is that the amount actually spent in 1982-83 was greater than that estimated. There is a reason for that also, because there was a substantial increase in salaries for mining engineers—and presumably some flow-on as well—in early 1982-83. If we refer to the contingencies area also, the honourable member would see that there is an improvement there, too, which would go towards meeting his requirements.

Mr GREGORY: How many occupational safety health inspections were made by the mines inspection personnel at the Olympic Dam site last year, and what is the safety record of the whole project?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will take the opportunity to introduce to the Committee Mr Peter Hill, Director of the Mining Division, and ask him to provide some information on that question.

Mr Hill: I will answer the second question first. The safety record at Olympic Dam has been reasonably good. The shaft was sunk 500 metres without a fatal accident. There were a number of minor accidents in it, but in a major construction project of this sort it is very pleasing that there was not a fatal accident. On the question of how many inspections were carried out last year, there were 15 mines inspections that involved checking of the entire mining operation and the radon ventilation and other aspects of mine safety.

Mr GREGORY: Several months ago there were press reports that the underground ventilation system had broken down in the mine, but the company continued to operate. Can you comment on the Department's role in this matter and assure the Committee that the steps the company takes in regard to monitoring are effective?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will ask Mr Hill to provide the detail on that matter. I recall the alleged incident to which the honourable member refers. As a matter of fact, I can recall being contacted from Sydney about a report of that nature. It was circulating in Sydney at that time and subsequently I contacted Mr Hill to ascertain the true situation. I am sure that he still has those facts readily on hand and I hope that he will be able to give them to the Committee.

Mr Hill: As the Minister said, there was a report in the press that the ventilation system had broken down. On investigation, this was not the case. The ventilation system at its present stage of development is fail-safe inasmuch as there are two upcast shafts, one on the eastern and one on the western end of the mine with upcast fans installed on the surface outlet of both shafts. These upcast fans draw air down the main shaft, which is the downcast airway. In this case it appears that someone was in the mine area and they observed a fan in bits on the surface. This was fairly soon after the second fan had been installed on the western ventilation shaft. In fact, the fan that appeared to be broken down was a spare fan that was on the surface for routine investigation and checking. There is a spare fan on site. If the ventilation system did break down for any reason there would still be air to the other end of the mine and the diesel

equipment would be moved to that end and work would continue. Of course, in this case it was not a breakdown but merely someone observing the fan on the surface and assuming that it was broken down because it was in bits.

Mr GREGORY: Can you assure the Committee that the mining company's monitoring system is effective?

Mr Hill: The radon measurements are carried out continually in the mine, and the company sends a monthly report to the Mines Department, and we forward a copy to the Health Commission. About a fortnight after this reporting period, when the mines inspectors and the occupational health people have had a chance to check the report, there is a meeting with company officers and any anomalies and the like are discussed. In addition to the company's monitoring the Health Commission and the Mines Department independently carry out other tests, and the equipment used by both the company and the Mines Department is calibrated against Health Commission equipment both in the field and in the laboratory to ensure that the equipment is reading correctly.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been my practice to keep a call list. If members want to call, they should signify their intention. I will now call the Deputy Leader, and on the Government side I will be next calling the member for Florey.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I would like to pursue the question of enrichment a little further. The Minister said that the uranium conversion group, which is comprised of a consortium of independent companies with some Government input, has been suspended for 12 months. One does not have to be very smart to work out why operations have been suspended—because of the uncertainty in regard to this question within the A.L.P. Companies are not in a habit of spending money on studies if they do not know whether they will be allowed to proceed. It seems from what the Minister said in regard to the South Australian Uranium Enrichment Committee that it is just puddling around and marking time. Will the Minister say what the committee is doing? The proposals considered by the committee were well advanced. The Minister well knows the enthusiasm of Sir Ben Dickinson. He would be in my office all day every day if one could allow that sort of time. Commercial studies had been done and it was simply a matter of decision-making by the Federal Government before the project could go ahead. Although the Minister has not said so, it seems that probably the Uranium Enrichment Committee is in exactly the same situation as the Uranium Conversion Committee. They have just to mark time and gather more information, the Minister says; the information has been gathered for 10 years and we are at the stage where the consortium is looking for a final answer.

The problem will be that the world will pass us by—because there is a limited demand for enrichment facilities. The demand was there and Australia could have been into it. There is no doubt about that. The companies were prepared to commit. However, by puddling along as is happening now, we could lose this industry. I want more detail from the Minister about what the committee is doing. How often does it meet, and when does it report to the Minister? What information is the committee gathering? Is it in regard to safety, because that information is well-known? I have been overseas myself and it would do the Minister much good if he could look at the type of facility planned for South Australia. What is the committee doing?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I know that it is the earnest aim of every member of Parliament that these Committees be of benefit to the people of South Australia and the working of Parliament. Most members would have something in a view along those lines, and it just amazes me, having been a member of Estimates Committees from both sides of the

fence, that we can get loose statements of the type that we have just had about the matters that the Deputy Leader refers to. First, he said that I said that activity was suspended, but I did not say that at all. Secondly, he accuses people like Sir Ben Dickinson, Bruce Webb, Ron Wilmshurst and other well known people who have given long and valuable service to various organisations in South Australia of puddling around, as if in some way that was the responsibility of the Government.

I am amazed that the member would take that line. What the member failed to mention is that the capacity for enrichment matched against the demand at the present time throughout the world—these are the sorts of things that the committee needs to look at—is such that there is an unclear pathway ahead as to whether a conversion venture, an enrichment venture, is required at this time in terms of the total world market and the demand for enriched uranium.

I say no more than that, because the committees we are talking about are in a better position to make specific technical judgments than is the member or I. It is the decision of the uranium conversion joint venture group that it does not have a high level of activity for the next 12 months.

The Government did not tell them to do anything. The Deputy Leader suggested that in some almost sinister way they had been required to do something of that nature—that is not correct at all. In relation to the enrichment committee, the Deputy Leader himself said how enthusiastic the Chairman, Sir Ben Dickinson, was. The Deputy Leader suggested to the Committee that the Chairman often called on him in his office, that he was keen, enthusiastic, and so on. That situation has not exactly changed, because Sir Ben calls on me from time to time and provides me with reports. I have already informed the Committee of his last report which stated that he expects to have the final report together in December. I do not know what else the Deputy Leader expects me to tell him in relation to that matter.

Presumably, when the Government receives the report it will look at it and something will be done or said. The activity is continuing. I know from information put before me from time to time by Sir Ben and from efforts that I have made myself with the assistance of the Department in relation to markets generally for both uranium and enriched uranium that the scene is not at all clear cut at the present time. Estimates vary. Some authorities say that there will be an improvement in demand for yellow cake from 1992. One authority suggests that that will occur perhaps before 1990 and even from 1989. All authorities tend to suggest that there will be an increasing market demand after either of those dates. However, none of them specifically says that demand will increase by a given figure. There is a note of caution in their prognostications. One can understand that situation because uranium and the nuclear fuel cycle do not exist in isolation in the world. They exist in a world where there is general caution about proceeding with almost any venture. It is not unreasonable that some of this caution has reflected itself in relation to the nuclear fuel cycle. From discussions that I have had with Sir Ben Dickinson, particularly in relation to enrichment, I believe that the report will be completed in December and that it will be a useful report containing a great deal of information. No doubt, at that time I will be in a position to provide the Deputy Leader with more information.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Obviously, the Minister does not know what he is talking about. He has provided a quite unsatisfactory answer. From what the Minister has said he does not know what the committee is doing. There was no reflection at all on the officers concerned. They are operating in a vacuum, as is the conversion committee. Where does the Minister obtain his information in relation to markets? The information provided by the Minister is

plainly untrue. I refer the Minister to the bulletins released by the joint venturers at Roxby Downs. The most recent bulletin, dated August or September, states quite clearly that companies are prepared to go out and negotiate contracts for uranium sales right now. The opportunities are there right now. The Minister has only to look at the statements made by the companies at Ranger and Jabiru. The companies want to write new contracts now, but they are precluded from doing so. For the Minister to hang his hat on the argument that a market does not exist is plainly false. If companies are prepared to write contracts now they should be allowed to do that. The problem is that the Government does not know where it is going on this question. Where does the Minister obtain his information by which he seeks to mislead the Committee?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not seek to mislead the Committee at all. I certainly did not say that it was not possible to write contracts at the moment. The Deputy Leader has something of a reputation for doing this with people's words. I repeat, I said that there is a note of caution in respect of the future of uranium marketing, whether enriched or otherwise, and whether it will be an increasing market. I did not say that it was not possible to write contracts at all. The honourable member knows that, although he did not say as much when asking his question. I put forward the view that we are in a cautionary phase.

The Deputy Leader also suggested that the joint venturers were putting out information suggesting that the market was sufficient for them to be able to enter into and organise contracts. I can only say that the South Australian Government does not have jurisdiction over the approval or otherwise in relation to the writing of contracts. That is a matter for the Federal Government. I believe that the Deputy Leader is well aware of that fact. I do not know why he is trying to suggest that I have any influence or any control over that scene. The Deputy Leader also suggested that I was trying to mislead the Committee. From my reading, from other information that I see from time to time from the Department, from periodicals and other information given to me on a confidential basis by one of the larger uranium producers in the United States (I will go no further than that and I will not identify the firm concerned, although I suspect that the Deputy Leader could guess the company's identity) I understand that the situation is exactly as I have stated. There is a cautionary phase. Some people expect the demand to rise at a certain rate. Other authorities of approximately equal status believe that there will be a slower increase, that that period will continue for some years and that a clear trend will not occur before 1991-92. I stand by that and I am not attempting to mislead the Committee.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Does the Minister support companies writing contracts for the export of yellow cake from Australia at the present time?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have no responsibility whatsoever for activity in that area outside of South Australia. My responsibility in South Australia is quite clear, as is the Government's. That has been made public many times. We support the Roxby Downs project and we support its continued existence under the terms of the indenture until it becomes an operating mine producing not only uranium but also copper, gold and silver. Of course, we support it and trust that the world market will be such that the joint venturers will be able to market the products and ensure the project's viability so that its employment opportunities will be of benefit to South Australia. I do not propose to give the Deputy Leader any answer as to my feelings in relation to the Northern Territory or Queensland. I am looking after the interests of South Australia, as I am required to do.

Mr GREGORY: How many fatal accidents have occurred in mines within South Australia? How do last year's fatal accident statistics compare with the previous five years?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Hill will provide that information.

Mr Hill: There was one fatal accident last year, and one in the previous year. Before then we had an unfortunate run of accidents, with five in the year before that, three in 1978-79 and seven in 1977-78. Even one fatal accident is not good enough. We are doing what we can to prevent accidents from occurring. The best way of doing that is by having as many mines inspections as possible, carried out by the best possible mines inspectors. We are attempting, wherever possible, to use preventative inspections rather than having to become involved in accidents.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Hill may like to further enlarge on those comments, as members of the Committee may be interested. From memory, there was an accident at the Coober Pedy opal mines last year.

Mr Hill: There was an accident last year in the opal fields, where a man fell in a shaft. Before that, there were accidents in quarries. In previous years the opal fields have been the worst area for accidents. On an accident/manshift basis, the opal fields are still the worst accident area. A number of experienced miners work in the opal fields, but some people are not sufficiently trained. Wherever possible, inspectors in the opal fields instruct people in safety procedures, and this has been successful over the past few years. More inspectors have been employed to go down the shafts to check the underground operations, and the campaign is paying off.

Mr GREGORY: Is the Roxby Management Services effort to complete the feasibility study by December 1984 on schedule, and how far has that project developed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: One could generally say, with some degree of concern, that the project is approximately on schedule in relation to the indenture. As is well known publicly, at present certain matters occupy the minds of the joint venturers in relation to the protection of Aboriginal sites which have been identified only recently both in the area of the mines and the development proposed in that vicinity and also in relation to the construction of the Borefield road.

That road is receiving publicity, but, apart from the recent blockade scene at the mine and development site, there has not been any real hold-up of work on the road, although the joint venturers have had to reschedule the way in which they would have carried out work on the road. Instead of proceeding from the southern end on a construction basis to the northern end at the Borefield, the joint venturers have constructed the road part-way from the south. There has been a problem in relation to Canegrass Swamp and equipment has been taken to the north of that area. Road work has been carried out in an area where there is no question (at least known to me) of sites being involved.

Recently, conflicting claims have been put forward by Aborigines as to who has the right to indicate sacred sites of significance, once again both in the development areas and also in regard to the road. A meeting will possibly take place at Coober Pedy in that regard today (and I choose those words because it is proposed that the meeting occur, but that does not necessarily mean that it will occur today) in regard to the right of designating areas of importance to Aboriginal heritage in that vicinity. Mr Warren and other people propose to meet today. The two tribal groups concerned are the Kokatha and the Nunkitajara.

It has been suggested that someone from the Department should attend that meeting, and I have asked Dr Colin Branch to attend to observe and listen. It was proposed that he be accompanied by Mr Elliott Dwyer, a member of the

Department of Mines and Energy who has also had some experience in these matters. It is important to note that this activity is continuing in parallel with the fact that another group of Aboriginal people have also been working in conjunction with Mr Rod Hagen, an anthropologist who has been employed by those people, with funds provided by the State Government, to carry out a survey in the area and to present a report and information about sites in the area. That report is currently with the Department of Environment and Planning heritage group. There is a kind of parallel scene. The answer I have given is qualifying to that extent. At present there is a kind of hold-up, but we are probably within a few days of resolution of the Canegrass Swamp situation.

Mr GREGORY: What work is being carried out to establish the effects of withdrawing large quantities of groundwater from the Great Artesian Basin to supply the Olympic Dam project?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Bill Boucaut from the Department will provide that information.

Mr Boucaut: The important aspect of the Olympic Dam project is water supply, and it is hoped that water can be obtained from the Great Artesian Basin. Studies to determine the availability of water have been carried out by a consultant to the joint venturers, Australian Groundwater Consultants, and this investigation is under way. The two major concerns of the Department in regard to the effect of extraction of this water are, first, the effects on the existing users and, secondly, the effects on the very important Mound Springs nearby.

It is proposed at this stage that extraction will be from two well fields, one near Bopeechee and the second to the north of that area. The one near Bopeechee will have the major effect on nearby Mound Springs. The work being carried out at the moment consists of seismic surveys to determine the shape of the basin and pump testing to determine properties of the aquifer and quantity of water available. On the basis of the result of this work we will be able to establish the effects on Mound Springs and the available quantity of water. Under the Olympic Dam indenture we were able to set quite strong management criteria on the extraction of water. It will be necessary to define the well fields under the Water Resources Act as a proclaimed area. We will also issue a special water licence to cover the amount of water that can be extracted by the joint venturers.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister refused to answer my question in relation to uranium markets and sought to hide behind his Federal colleagues who, in effect, are responsible for authorising export contracts. The Minister must realise that the Olympic Dam venture has no future if it cannot write contracts for uranium. I think that he has absorbed the point that if they cannot sell uranium the project will not go ahead. His idea of simply extracting copper and gold and selling them would mean that the project would not be viable. It is equally clear that, if the Australian Labor Party wishes to wind down Ranger, this will create a problem. He sought to suggest that I was talking about other States in this respect, but I am talking about Roxby Downs, the one uranium project that the Government now enthusiastically endorses after doing its level best to defeat the legislation in relation to it when it was in this Chamber. It should be clear to the Minister that Roxby Downs has no future if export contracts cannot be written. According to the latest bulletin they are seeking to do that at the moment. The Minister says he has no responsibility in this matter. Will he use his influence in the Australian Labor Party and the councils of that Party to ensure that companies are able to write contracts for the export of uranium from South Australia.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We are now assured that the Minister will use his influence within the Labor Party, particularly with the Federal Caucus, to ensure that uranium can be exported from this country. That is the first positive assurance of the Minister's stance that I have heard from him, and I congratulate him.

I turn now to the matter of the Honeymoon mine. The Minister made a number of statements this morning about this matter. He told the Committee that no technical reason has been advanced to negate the reasons he gave for refusing to allow the Honeymoon venture to proceed. In framing this question I observe that, quite clearly, no technical reason can be advanced because the reasons he gave were not technical. The Minister gave four reasons for his refusal: first, that there was controversy in the community in relation to uranium mining so Honeymoon could not go ahead, although Roxby Downs could; secondly, that it was a small operation, so it did not matter much if it closed down (and he should tell that to the wife of the geologist who lost his job as a direct result of that decision—also, it would not be very encouraging to small businesses in South Australia to hear that because they are small they do not matter); thirdly, that markets were not available for the product (and we canvassed this matter this morning and the Minister has come up with nothing which justifies that reasoning); and, fourthly, that the technology was new. Does the Minister disbelieve the environmental impact statement issued in relation to the Honeymoon project?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have often wondered about the origins of some of the hackneyed sayings that have appeared in our literature and language. I no longer wonder about the one called 'flogging a dead horse'. If ever one needed to understand why that saying might have come into being one has had a good example here today in the way that the Deputy Leader has not been able to get away from the fact (and I am sorry to have to take the Committee's time to state this once again) that an election was held in this State in 1982 at which the policy of the Australian Labor Party in South Australia in respect of the Roxby Downs project was clearly enunciated and a statement made that the other two projects would be examined on their merits. This Government has kept its word 100 per cent on those matters and that is what bugs the Deputy Leader, that the Government has been able to demonstrate that it has kept its word about these matters and has given all the support that has been called for until this time in relation to the Roxby Downs project. He is now trying to say that the reasons put forward after the examination carried out into the merits of the other two projects are something which do not have any status.

Let us examine those reasons. First, the Deputy Leader said (quite correctly) that we referred to the fact that there was division and controversy in the community over the question of *in situ* leaching. That is a definite fact. It is well known that there is controversy about this matter in respect of the possible harm such leaching might do to the subsurface environment, the surface environment and the permanent harm caused to groundwater. Whenever people show an underground leaching operation they seem to be very good at drawing nice, neat level lines representing strata. These lines show impervious barriers and pervious barriers as if those people know geology below the surface as an exact science (when holes are drilled only at 100, 200, or 400 metre intervals). They assume that the strata continues to be the same between any pair of drill holes, yet that is not so (and the Deputy Leader knows that). It has been these sorts of things that have led to excursion mining, which has been practised elsewhere in the world. These excursions have meant that there has been contamination of water in the mines concerned.

The Deputy Leader might say that that is all right and that there is a requirement for people to make good, that bonds can be arranged and so on so that if there are failures of that nature they can be made good. But what is the history of that scene? There are still solution mines in the United States that got into the kinds of difficulties I have talked about, difficulties which have not been made good. The State of Wyoming is no longer issuing licences for solution mining. I qualify that to the extent that this was indicated to me in a letter I received from the Governor of that State some months ago; there may have been a change since. I took the opportunity to check allegations and counter-allegations appearing in the press some time back in relation to this matter. I checked the matter out and received an answer along the lines of the answer I have just given to the Committee.

The Deputy Leader said that it was wrong of us to describe the operations concerned as small and that there ought not to be any way in which the South Australian Government can be seen even to be jeopardising (let alone on a practical basis) the progress of the Roxby Downs operation because it means a great deal to the State, and it needs every possible assistance for its future.

Quite clearly, the Commonwealth also has already indicated that approval was forthcoming at the times of which we are speaking. This is what we are talking about. When the permission to proceed was not given, the Commonwealth Government was prepared to approve Roxby Downs. It was public knowledge and the Federal election in March had been fought with the same airing of the respective policies, and the Federal Government was installed with a record majority.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What about answering the question?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am answering the question. The Deputy Leader tries to distort these matters, and I am sorry that I am again forced to put to the Committee—some members, at least, are aware of it—the true position that existed. So, we have dealt with those aspects. The Deputy Leader says that the other reason we put forward related to markets, which is the aspect to which I am referring in relation to Roxby Downs. Roxby will be a major producer. We have just had the Deputy Leader claiming that they are willing to negotiate contracts.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: No, we will allow them to negotiate. The companies want to do the job, but the Government says, 'No, you cannot.'

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not putting any barrier in front of the Roxby Downs producers as to whether or not they be allowed to negotiate contracts. I have had no requests from the joint venturers in relation to that matter. I suggest that presumably the Deputy Leader might take that little morsel to himself and try to digest it. I do not know why he is here flogging that dead horse to which I referred originally.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order from both sides!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The producers are perfectly capable of handling their own affairs in respect of that area. The other question relates to e.i.s.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What about Honeymoon? Do you believe it or disbelieve it?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have to take into account all the factors concerned, including those which were the reasons for the refusal on the Honeymoon and Beverley projects. I took into account all those factors. So did Cabinet, and the Government's decision has been announced. I do not know why the Deputy Leader does not do the decent thing and allow the animal to be decently interred rather than go on

trying to flog it to death. He has already killed it over and over.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That will be very encouraging news to the company which has that Honey-moon venture on a care and maintenance basis. The Minister is really saying that they might as well pull up their tent pegs, pull down their pilot plant which has just been completed, and leave. I ask whether the Minister is in fact telling the company to get right out—what he describes as a 'dead horse'.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: We are not telling the companies to get out. What I am describing as a dead horse is this effort of the Deputy Leader to continue to work this thing in the way that he tries. It is not a matter that ought to be handled in the way that he handles it. We have not told the companies to get out. The companies are fully aware of whatever rights they have in the matter. They are considering the offer that has been made to them with respect to retaining their interest by way of retention lease or whatever in the area. I again point out that they are not carrying on in the way in which the Deputy Leader is; they are acting as one would expect responsible people to operate.

I have had a letter from one of the joint venturers, and I will say no more than that because I steadfastly refuse, despite all the political point-scoring that was attempted by the Opposition some months ago, to make public the details which really belong between the commercial proposers and the Government, except that there has been some acceptance of the offer that has been made in these matters from the Government that the interest held by the proponents can be protected in terms of the Mining Act with lease or whatever.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We have changed grounds: it is no longer a dead horse; it is just a horse that has to stay in the stable.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has had his question. This is a supplementary question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I asked a question on the e.i.s. and after half an hour he did not answer. I simply asked a question about the dead horse. That is two questions.

Mr GROOM: Three.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What was the third? That has been ruled out. What was the third question? As a point of order, what three questions did I ask? The first was whether he disbelieved the e.i.s. The second was whether he believed it was flogging a dead horse.

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable member claims to have had only two questions. The Committee is fully aware that I came back in here, and I have marked off one on top of the other two. The honourable member will get ample opportunity; I assure him. I call on the member for Hartley.

An honourable member interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: All members will get ample opportunity. Order! I call the member for Hartley and I do not want to listen to other members on the Committee.

Mr GROOM: I turn to 'Oil and gas exploration—development staff'—on page 111 of the Estimates Papers. I notice that there is an increase of expenditure of roughly 27 per cent on the previous year. Can the Minister say to what extent this increase reflects an increase in priority in this area?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This increase, correctly described by the member for Hartley, reflects the high priority being given to the assessment and development of the State's oil, gas and coal resources. The allocation includes the allocation for the coal section which was previously included under the Resources Division, which was under the geological survey. Two senior petroleum geologists have been recruited, supporting what I have just said to the honourable member,

namely, that an increased priority is being given to this area.

Mr GROOM: Over the page, under 'Energy Division—energy policy and development—

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will have his opportunity, too.

Mr GROOM: Earlier this year the Minister announced results of a preliminary feasibility study by Sumitomo on the gasification of South Australian coal. Can the Minister outline the current status of this project?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I can certainly answer in general terms that the Sumitomo exercise was of a pilot nature and a decision has been taken to proceed to what might be described as a larger scale exercise. But, I will ask Dr Malcolm Messenger, the Director of the Energy Division, to give some more detailed information to the Committee.

Dr Messenger: Since Sumitomo visited and reported earlier this year, ongoing work has been directed towards clarifying and furthering some of the economic and technical details. At the time they visited it was seen that the Sumitomo process was quite a cost-comparable alternative to existing or potential power supplies.

I refer to the key things that had to be done. Further work had to be done on the combined cycle generation aspects, which is being done in conjunction with a number of suppliers of equipment. General Electric is one. Also, as the Minister has indicated, they are proceeding to a larger scale pilot plant, and that needed to be undertaken. This was to enable a scaling up of the plant and a minimisation of the cost of the unit. This scaling up is essential, and the establishment of a pilot plant is to be announced in some detail shortly. This will be a vital step towards the commercial furthering of the project.

We have continued in our negotiations and discussions both with equipment suppliers and with Sumitomo and others in the gasification field. It looks to be quite promising. The scale of operation that we are talking about is an increase of a scale of four, which will make far more certain the design and implementation of the larger scale plant. It is a very important step in the commercialisation of this, and it is interesting that the company is willing to commit this money and effort in what looks to be a promising process.

Mr GROOM: I refer to the line 'Energy Information Centre'. I am interested in arranging visits to the centre by students from my area. How active is the centre in regard to inquiries and visitors? What is the level of interest given by South Australian schools?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The level of interest has been maintained on a reasonably steady basis. The centre is one of those areas of the portfolio upon which priority was given prior to the last election by both the main Parties. It was in both their policy manifestos that such a centre would be established. In the event of the 1979 election, the Liberal Party came to power and set up the centre. I visited the centre when I was in Opposition and I have made a number of visits subsequently as the responsible Minister. I agree with the remarks made during the period of office of the previous Minister, who is now the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that it is an excellent operation.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The former Government did well.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Certainly, I am willing to say that the former Government in that area provided a facility, as part of the Department of Mines and Energy, of which the former Minister can justly be proud, just as I, as the current Minister, am proud of the centre on North Terrace. I commend a visit to the centre by any member of the Committee or the House to see how it operates. I refer to the zeal and

enthusiasm of its staff, as well as their efficiency in providing a service to the public on a basis of non-bias or neutrality in regard to the performance of appliances and the like. Information is given on a very strictly factual and non-partisan basis. Indeed, I have obtained feedback from my constituents who have visited the centre and who have said how helpful they found the advice offered. Apart from that, the exhibits presented are shown in an excellent manner.

I understand from a recent inquiry, partly related to the recent Question on Notice, that the number of telephone inquiries made of the centre has been increasing. I presume that this is a sign of the economic times in regard to the cost of energy, because people are making more inquiries in that area. School visits have also increased. Certainly, I am sure that the member would have no difficulty in arranging a visit, providing he allows sufficient time for adequate notice in respect of required dates, because the centre has a full schedule of activities.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister did not answer my question about the e.i.s. for Honeymoon. He knows that the Department for Environment and Planning went at length into the question of groundwater pollution because, as he suggests, that matter has been worrying people; no-one denies that. Really, the Minister has put that e.i.s. aside when he has tried to advance any environmental impairment of the project. Why does the Minister believe that the venturers should not pull down their pilot plant? He is saying that it is not a dead horse. Why should they not tear it down unless he believes that there is a chance that the A.L.P. will change its uranium mining policy?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I wonder at times at the honourable member's motives but he is entitled to them. I am not required in this instance to tell the joint venturers involved in Honeymoon to pull their gear down, or however the member describes it. The Deputy Leader is attempting to put words into my mouth. Currently, the Honeymoon joint venturers have the opportunity of leaving it together, if that is their wish. That is entirely within their own province and their responsibility to their shareholders. That area is not my concern, nor am I required to issue an instruction to them, as the member suggests. They have been offered an opportunity in respect of that plant, buildings, and so on, in terms of the Mining Act. That is a perfectly sensible and logical step by the Government.

The offer has been made and, as I have already indicated to the member, I understand that at least one of the parties concerned about those projects has indicated the degree of acceptance of that offer having been given. The Government announced at the time of the decision about which the member has been raving, that it would consider the matter, and the venturers concerned, as I have tried to explain, have apparently decided to avail themselves of that opportunity. Negotiations with departmental officers and me as Minister will take place if required in respect of the area that they wish to retain. Perhaps that is fair and equitable—perhaps that is what is bugging the Deputy Leader. I cannot figure out what he is on about. Both the Government and I have tried to be fair in this area.

The member made another reference to the e.i.s., presumably suggesting that it must always be followed by perfect happenings. That is not so. I have already told the Committee of the situation in the United States, where factors similar to the e.i.s. are required under Federal and State law. Licensing is required from the beginning in regard to aquifers. Base line studies, and the like, must be established, and, although all those steps were taken in respect of those underground mines, things went wrong.

To me, that is not unusual. I tried to indicate to the Deputy Leader that the Government took those factors into account along with the e.i.s. in relation to making a decision

on Honeymoon and Beverley, but he seems to find that unreasonable. I cannot understand his position at all. The Deputy Leader seems to be saying that we must live on a little island and take no notice of experience from elsewhere. That approach is not even sensible. I do not believe that the Deputy Leader's question requires any further answer.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister is making some fairly wild statements, thrashing around and not answering the question. He said earlier that exploration at Honeymoon occurred during the life of a Labor Government. The Minister is also seeking some credit for the Roxby development. He said that these things occurred during the life of a previous Labor Government, and indeed they did. The Minister is now suggesting in his non-answer to my last question that the Government was being fair and equitable by stating that the project could not go ahead. However, the Honeymoon venturers were encouraged during the life of a previous Labor Government to explore and develop and spend \$10 million on a pilot plant. The Honeymoon venturers were ready to start and were told nothing to the contrary at the last election, as the Minister claimed. The then Leader of the Opposition specifically did not answer the question in relation to Honeymoon and Beverley; he said 'Wait and see.' We knew perfectly well the status of the project, as did the then Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister is suggesting that the Government's decision is fair and reasonable, the company concerned having spent \$10 million, only to be informed that it could not proceed. Let him try that on the people who were thrown out of work because of that decision. Let him try the fair and equitable line in that area. That is absolute garbage. In view of his statement that the venturers should not pull down the pilot plant, will the Minister use his best endeavours to see that the Honeymoon project gets off the ground?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am getting sick of having words put into my mouth in Parliament and in this Committee by the honourable member who just spoke. I did not say any of the things that he just claimed. I want every person who reads the *Hansard* report of these proceedings to note that fact. I am absolutely sick of the Deputy Leader's attitude in respect of this matter. I do not know what he seeks to gain in attributing to me things that I have not said. I did not say the things that he just put forward at all. I said that I have endeavoured to be fair and equitable in an area where the company has some interests and where the Government, in the same way, agreed that certain rights could be offered to the proponents. The proponents are not running around yelling and screaming like the Deputy Leader is.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Eyre will come to order.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In my opinion the proponents are acting in a responsible manner. In at least one case, as I have already said, they have indicated that they propose to avail themselves of the offer made. I have never suggested that they pull up their stakes, or whatever the Deputy Leader claimed. An offer has been made under the auspices of the Government through me as Minister, and it is being considered. Apparently, the offer is to be taken up by one of the venturers. That is the position.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has still not answered my question, although we eventually received an answer, in relation to exports, to the effect that he would use his best endeavours. That is very encouraging. The Minister will use his best endeavours to convince his Federal colleagues to allow people who are interested in uranium mining to write export contracts. That is very encouraging. At least the Minister is showing some degree of reality in telling us where he stands. However, a lot of people do not know what to do in relation to the Honeymoon project.

The companies concerned do not know what to do. If there is no chance of that project proceeding, the companies will pull down their plant and salvage what they can, even though they have already spent \$10 million. The people who have been thrown out of work are waiting to get their jobs back. At the moment, there appears to be no chance that the project will start up again.

Will the Minister use his best endeavours to see that the Honeymoon project proceeds, and will he ensure that the changes in policy required for it to proceed are made? Unfortunately, I received a negative response to that question earlier, so I suppose there is little point in asking the same question again. I ask the Minister straight out whether he will use his best endeavours (as he did in relation to export licences) in relation to the Honeymoon mine. To suggest that Honeymoon is jeopardising the Roxby project is plainly untrue. That is what the Minister said to this Committee, but it is plainly untrue. Honeymoon is not jeopardising Roxby, and the Minister knows that.

To suggest that the e.i.s. is deficient is a complete slur on this State's Department of Environment and Planning. The question of groundwater was studied at great length. When we come to the heart of the matter, we see that the problem with developments of this type is the A.L.P.'s hypocritical and immoral uranium policy. That does not overstate the Labor Party's stance: it is a hypocritical and immoral uranium policy. I ask the Minister whether he will use his best endeavours to see that the A.L.P. policy is changed so that these developments can proceed.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Once again, I wish to correct the false information that is being put forward by the Deputy Leader in relation to what I have and have not said. Anyone reading *Hansard* can check what I have said, and I invite them to do that. The Deputy Leader asked me to use my influence within the Federal Party in relation to the writing of export contracts for Roxby Downs. I said that I would do that.

In answer to a previous question, I explained to the Deputy Leader that I have no responsibility in respect of any other State or whatever. I said that my responsibility is to South Australia. I am sure that the Committee will recall that earlier exchange. In relation to the writing of export contracts and whether or not I will use whatever influence I have, that will occur in relation to Roxby Downs.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: No others?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That is correct.

Mrs APPLEBY: I refer to page 111 of the Estimates of Payments and the Energy Division. I notice that the amount proposed for the Energy Information Centre for 1983-84 is a little less than the allocation for 1982-83. Is the staffing level to be reduced marginally or is there some other explanation?

Mr Whinnen: The reduction shown in the proposed allocation for salaries in the Energy Division is indicative, I suppose, of the reduction shown in some of the salaries in other Divisions. It is not a specific staffing reduction in the Division. It is a spread of the savings or the reduction in expenditure over all the Divisions because of a reduction in the overall staffing of the Department. At the beginning of the year we are not exactly sure where the staffing reduction will occur in the Department. It is, therefore, a process of spreading the reduction or attrition over the whole Department. Therefore, when we get down to a small Division such as the Energy Information Centre, which has three staff members, a small reduction shows up. It is an accounting spread of a reduction in the cost of the salaries expected for the year, not a specific reduction in that one area.

Mrs APPLEBY: I refer to the Energy Information Centre. Constituents often seek information in relation to life support systems operated within their own homes. Costing figures

are sometimes relevant for them in relation to increased billing for electricity, and so on.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think that the honourable member is probably referring to the cost of electricity that must be met in respect of people who are required for their very life support to have the use of certain lifesaving or life prolonging machines, such as dialysis machines which are used by people with kidney problems. I understand that there is also a problem in relation to some people who unfortunately are what are called 'high' paraplegics (and that is an unfortunate label to apply to people who have had a severe misfortune). It is often necessary for these people to live in an air-conditioned environment for most of the time, outside the normal limits, when those of us who are more fortunate would not want to use an air-conditioner. Some of those people require air-conditioning because it has an improved effect on their body fluids and for other medical reasons, on which I am not competent to comment.

Since we came into office, I have approached both the State Minister in respect to concessions in these areas (and the matter is under review by the Minister of Community Welfare) and the Federal Minister, because it seems to me that this matter should be tackled on a national basis rather than in regard to sufferers in South Australia. Therefore, I wrote originally to Senator Grimes and, because of the way these matters sometimes go, I believe that Senator Grimes has done a bit of referring. Just as I was unclear about who might have responsibility at the Federal level and so I contacted the welfare area, Senator Grimes has cross-referred the matter to the Federal Minister for Health. I understand that the matter will be examined at the Federal level as well as at the State level. I propose to follow up this issue, because, as I am sure all members of the Committee would agree, energy use involving gas or electricity that is required for life support and continuance should be considered on a national basis. In the crudest terms, people should not die because they cannot afford the cost of power. The honourable member can rest assured that I will continue to try to improve the situation.

[*Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2 p.m.*]

Mr GUNN: I turn first to the policy statement which was issued by the Labor Party at the time of the last election and which dealt with the economic development of the State. In one section it states, 'The State's economic base must be broadened and opportunities provided,' and goes on at length to explain some of the Labor Party's aims. There has already been debate on this Government's decision to kill the Honeymoon project. Next, there was the unfortunate attitude adopted by the people advising the Pitjantjatjara in the North-West. It appears that, in a State such as South Australia, we should be encouraging mineral exploration. There is no doubt that there are large areas of the State which mining companies would like to explore, particularly the Officer Basin area.

As I understand, at the time the Pitjantjatjara legislation was passed it was made very clear that there would be no payments whatever at the exploration stage of any project, and careful consideration was given to the legislation so that no under-the-lap payments would be made. Also, certain undertakings were given. However, the legislation provided for certain financial arrangements to apply at the time of mining. The Minister would be well aware that the exploration stage is the risk stage of a project—the stage at which companies spend much money without guarantee of a return. Will the Minister say what action the Government is taking to ensure that the problems that arose with the Haematite arrangements will not recur? On the first occasion \$2 million was requested as payment to allow Haematite to carry out

exploration which could have resulted in an expenditure of \$30 million. It appears from what I have been told that representatives of the Aboriginal people—not Aborigines but the arrogant advisers who are trying to build empires for themselves—are the ones causing all the trouble.

From time to time Aboriginal communities indicate that they want economic independence, something we would all like them to achieve. One of the ways in which they can achieve that independence is for exploration and mining to take place on their lands on a proper basis. Can the Minister give an assurance that he and the Government are doing everything necessary to ensure that an occurrence similar to that involving Haematite does not occur in future, and is the Government encouraging other companies to explore on Pitjantjatjara lands? I believe that the Haematite, Honey-moon and Beverley decisions have had a detrimental effect on future investment in mining in South Australia. People are aware of the dramatic downturn in exploration in the Northern Territory because of its land rights legislation. I hope that we do not see a situation where large sections of this State are tied up and where mining companies have conditions imposed upon them that make it impossible for them to explore these areas.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The matter to which the honourable member refers is certainly cause for concern. As Minister responsible, I have given this matter my best endeavours until this point in an effort to find some way out of the impasse in which we find ourselves at the moment. I suppose that it would be fair for me to point out to the Committee that the member for Eyre and I were on the Select Committee associated with that land rights legislation, so one could argue that both of us did not do as good a job as we should have done in foreseeing what would happen after this legislation was passed. I think that the honourable member is fair enough to accept part of the responsibility for that, as I am attempting to do. He would recall that, subsequent to the passage of this legislation, during the examination of the definition I said from my position in Opposition that there should be a closer examination of the legislation in conjunction with an examination of the Mining Act. It did not occur to me that, in relation to payments for mining activities as defined in that legislation, definitions already existed for the words 'exploration activity'. I suppose I am saying that Parliamentarians are human beings, too, and did not foresee (not did Parliamentary counsel, legal advisers and others) where that legislation was going to lead us.

The member has also asked me to give an assurance that a similar occurrence will not take place. I cannot give any such assurance because wherever land rights legislation is involved with development or mining activity, quite rightly, the legislation provides for an attitude to be adopted by the Aboriginal community involved. I know that the member for Eyre would support that approach, as he supported it when a member of the Select Committee that I have mentioned. In other words, the Aborigines are entitled to have their viewpoint and to have their rights considered in these matters. I cannot give an assurance that there will not be a similar occurrence. However, there has been discussion relating to this matter with elders and one of the advisers from the Pitjantjatjara lands. I cannot say that I found that I found that adviser arrogant as the member for Eyre has found some of the people in that job. I found the adviser to be reasonable and he listened to the viewpoints expressed by the people at that discussion (including more than one Minister) as to what was reasonable and fair in the circumstances. I think that what happened was that there was an agreement to go away and consider the position.

I hasten to add that that was some months ago and that there has not been much progress since. There was a suggestion at that meeting that it would be useful to have a

seminar attended by Aboriginal community leaders from the Pitjantjatjara and possibly from other areas who could put their viewpoint on this matter and on what future legislation ought to contain. This presumed that such a seminar would be held in Adelaide at A.M.F., or somewhere like that, where there could be useful exchange of views. I stress the fact that there has been some reasonableness in discussions, despite the member for Eyre's reference to 'arrogant advisers'. There has not been a great deal of progress beyond that point.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: There won't be, unless you grasp the nettle.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The former Minister had the opportunity to grasp that nettle, but I do not think that he actually grasped it.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I said it wasn't clear—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: If the Deputy Leader would allow me to finish, he might find that I had further information that has a bearing on the member for Eyre's question. I have endeavoured to ascertain whether we can reopen negotiations about the area concerned in the Officer Basin. I have had discussions with representatives of Comalco who have managed to operate on the border of the Pitjantjatjara lands, which fact I think is known to the member for Eyre. They have been able to conduct their activities looking for soda ash, and sensible arrangements were able to be entered into in respect of the land just outside the border of the defined lands.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: They don't have to pay \$2 million.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is correct to say that \$2 million will not be paid in these circumstances. Perhaps, without entering into a discussion on the merits of \$2 million or otherwise, it is reasonable to point out that which I have just mentioned: that one area of the land is land to which the Pitjantjatjara people have title by virtue of the action of the previous Government, of which the Deputy Leader was a member. It may well be, as occurs in white society, that people have a different viewpoint about land to which they hold the title than about land to which they do not hold the title.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I also acknowledge that certainly an unintentional error crept into the legislation which has allowed the present position to arise. I am not suggesting that it is anybody's fault.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The fault is that you did not stick to what we agreed.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I believe that the member for Eyre would understand me when I say that I do not want to be any more specific in this Committee than to say that I have had discussions and I am endeavouring to get a re-entry arrangement to occur in relation to the lands.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Haematite?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Haematite would be a possibility, but I am suggesting that the South Australian Oil and Gas Corporation could be a means—a farm-in, or whatever one wants to call it—to get access into the area on terms which are fair to all concerned, and which would go some way towards opening up the area for future exploration, provided, of course, that it is in accordance with the wishes of the Pitjantjatjara people. I do not want to be any more specific than that. I trust that the honourable member will accept that explanation.

Mr GUNN: I thank the Minister for the information. I am pleased that he also recognises that there was a mistake in the legislation, or that it has been interpreted in a manner other than the way in which the Select Committee thought that it would be. We all know that from time to time Parliament makes mistakes and that the best course of

action, as soon as that mistake is realised, is that Parliament should bring in amending legislation. It would appear to me, having looked at this matter ever since the dispute arose, that the simplest way to effectively remedy the problem is to amend the Act to make the exploration provisions of the Mining Act and the Petroleum Act apply to the Pitjantjatjara legislation. That will clearly overcome the problem.

It will place the Pitjantjatjara people at no less advantage than any other group in the community. They will have the protection of those Acts, but it will also allow proper exploration to take place in that part of South Australia, which will benefit the people who hold the title and also have some long-term benefits for all the citizens of this State. Is the Minister prepared to consider that course of action, which would appear to me and to others who have looked at it to be the simplest way of rectifying the problem, bearing in mind that it was my clear understanding at the time of that Select Committee—and, like the Minister, it was the second Select Committee in which we have been involved on this subject—that the clear provisions of the Mining Act and the Petroleum Act in relation to exploration did apply and the other financial arrangements applied only until the time of the mining, when we would be dealing with an agreement and an indenture and those royalty provisions and other things would apply?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think that the member for Eyre is exhibiting a high degree of afterthought intelligence, from which I would like to distinguish myself. I would not suggest that I was entirely clear on the Select Committee as to what would apply in respect of exploration and/or mining activity on the lands other than to the extent that it clearly would be a matter for negotiation, and the legislation provides for that.

I suggest that there is a fair amount of hindsight in the honourable member's percipience at the moment that he had a clear-cut version of how it would work. I do not believe that we spent much time canvassing that area on the Committee. We had a lot of other concerns that took up a good deal of our time; for example, Mintabie, and the problem of that opal area in respect of the lands. I am sure that the member would agree.

He has suggested that a way out of this matter is that time-honoured method belonging to all Parliaments—that we just race in with an amendment. On the face of it, that seems reasonable to say, provided that we do not consider the name of the legislation that we are dealing with and how it came into being. It would be fair to say that the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act was quarried almost over seven years. It came into being with the involvement of two successive Governments. It evolved from the early aspirations of the Pitjantjatjara people, as expressed years before the legislation appeared in the ultimate form, which was brought into the House by the previous Liberal Government and passed. I had direct involvement with the earlier Labor Party legislation, which began under the auspices of the former Premier, Don Dunstan. I made, in company with Mr Dunstan, visits to all of the communities in the area concerned. I also made visits on my own as Minister of Community Welfare, and the tremendous interest in the proposed legislation has never been equalled in this State in relation to the group of people concerned.

As the member knows, there were many meetings at which every available Aboriginal person of Pitjantjatjara descent in the given area came from miles just to discuss and listen to explanations of what was proposed, to put their views, and so on. To suggest now that all one needs to do in order to fix the matter is just to slip in an amendment, begs the question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: In what way?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The proper method, surely. If it took so much consultation, consensus and prior agreement and hard, hammered-out negotiation to get the legislation which became acceptable to both the Pitjantjatjara people and the then Government and even, as it were, to the Opposition to the extent that they were participants in a Select Committee and so on, and to say that one arbitrarily changes that legislation—

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It does not do it arbitrarily; it gives effect to what was agreed, as everybody understood. The Minister has admitted that.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have not admitted any such thing. I have said that this was an area that had not—now, I am speaking with hindsight, having accused the member for Eyre of that—received the degree of study that it ought to have received at that time. That was, as I have explained, due to other problem areas.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Technical error.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes, it might even be argued—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Deputy Leader not to interject.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am helping him.

The CHAIRMAN: I also ask the Minister not to answer those interjections. We will get on with the Committee work a lot better.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I apologise for not being able to resist replying to interjections. To sum up, an amendment is a possibility, and that is what some of the discussions to which I have referred were about. The result of the discussions to date is that there has not been general agreement from the Pitjantjatjara people that we can just go ahead with such an amendment. It would be quite wrong to expect good results to flow from something which is not an agreed amendment. It might be possible technically to race in and put an amendment through, but, if it is done in what appears to be a unilateral way, to expect that one would get a different pattern of behaviour than has occurred until now might be a wishful pattern of thinking.

Mr GUNN: I think that I am a pretty reasonable fellow, and I have tried to be reasonable in this matter, but at the time of the Select Committee and prior to it there were lengthy and extensive negotiations on this matter which clearly arrived at a decision, from my understanding and involvement in it—and it took some time—that there would be no payments of any kind in any circumstances except at the stage of mining. The actual splitting of the royalties between the State, the local community and the Aboriginal community at large was quite a radical proposal.

That was the agreement and, if Parliament from time to time has made a mistake, it ought to be rectified. It is no good our trying to get out of doing something, even if a few people make much noise; we have to bear in mind the overall welfare of the people of the State. The Minister referred to that earlier this morning. Unless we are willing to amend this legislation, in my judgment and based on what I have been told by the mining companies and the mining industry in general, they are not prepared in any circumstances to make any front-end payments for mining in that part of South Australia, or anywhere in Australia.

If we are not to bite the bullet and cut it out now, if the situation is allowed to continue, it could have a detrimental effect, not only on the mining industry in South Australia but across the nation. Land rights legislation in South Australia is looked upon as the model to be used across Australia. Our legislation has been held up as the shining example of how Governments should go in regard to land rights legislation for Aborigines. Unless we rectify the problems quickly, we could have inflicted upon the whole mining industry in Australia a problem that will take much sorting out. It is not just a matter of my wanting to grandstand here today:

this matter is of the most serious nature in my judgment. Since the matter has come to my notice I have tried to be reasonable and responsible. The Minister and the Government have a responsibility to amend the Act quickly.

It will have little or no detrimental effect on the Aboriginal communities in that area. Indeed, I do not believe that local Aboriginal communities are greatly perturbed, although some other people are quite devious and have other motives. They want to build their own little empires and would be opposed to my suggested amendment. Whatever happens in the long term, there will have to be an amendment of this nature included in the legislation if those people will ever have the opportunities to reap the benefits from the minerals in those areas.

I ask the Minister and his colleagues to give the matter serious consideration as quickly as possible, otherwise we will have a repeat of the haematite arrangements, where I have been told the companies have gone to other parts of the world. Unfortunately, I am advised that in other parts of the world Governments are keen for mining companies to spend money under much more generous conditions than apply in Australia, especially in regard to tax holidays and the like.

Mr GREGORY: Come on! You are exaggerating.

Mr GUNN: I am making the point to the Minister. The member for Florey will have the opportunity of giving his vast knowledge and understanding at length. We will wait with interest to hear what he has to say. The honourable member ought to address himself to those problems because many of the people he claims to represent would be looking forward to getting employment in the mining industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Eyre should ask his question and not indulge in a debate across the Chamber. Both members are out of order.

Mr GUNN: Mr Chairman, I was provoked. As I said earlier, I have tried to be reasonable in this case, but I was provoked and had no alternative but to correct the honourable member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I, too, want to be reasonable. However, if Standing Orders are flouted, I will be tough.

Mr GUNN: I have made the point, and I await the Minister's reply with interest.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I make it clear that I accept the point that the honourable member has advanced that, in this case, he is being moderate and reasonable. I note that he said, 'in this case', so apparently he believes that at other times he is not moderate or reasonable. However, I do not want to labour that point any longer. I accept his *bona fides* in respect of the way in which he approaches the matter, and I hope that he will accept mine when I try to explain to him that I do not believe that it is a matter for arbitrary action by the Government and that the preferred course of action, if there is to be any such amendment, is one that is agreed to by the Pitjantjatjara people and, for that matter, has some agreement similarly from the Chamber and others interested.

It is unfortunate that this scene in South Australia seems to have become a cause celebre for the Australian Mining Industry Council. Everyone seems to have got on the band waggon so that either it all succeeds or it all founders. I know the honourable member is aware of overtones of that. If the proponents were to be somewhat less firm in what amounts may or may not be paid there may have been some progress, but I believe that they were prevailed on by the industry as a whole not to go beyond a certain point. The honourable member believes that there is something in what I have said. There really does not seem to be much difference between what he proposes should happen and what I am trying to achieve, except the way in which we propose to do it. I can only say to him that I will continue

to proceed on the path that I have chosen; that is, to try to get some prior agreement before any amendment is brought to the House.

Mr HAMILTON: I direct the Minister's attention to the issue raised in this morning's *Advertiser* on page 7 in the article headed 'Trees, who trusts the Trust?' The report accuses the Electricity Trust of being irresponsible in the manner in which trees are felled and trimmed in the Adelaide Hills. I believe that the Trust has acted responsibly in this regard, particularly with the summer season almost imminent. Will the Minister comment on the article that appeared in this morning's *Advertiser* and, more specifically, the role of the Trust in regard to the powerlines in that area?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: One could argue that the article in question is under an energy line or the like, but it seemed that the article was a reasonably balanced approach to this question. For example, I thought it was of some significance that the Trust was happy for officers to be spoken to about the matter. Certainly, I can say that I have had some knowledge of some recent concern expressed in the Mount Barker area in regard to tree trimming and, in one case, a felling that took place in regard to a line of 11 000 volts.

The information that I would like to put before the Committee, as advised to me, is that the Trust has a set of guidelines or a code of practice in regard to tree trimming and the protection necessary for powerlines. I do not want to canvass this area in too specific a detail because the Committee will be aware that questions related to this topic also relate to Ash Wednesday fires which are now the subject of coronial and other inquiries. However, it is fair to talk generally as we have done so far. I have seen the guidelines which take into account the matters that one would expect, including the movement of trees, and I have been surprised to see the sorts of movements that are possible for trees in high winds, as suggested in this morning's article.

I am informed that the instructions issued to the groups of men who do the trimming are fairly explicit. I also believe that there is a high degree of supervision in this area to ensure that the instructions and the guidelines in relation to tree trimming are carried out. I know that it must be a dilemma for the Trust, having concern for the protection of their powerlines, that it also protects the consumer. The consumer does not worry too much. A consumer expects to be able to throw a switch and receive a power supply and not be told 'bad luck, a tree has knocked down the powerline'. It is certainly a difficult area for the Trust.

All the information that I have received suggests that the Trust is doing very well in a particularly difficult area. That does not mean that a mistake could not occur. I refer to a specific example at Mount Barker. A person in that area telephoned me at home and said that a tree had been cut down and that others had been trimmed on the opposite side of the road to the powerlines. The person wanted to know why that action was taken, because the powerlines were a road width away. I have not had time to visit the road in question, but I have seen a photograph of it. It is not exactly like Anzac Highway in terms of width. There is enough room to allow two cars to pass and the rest is verge. A reasonably sized gum tree or whatever is quite likely to encroach across the road and be in the vicinity of the powerlines. In that case, I think the trimming that was done was justified and it was carried out in as good a manner as was possible.

I am pleasantly surprised that the guidelines in relation to tree trimming take into account the aesthetics of a tree and how it needs to be treated. They cannot be hacked about willy-nilly. The trimming needs to allow them to maintain their growth in a reasonably symmetrical manner, and so on. Up to date, I believe that the Trust has been doing as good a job as is possible in the circumstances. I

know that there has been liaison between the Trust and the Department of Environment and Planning in relation to the preparation of guidelines.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am slightly inclined towards the interjection from the member for Eyre (although I know that I am not supposed to take any notice of interjections) and the view that he expresses. I suppose the Trust often has to take into account the continuity of supply to a consumer, possible safety aspects, and a desire to leave the environment in as natural a state as possible. The Trust has to make decisions. To my knowledge, I believe that the Trust has taken decisions in the best manner possible.

Mr HAMILTON: In the same article Professor Schwerdtfeger refers to undergrounding powerlines. He states in the article that he does not believe that the undergrounding of powerlines is as expensive as the Trust implies. He also states:

We have been told things that are not supported. I would be happy if the Trust can demonstrate that my thesis is nonsense. I believe I am speaking for a consensus of people.

Can the Minister comment on that statement by Professor Schwerdtfeger and also on the likely effect upon other members of the community in relation to undergrounding and the effect that it would have on electricity bills in South Australia, and particularly in metropolitan Adelaide?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: One is occasionally tempted to be not as responsible as one is required to be, but I will not change. I have seen that part of the article cited by the honourable member. It occurred to me that Professor Schwerdtfeger said that \$500 was not a bad sort of figure (or unreasonable, or something like that) in order to have an underground service to his home. A lot of people in my district would find an expenditure of \$500 for that service extremely difficult to meet. In fact, some people are finding it difficult to obtain a home, let alone \$500 for undergrounding. Sometimes I wonder why people say the things that they do. However, we live in a democracy and the Professor is entitled to the view that he has put forward.

My understanding of the costs associated with undergrounding mains is that there would have to be an increase in electricity charges to cover it, if that became a major activity of the Trust for which no direct charge was made. In fact, such an announcement was made in Victoria by the Minister, David White. He said that if they had to resort to undergrounding there would be considerable increases in the cost of electricity. My background in electronics occurred 13 years ago. At that time it was an uncommon practice to underground extremely high voltage power lines. However, that may now be possible. It was a most uncommon practice 13 years ago. I imagine that, if technology has advanced that far, the cost has advanced in step with it. One can only assume that the Professor was referring to undergrounding in the vicinity of the home. Of course, a committee operates under the auspices of the Trust, and I think it is known as the Underground Reticulation Committee. The present Chairman happens to be a former member of the House of Assembly and a former Minister of the State, Geoff Virgo.

Mr HAMILTON: A good bloke to boot.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes, and a good bloke to boot. I know that he would apply a degree of reasonableness in relation to judgments in that regard. The Trust has been helpful in relation to the undergrounding of reticulation necessary in the historical areas of Port Adelaide. I am sure that the member for Albert Park would be aware of those areas (although that precinct is not in his district), and I am sure that you are also aware of those areas, Mr Chairman. To re-establish and present those areas of Port Adelaide in an historical setting it was necessary that the powerlines

and poles, which are sometimes described as unsightly, be done away with. The Underground Reticulation Committee looked at that as a proposition and in conjunction with ETSA (which is required to meet the cost to some degree) and the council, which was also contributing, an amicable arrangement was arrived at to the benefit of visitors. People visiting the area will be able to view the area unmarred, as some people would put it, by poles and unsightly powerlines.

Mr HAMILTON: I wish to follow up the Minister's remarks about the chairmanship of the committee by the previous Minister of Transport, Mr Virgo. Why is it that not all applications are forwarded to that committee? Why is it that only some applications are directed to the committee and not others?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Sooner or later in this game one can always bet on the fact that one will be shot down. I was just shot down. I cannot say why some applications go to the committee and some do not. I undertake to make the necessary inquiries and I will try to obtain an answer.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I return to the subject that we were dealing with before the luncheon adjournment. The Minister has been somewhat equivocal about what the Honeymoon venturers should do with their pilot plant. One moment one thinks that the Minister is suggesting that they should leave it there, but when one puts that to him the Minister says he did not say that but that the venturers must make up their own minds.

It is perfectly obvious that the plant has no future at all unless uranium mining is permitted at Honeymoon. Will the Minister use his influence within the Labor Party councils to see that the Honeymoon mine can go ahead?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will not give any such assurance to the Deputy Leader, but I will assure him that I will continue, in Labor Party councils or circles, to try to ensure that the best and most up-to-date information about the technology associated with *in situ* leach mining is freely available within those organs of the Party so that proper evaluation can be made of the state of the art.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We are not getting very far with the Minister in this regard. He keeps hanging his hat on a different peg to try to justify the quite disgraceful closure of that operation. Therefore, the member for Todd will continue this line of questioning.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the member for Florey.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Todd would like to ask questions in this regard.

The CHAIRMAN: If members of the Committee want to use the system whereby three questions are asked from each side, and not three questions being asked by each member, that is all right, but that has not been the practice in the past. Later in the evening when only one member on each side wants to ask a question, that system could be adopted, but in the meantime I believe that it would be better if each member asked three questions. However, if a member wants to ask only one or two questions, we will revert to the other side.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Chairman, I understood that there would be three questions from each side.

The CHAIRMAN: We will not have any arguments about this matter. I have outlined the practice that has operated and also the position to which we have reverted when a member may want to ask only one or two questions, or perhaps a supplementary question. I do not mind if we adopt the practice suggested by the honourable member: I am flexible. If there is to be any argument, I will call the member for Todd.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: If the previous practice is to be followed, I will ask further questions. I understood that the member for Todd wished to ask a supplementary

question on the Honeymoon project, and that is why I suggested that he be given the call. If the honourable member is not given the call, I will ask further questions.

The CHAIRMAN: I will allow the member for Todd to ask the two questions on the Honeymoon topic that were forfeited by the Hon. Mr Goldsworthy.

Mr ASHENDEN: My questions relate to Honeymoon. I am sure that the Minister would agree that unemployment is a major problem in South Australia. In fact, the member for Newland made great play in the *North-East Leader* of the fact that the Federal Government has provided \$500 000 to the Corporation of the City of Tea Tree Gully to implement a scheme to employ a couple of hundred people for a few weeks. That was claimed to be a major achievement. The point I take up is that the Minister has made a decision that has cost hundreds of permanent, full-time jobs in South Australia. Had Honeymoon and Beverley proceeded, hundreds of jobs would have been created, and, even at the present stage reached in the development, a number of jobs were involved.

Two of my constituents have approached me in this regard. One was a young lady who was widowed a couple of years ago with a young child. She was fulfilling a secretarial and clerical position with one of those companies, but she was dismissed because the company was having to wind down its operations. Further, a man who was employed as a labourer at Honeymoon came to see me. He has two children, and he is the sole income-earner for that family, but he has also been dismissed. Neither of those two constituents has been able to find another job to date.

I am sure that the Minister would agree that a few jobs for a few weeks are of very small comfort for those two constituents. If I have been approached by two constituents, I am sure that many other people have lost jobs already because of the Minister's decision. Not only have potential jobs been lost but also actual jobs are being lost, through a decision made by a Government that purports to be interested in creating employment. Will the Minister advise the Committee—

Mr Hamilton interjecting:

Mr ASHENDEN: That is an interesting interjection. Again, I invite the honourable member to make those statements in public. I would be delighted to take action, because I have not made any such statement.

Mr HAMILTON: Not much you haven't!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr ASHENDEN: The honourable member can say that outside. I am delighted for him to do so. That statement is totally false.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I will not allow interjections across the Chamber, and the questioner may not answer an interjection by saying that he is delighted to answer that sort of interjection.

Mr ASHENDEN: Thank you, Mr Chairman, I have almost finished making the point. I have given two specific examples where people have lost their job because of a deliberate decision by this Government to prevent the mining of uranium in two instances, whereas it is quite happy (as the Premier has stated in Japan) to say that it is wholeheartedly behind the Roxby Downs decision. These people can see no logic in what the Government has done. Will the Minister provide an answer that I can take back to my constituents that would satisfy them, because they believe that the Government's words are very hollow indeed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, the member for Todd was quite correct in saying that the Government is concerned about unemployment, employment, the creation of employment in South Australia, and providing jobs. He also correctly announced that the Federal Government recognises that unemployment is at a very high level in Australia at present

and that funding is necessary at least to create a number of jobs where previously they did not exist.

Mr ASHENDEN: Only for a few weeks.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My understanding is that there are certain guidelines in relation to the funding being provided under the Commonwealth employment scheme that require a certain duration of employment, in excess of a few weeks I think (although I do not claim to be an expert on the guidelines). The honourable member asked whether I could help him out in explaining to his constituents what has happened. That would seem to be somewhat superfluous. Let me assure this Committee that there is no levity in this matter on my part. I knew and understood when the Government's decision was announced there was a possibility that some people who were to be employed would not be employed on that project. It was made quite clear from the information originally provided by the proponents that some people might not be employed if changes to the project occurred.

The company concerned in the Honeymoon venture maintained some contact with me on the matter, and I did what I could to see whether some alternative employment could be found. In fact, the company, at my request, supplied me with a list of names and qualifications of people who were to be displaced so that they could be considered when a vacancy in the Public Service or the State structure occurred. Nevertheless, the undertaking given in this matter before the election was that the projects would be examined on their merits.

Their merits were examined, the Government took a decision and the projects were not given approval to proceed. Actual employment, as distinct from potential employment, was then in the hands of the proponents, who decided to discontinue the employment of some of the people concerned, as outlined by the honourable member. I have sympathy for those who are unemployed, whether for this or for any other reason, but I do not think that there is anything else that I can say to the member to put to those people than has already been announced in this matter. Our general concern relating to that project (Honeymoon, in this case) led to the Government taking the decision it did not to allow that project to proceed.

Mr ASHENDEN: My questions involve matters put to me by two constituents who are totally confused about this matter. For example, both of them asked me why the Government had determined that Honeymoon and Beverley, which are mining a mineral, namely, uranium, that is also being mined at Roxby Downs, were not allowed to proceed. The Roxby Downs mine has the complete support of the present Government, even though it did not give that support when in Opposition but rather did all that it could to defeat the Roxby Downs legislation when it came before the Parliament. However, now it has seen the light and is supportive of Roxby Downs (thank goodness for South Australia's sake). They say that that mine will be producing a considerable amount of uranium.

The mines at Honeymoon and Beverley would also have been producing uranium, and obviously the companies developing those projects thought that there were markets for them, too. My constituents cannot understand why this Government has stopped them working while it has allowed another mine producing an identical product to continue. It was also put to me by one constituent that he cannot understand why this Government has stopped developments which would have brought millions of dollars of royalties into the State coffers thus leading to a reduction in State taxation.

These were projects that would have created meaningful, permanent jobs and which would have been good for the economy of South Australia, unlike job creation schemes, which are a drain on taxpayers pockets. Permanent jobs

would have created money for South Australia and for the Federal Government. My constituents cannot understand why the Government has taken this decision. Will the Minister enlighten the Committee as to why those decisions were taken, because I cannot see any logic for them, and nor can my constituents?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I can only suggest to the honourable member that he did not listen to earlier answers that were given in relation to this matter. The projects were considered on merit and, because of the factors contained in information supplied to the proponents at the time and made public in the House by way of a Ministerial statement, a decision was taken not to proceed with them. One small matter the honourable member has overlooked is that, although the end product is the same at both locations, when one considers Beverley in relation to Roxby Downs one realises that the method of production is different; this was one of the reasons leading to the Government's taking the decision that it took.

Mr GREGORY: There has been considerable publicity concerning extraction of large amounts of groundwater to dewater the proposed Kingston coalfield. Will such extractions seriously affect the groundwaters in the South-East?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This is an involved and interesting technical matter. I will ask Mr Boucaut to supply that information.

Mr Boucaut: Before coal mining can proceed at Kingston, it is essential that the area be dewatered. This relates both to the ability of heavy earthmoving equipment to function in the open pit and to the stability of the batters in the open cut. The coal mine is designed to proceed in two stages—a south mine followed by a north mine. A study into the groundwater problems of the area was carried out by a consultant to Western Mining, Australian Groundwater Consultants; it has been carrying out tests to determine the properties of the aquifer system in the area. Two aquifers are involved: a water table aquifer, which lies above the coal, and a pressure aquifer which underlies the coal. That is a subglacial aquifer.

The consultants have determined that the quantity of water to be extracted from these aquifers in order to allow dewatering is about 120 megalitres a day for each of the pits. There will be a period when dewatering occurs at both pits and when the process of excavation of one pit draws to a close and the next pit starts. At that time the extraction will be of the order of 220 megalitres a day, so quite a large quantity of water is to be pumped from the area.

The results of the work done by the consultants have been used in carrying out computer studies on the effects of dewatering on the two aquifer systems. The South Australian Government (the E. & W.S. and the Department of Mines and Energy) has carried out similar computer studies. Results have been of the same order as those obtained by Australian Groundwater Consultants. Results to date indicate that there will be no measurable effect on the water resources of the South-East. There will be measurable effects on a local basis on the area immediately surrounding each of the mines. Present indications, based on available information, suggest that those measurable effects will not extend more than about 20 kilometres from each of the mines.

The effect of these draw-downs will be twofold: first, there will be some effect on pastures because of the lowering of the water table; and, secondly, there will be an effect on the bores sunk in that area to supply domestic and stock water as well as on irrigation supplies for local farmers. It has been mentioned that the Kingston town water supply, which is a ground water supply from the pressure aquifer, might also be effected. Results to date show that this will not occur. The company has stated in its environmental impact statement that it is prepared to provide compensation

to those farmers affected by those draw downs, either by provision of an alternative water supply or possibly by buying their properties.

Mr GREGORY: The project requires backfilling of the holes. Will the Minister indicate whether or not after backfilling the aquifer will continue as it had prior to mining or whether the aquifers will be disturbed.

Mr Boucaut: As coal mining proceeds, the open cut behind the working face will be backfilled and the material used in the backfilling will be of an impermeable nature. There will be no mixing of the water from the pressure aquifer with the water table aquifer.

At the conclusion of the mining an area will be left open, and the final form of this will be the lake. Beneath the coal is a clay layer, which is also fairly impermeable or watertight. In the area of this lake it will be ensured that this clay layer is left intact. So, even though it might have the appearance of an open body of water, the interaction with the underlying pressure aquifer will be minimal. Of course, there will be some flow up through the clay, although it may be slow, but the effect of this will be to improve the quality of the water in the watertable aquifer as the water in the underlying pressure aquifer is of better quality than the surface waters.

Mr GREGORY: What is the level of mineral exploration in this State?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The present level of mineral exploration in South Australia is somewhat down on the previous years. It would be fair to say, however, that it is not out of kilter with the general down-turn which has occurred throughout Australia in the various States. There has been a suggestion in the past that the decision relating to Honeymoon and Beverley, for example, which has received a fair airing today, would have the effect of driving exploration away from South Australia and that there would be some sort of mass exodus or withdrawal from the local scene on that basis. The information that I have to hand does not suggest that that has occurred.

There has been a discontinuance of a licence area by one small company in respect of uranium search, but that, to my knowledge, is the only one that has occurred. These things relate to a number of other factors, anyway. The level of exploration obviously relates to the economic scene. It can also relate to the prospectivity of an area within a State, or to changes in thinking in relation to the geology, structure, and so on, of the rocks in the earth's crust in a given area.

South Australia seems to have become fairly popular at the moment in the search for diamonds, for example. One of the things that I do as Minister—and the previous Minister did, too—is to sign the various licences and leases. It has been something of a surprise to me to see the increasing level of interest in taking out exploration licences which indicate diamonds as a primary search target, anyway, on the form part of the licence. There is also an ongoing search for lead zinc ore, and members are aware of the hope and the need to find an alternative source of feedstock for the smelters at Port Pirie so that that activity, which contains a very large employment component, can continue. In summary, without providing specific details—which I can certainly undertake to obtain for the honourable member at a later time—there has been something of a down-turn. I suggest that it is approximately in step with what has occurred throughout Australia because of the economic scene.

Mr LEWIS: My question is in some part a follow-up to what the member for Florey has been talking about. Can the Minister tell me and the Committee whether mining will proceed at Kingston and, if the answer is 'Yes', when?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The honourable member is certainly direct in his questions. The questions of whether and when mining will proceed at Kingston are yet to be decided. Certain steps are normally gone through in these matters.

As I understand it, an e.i.s. is now in being and is in the process of assessment by the Department of Environment and Planning. Subsequent to that, of course, there would be other steps, even if there were not other factors which entered into the matter, not the least of which is, of course, the fact that a committee is looking at matters which have a direct relationship to the Kingston coal deposit.

The Stewart Committee, which was set up by this Government, had amongst its tasks, as well as trying to ascertain to the best degree of accuracy possible for approximately a 13-year period the amount of electrical energy which this State would need to provide, the task of examining the ways in which any such additional electrical demand ought to be provided. Amongst the terms of reference that it was given were terms such as these, which pointed out that the committee was asked to give every regard to the maximum use of local resources already in South Australia. This is obviously one of those resources.

My understanding is that a presentation has already been made to the Stewart Committee by the proponents of Kingston—Western Mining—and also that a further submission will be made to the Stewart Committee in relation to some of the matters about which Mr Boucaut has just been speaking regarding watering and/or dewatering arrangements which will prevail. I think that that presentation will occur within a few days. So, that is where the matter lies at the moment. Presumably, on the completion of the e.i.s. assessment phases, and so on, in relation to any advice that will be forthcoming to the Government from the Stewart Committee Report, the Government will make a decision on the matters for which the honourable member has requested answers.

Mr LEWIS: Will the Minister say whether he believes that the information and the expressed views that Mr Boucaut has put to the Committee are factual? If so (if he believes them to be and supports them as such), does the Government support them as such?

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand the honourable member to ask whether Mr Boucaut's replies were factual?

Mr LEWIS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: You are casting reflections and saying that he is not giving an accurate reply?

Mr LEWIS: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I take strong exception to your casting reflections on one of the officers.

Mr LEWIS: No, I am casting reflections not on the officer but merely on the accuracy of his information.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer the question to the Minister.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is a sad thing when remarks such as those which have just been made by the member for Mallee are made. I accept that he may not mean them in the way that they sound. He really asked me to comment on the veracity of one of my officers, which is disgraceful. I say quite clearly and unequivocally that I have every confidence in the officers of my Department, including those who are not here today, that they would give the best information that they have available, to the limits of their knowledge, in response to any matter raised in this Chamber of the Parliament, to the Stewart Committee or anywhere else.

I hasten to assure the member that at the present time it is not at all a matter of whether I believe my officer. I believe Mr Boucaut, in putting forward that information, has my full confidence, in that he put it in a way that I trust: he has given me the best information available to his knowledge, and he has given that information to the Committee as well.

The CHAIRMAN: I allowed the question to be answered by the Minister because the member for Mallee chose his words loosely. I ask him to be more considerate in future

in the terms that he uses. They should not cast a reflection on any officer.

Mr LEWIS: Does the Minister share the view of Mr Boucaut, who said it was not a matter of whether the mine would go ahead or whether the e.i.s. prepared by the experts for the mining company was valid? His expressed opinion was that it was so. The remarks he made indicated his belief that the mine would proceed. I wanted to know whether that was official Government policy, and that is why I asked the Minister what I did. Mr Boucaut may well believe the e.i.s. and the material that it contains to be valid.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: On a point of order, Mr Chairman, the member's statement is an offence to officers who do not really have the right of reply, and I am amazed at the member. I know what he is trying to say, but he is not saying it very well.

The CHAIRMAN: That is not a point of order. I think the member for Mallee is trying to explain that he did not intend to cast a reflection on Mr Boucaut. I do not think that is the case at all, but I ask the member to be more careful in making assumptions and not to reflect on an officer.

Mr LEWIS: I do not seek in any way at all to impugn the professional integrity of Mr Boucaut. I merely sought to determine whether it was Government policy to proceed with the mine and, if that was so, when it would be proceeded with, and whether the Minister accepted the view expressed in the company's e.i.s. that there would be no damage to the underground aquifer in any significant way when other experts who were hired by the District Council of Lacedpede and who additionally and elsewhere prepared a response to the e.i.s. found the contrary to be so. As the evidence before the committee at present reads, without my raising this point, it appears that there is no scientifically valid question as to the accuracy of the information contained in the mining company's e.i.s. In fact, to my certain knowledge the contrary is true: there is valid scientific doubt about the accuracy of the material and the propositions contained in the company's e.i.s.

Those differences have not been resolved by scientists, and I would not want this Committee to be led into thinking that the last word on the prospect of mining the lignite deposit near Kingston in the South-East was contained in the company's e.i.s. In my certain knowledge, in discussion with scientists involved in the preparation of the response, and with the people who sponsored it, until those matters of scientific difference have been settled, any decision to proceed with the Kingston mine at this time would have to be a political decision—a decision taken in spite of the difference in scientific opinion and not because of it.

That was the reason for my first drawing attention to Mr Boucaut's remarks, quite properly quoting the substance of the e.i.s. and drawing the Committee's attention, in addition to that point, to the necessity for the Committee to understand whether the Government intended to proceed with that mine in the present state of irresolution; that is, where there is no resolution of those scientific matters. My questions to the Minister sought to do that and, having now explained the reason for putting the question to the Committee, I ask whether the Minister is willing to accept that what I have asked him is contained in my first two questions and to respond to it.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My answer contains a number of points. The first point is that the Underground Waters Technical Advisory Committee is comprised of members from the E. & W.S. Department and the Department of Mines and Energy. It is chaired by an officer of the E. & W.S. Department, Mr Killick. That committee would give technical advice to the Government on matters such as those which concern the member. The Stewart Committee, to

which I have already adverted, is made up (its members will forgive me for saying this) of fairly hard-headed persons in the community. Mr Doug Stewart has had 20 years experience and has been involved in coal control at the State Electricity Commission in Victoria as well as having held a number of other appointments with fairly large companies in the mining industry. The committee also includes Mr Hugh Hudson, who needs no introduction; Mr Ron Barnes, State Under Treasurer, who also needs no further introduction; and Mr Leon Sykes, the Deputy General Manager of ETSA. I know that the honourable member can have confidence in the ability of persons such as these and others whom I have not mentioned, because the committee has the power to co-opt and it does co-opt from time to time in order to make a hard-headed assessment of the claims and counter-claims that may be advanced in respect of a possible development. I already indicated to the member that submissions would be made to the Stewart Committee on the water aspects as well.

The only other thing that I need to draw to the member's attention is that the Stewart Committee will also be looking at Sedan, Lochiel, Wintinna, Lock, and Wakefield. The maximum use of local resources, if possible, was one of the requirements contained in the committee's terms of reference. The committee has been working hard, adhering to its terms of reference and doing an excellent job. I am certain of that because of the reports coming to me from time to time from people who have been before the committee.

The member need have no qualms that the Government, as he put it, is ready to make a decision on whether or not the Kingston project will proceed. It was my understanding when Mr Boucaut was talking that he was outlining what would be the technical arrangement in respect of the waters concerned—both if the upper aquifer and the pressure aquifer—during a mining operation. It was not so much that it was starting tomorrow, as was hinted at and that it was something which had already been confirmed. He was outlining the technical parameters in relation to the kinds of operation in the proposal put forward by Western Mining.

Mr LEWIS: Mr Chairman, does that count as my third question?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope that the member for Mallee is not casting reflections on the Chair to the effect that it is being biased or anything like that. Does the honourable member claim that one of his questions was a supplementary question?

Mr LEWIS: Mr Chairman, I thought the last occasion on which I spoke was in explanation of my two previous questions, so that the Minister and the Committee would understand what I was seeking.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Chairman, I recall hearing the honourable member say that he was seeking an amplification of the information that I had given him in answer to his two previous questions, although it became a sort of third question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Chairman, I seek clarification in relation to the asking of only three questions. Do I understand that you suggested a moment ago that a member could ask three questions and further supplementary questions?

The CHAIRMAN: Not really: only if the supplementary question seeks to clarify information given by the Minister, or if the question allows the Minister to supplement his reply. I will allow the member for Mallee to ask a further question.

Mr LEWIS: I refer again to the question of coal mines and, in particular, the proposed mine at Kingston. Has the Minister or any of his officers been given access to the information upon which a mathematical model was devel-

oped for the dewatering procedures necessary for both the upper aquifer and incidental perched aquifers in the upper water table and on the Dilwyn aquifer in that locality? If they have been given that information, will the Minister make it available to the public, because it was not included in the e.i.s.? Those members of the general public who sought that information were refused it by the company and the company's consultants. If the Minister has received that information, is he satisfied with the apparent inconsistencies between the porosity ratings alleged and inferred by the Department of Mines and Energy in other places, compared with those that would need to be within the parameters of those used in the preparation of the model and the ultimate impact that mining would have on those aquifers?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: To the best of my knowledge, I was given no such mathematical model or information as to the type of mathematical model. I am almost tempted to say 'Thank God I was not' because I might not have been able to understand it. It is interesting to hear the kinds of arguments that have been put forward by the Deputy Leader. His arguments do not seem to apply in the case of Honeymoon, where we might have been doing underground solution mining. I am not trying to pin down the Deputy Leader too hard. It is only in this other area where there are suspicions about the porosity of layers, the integrity of the strata, and so on. Mr Boucaut may have more information.

Mr Boucaut: The Department of Mines and Energy has been working in the South-East for many years, probably in the order of 25 years, carrying out investigations into underground water resources in the area. As a result, we have a deal of information about the properties of the aquifer systems in the South-East. In addition, Western Mining and its consultant, Australian Groundwater Consultants, carried out specific work in the area of the proposed coal mine. The results that they obtained are similar to the results we obtained elsewhere in the South-East. Therefore, we believe that the figures obtained are of the correct order. Western Mining used its own information plus information that we provided to produce its own mathematical or computer model. Our Department and the Engineering and Water Supply Department, as I mentioned before, have carried out similar modelling exercises, the results of which were similar.

Mr HAMILTON: One of the specific targets for 1983-84 is to continue the South-East confined aquifer observation well network and assess the hydrogeology of the Blue Lake, Mount Gambier. Will the Minister, as a Mount Gambier born and bred lad, say where the water that continually fills that lake comes from?

Members interjecting:

Mr HAMILTON: The ex-Minister may well laugh, but I suggest that many people and many visitors to Mount Gambier are interested in this matter, as indeed I am. Why does the Blue Lake change colour in about October or November each year? I recall many years ago as a student at the Mount Gambier High School a demonstration involving a fern taken from the side of the Valley Lake which, after being placed in a cup of that water, turned the water a darker shade of blue.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: As I was the Minister of Water Resources for only four months in 1979, it probably behoves me to be fairly careful in any answers I put forward to the questions raised by the honourable member. However, I am willing to say that I can recall being told at that time that there was a firming up of the belief that the famous blue colour of the lake was related to calcium carbonate precipitation, and I will stop there. I also recall being told at that time that work was under way, and no doubt the

yellow book refers to that continuing effort in the South-East. It has been suggested that the water in the lake comes from more than one aquifer, but I will halt my answer there. Mr Boucaut may be able to provide further and more detailed information on the matters raised.

Mr Boucaut: Mount Gambier, as is much of the South-East, including the Kingston coal field, is on two aquifer systems—a watertable aquifer in the Gambier limestone and a deeper pressure aquifer in the Dilwyn formation. In the vicinity of the Mount Gambier township this aquifer system is interrupted by the volcanic activity that formed Mount Gambier. The Department has been concerned to determine the source of the water in the Blue Lake, and this relates to the concern expressed at Mount Gambier particularly by the E. & W.S. Department in regard to the town's water supply and the fact that the Gambier limestone water adjacent to the township is fairly heavily polluted.

This pollution is evidenced by a high nitrate level, and in several areas it is well above the level recommended by the World Health Organisation. The source of the pollution relates to various factors, such as cheese factories, abattoirs, and so on, which expel waste into the Gambier limestone system. Drainage water from the township is also disposed of directly into the limestone aquifer. Fortunately, to date this pollution has not shown up in the Blue Lake: the nitrate levels in that water are quite low. Recent work has shown that at least half of the water in the Blue Lake is from the deeper Dilwyn formation, which is unpolluted. More work will be undertaken in the next few years to formally prove that, but at present it appears that the Blue Lake is fairly safe from pollution.

I am afraid that I am not an expert on the colour of the Blue Lake, but I understand also that the colour change is due to the formation of fine calcium carbonate crystals in the water at a certain time of the year. The formation of those crystals relates to the temperature of the water which, of course, relates to the air temperature, so there is a seasonal change in colour.

I might just add, in regard to pollution, that the E. & W.S. Department has also established a network of bores in the township that penetrate the Dilwyn formation. These bores are not used at present, but they can be used should sudden catastrophic pollution occur in the Blue Lake, such as a petrol truck or a similar vehicle going over the edge into the water. There is an emergency back-up should the Blue Lake become polluted.

Mr HAMILTON: I note from the yellow book that assessment of groundwater resources of metropolitan Adelaide will continue. What is the present situation in relation to groundwater resources in metropolitan Adelaide, particularly in the market garden areas around Salisbury and Elizabeth? Is there a reduction in the amount of resources available? Is it anticipated that this will continue and, if so, what action is the Department of Mines and Energy taking in that regard?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: From memory once again, there is an ongoing programme in relation to the water resources of the Adelaide Plains as a whole, and in particular metropolitan Adelaide.

For some of the reasons mentioned by Mr Boucaut in relation to the South-East, there is a continuing need to check on possible pollution of aquifers, and so on, so I will ask Mr Boucaut to advise the Committee about the more technical matters.

Mr Boucaut: I will address the question in two parts—one referring to the Northern Adelaide Irrigation Plains and the other to the Adelaide metropolitan area. Concern has been expressed for many years as to the life of the basin water in the irrigation area on the Northern Adelaide Plains. This area is now managed by the E. & W.S. Department

and is a proclaimed area under the Water Resources Act. Recent mathematical computer studies by that Department and my Department have shown that the life of the basin will be longer than previously expected and could be of the order of 50 years at the present rate of extraction. However, the management of the basin is trying to maintain the *status quo* and will not allow any increase in irrigation use. Alternative water supplies for the area are being looked for at the moment. This relates particularly to usage of Bolivar effluent. As to the metropolitan Adelaide system, this has become a high priority in our groundwater resources investigation because of the markedly increasing demand for irrigation water in the Adelaide city area, particularly from local councils for parks, gardens and ovals; schools, for ovals and gardens; and golf clubs for irrigation of their courses. Our work has been to establish a network of observation bores throughout the Adelaide area to monitor the behaviour of water levels in the various aquifers and to monitor results of test pumping carried out on those bores to determine the amount of water available for use by these people.

Aquifers are also being investigated on behalf of the E. & W.S. Department with a view to using them as storage places for excess surface waters from dams in the Adelaide Hills when they are full. Perhaps some of this water could be stored in the basin in the Adelaide metropolitan area and extracted during the summer. The purpose of our investigation is two-fold: first, to satisfy the demand from present irrigators; and, secondly, to look at the use of the basins for artificial recharge and storage of surface waters.

Mr HAMILTON: Will the Minister advise the Committee what is the present situation regarding groundwater resources on Eyre Peninsula and, more specifically, at Port Lincoln? We should bear in mind the Government's recent announcement regarding the Porter Bay development (a development I certainly hope will occur) involving investment of about \$80 million, which I imagine would create demands for water for tourism and other uses in that area?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Once again drawing on my memory of some years ago when I was Minister of Water Resources, I think that there was much concern expressed about the amount of water that could be drawn from the Poldia Basin and, I think I am correct in saying, the Uley-Wanilla Basin, also. I know that over a period the E. & W.S. Department, in conjunction with the Department of Mines and Energy, has carried out assessments and other observations in that area. I ask Mr Boucaut to provide further information about this matter.

Mr Boucaut: I cannot add much to what the Minister has just said except to say that there is a study under way at present into the water resources of Eyre Peninsula. This group was set up by the Minister of Water Resources and is administered by the E. & W.S. Department. On the committee are representatives of several departments—my Department, E. & W.S., Agriculture, and Environment and Planning. That committee is looking into known available water resources on Eyre Peninsula, both underground and surface, and relating those findings to anticipated demands because of predicted expansion on the Eyre Peninsula. This committee has been working for about a year and I understand will be reporting to the Minister in early 1984.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Everyone was quite excited earlier when the Minister, I think in his opening remarks, made certain statements about Adelaide's gas supplies. The Minister is reported in the *Stop Press* of today's *News* under the heading 'Twenty-three years of Cooper gas' as saying that there is enough gas in the Cooper Basin now, and will be in the future, to supply South Australia and New South Wales for the next 23 years. The report states that the figures were released during the Estimates Committee

hearing at Parliament House on the Mines and Energy Department's expenditure for 1983-84. I was quite excited on hearing the Minister's remark that our gas problems had suddenly disappeared. I was impressed by the Minister's bullish comments, as obviously was the *News* journalist in the press gallery who wrote this article. The Minister's optimism has led to this press report but, unless I am way behind the times, I think that what the Minister said to the Committee was quite misleading.

I will explain my remarks. Gas supply contracts, as I understand, were negotiated in 1973-74 by a former Labor Government. I have made extensive inquiries into the circumstances existing at that time because until today I believed that we had an enormous problem in relation to gas supplies for South Australia after 1987. I am delighted that that problem has been solved, if that is the case. Contracts were written, and Mr Bob Blair of Delhi warned that the State's interests were not protected by those contracts. He is quite happy to make that statement publicly. He said that at the time and some of the Government advisers stated likewise.

The Premier of the day is reported to have said, with one of those airy theatrical waves of the hand for which he was noted, 'We will find plenty of gas, have no fears.' History has shown reserves to have been depleted since that time. During the life of the Liberal Government more than 700 billion cubic feet of gas had to be discovered, and was not discovered, to satisfy the Sydney contract. We have been spending large sums to find gas for South Australia. However, one of the real problems is that we are spending South Australian money to find gas for Sydney. I suppose that a later edition of the *News* will show this item in banner headlines, because it is the best news for South Australia I have heard since I have been in this place.

I want to know what the true position is in relation to these gas reserves because I have been asking questions on notice for the past month. It has taken a hell of a long time to answer them, but answers have finally turned up.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I got one answer the day before we came back, starting 'Dear Roger'—the soft soap job. I have been waiting six months for the answer, which told me nothing: that they were going to turn oil from Queensland to South Australia; but, there had been no discussions. Do not let me be sidetracked, however, from this very important and vital issue of South Australian gas supplies.

I asked questions on notice about the fracking process, which was going to unlock tight gas. There was a very bullish report on the front page of the *Advertiser* that this would solve their problems: there were hundreds of b.c.f. to be freed up. The answers I got to my questions, which were no doubt prepared by the Chairman of SAOG or the people in SAOG, were far more guarded than that. Nobody has any real evidence as to the amount of gas which will be released, let alone the cost to release it—no estimate at all. Either that *News* chap got some of that flavour that I got—that all is rosy in the garden and our gas problems have disappeared—or else the Minister was far too bullish or far too imprecise in relation to our exact current reserves.

It is no use whatever talking about what people say they will find; they have been talking like that since 1973. If the Minister follows the pattern that we did—going around to Santos each year and getting a briefing on the state of the art at Santos—he will get the same old story. Instead of the graph on reserves going up, unfortunately the pressure dropped more quickly than they thought it would and down they went. It is the same old depressing story. Perhaps this increase in price has done the trick; we have always been told, 'Pay us the price and we will find some gas,' and they

may have really got cracking, but I doubt it. I want far more accurate information. It is vital to every industrial and domestic gas consumer in this State to know precisely what the situation is in relation to gas supplies. Whether the problem is solved or whether we are still on a wing and a prayer as we have been since 1973: with this airy wave of their hands they will find plenty of gas.

People are still trying to plan for their future. People such as Adelaide Brighton, for instance, have to decide whether to convert to coal or stay on gas. They cannot hang around on the airy-fairy statement that has been in this area since 1973 that they will find plenty of gas. We have to find it and find it now.

I ask the Minister to be as precise as he can be and, if he cannot be, one of his officers I hope will give the Committee the most up-to-date information in relation to what the reserves are and what the position is in relation to fulfilling what until this year was over 750 b.c.f.s still to be found to fulfil the Sydney contract. What is the precise information in relation to gas reserves—I am not interested in what they might find—that can now be quoted as reserves that are there to fulfil these contracts?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I suppose that I first have to say that I am not necessarily responsible for what viewpoint the media or a journalist might place on remarks that I make in this Committee. That is the prerogative of the journalist concerned. What I said—and I was careful to say—was that one way of looking at this scene is to take what the proven, probable and estimated—and everybody on this Committee knows what those kinds of words mean—reserves were stated to be and what was the total amount involved in the contracts. That is what I actually stated.

I was trying to indicate that there was room for somewhat more optimism than there has been in the past—no more than that. The former Minister has agreed, whilst outlining the background to his question, that it can be quite difficult, because he referred to the difficulties associated with fracking—the rate of delivery, the delineation of how much one can actually get out of a released, tight sand formation, and so on. However, he now says that he wants to have an accurate estimation of the reserve position as it is.

I will ask Mr Terry Watts in a moment whether he can give any useful information to the Committee along those lines. First, I want to say to the Committee that since the setting up of the Stewart Committee, which has obviously got to take the future supply of gas into account if it is looking ahead for a period of around 13 years as to how any additional electricity generation might be provided in this State, the question of the availability of gas is one of those factors.

The committee has had submissions to it on more than one occasion. I have had submissions made to me on more than one occasion from the producers—that is, per medium of Santos—which show that there has been an improvement in the gas that they are prepared to say is available. I do not attempt to carry all those figures around in my head. In fact, the submissions to me and to the Stewart Committee have varied. The former Minister has pointed out the difficulties that he had in this matter, but he failed to point out why it was not vital and urgent that we got this gas now for the three years that he was in Government and it has now suddenly become an urgency that there was not there for the previous three years. His best endeavours in that area have not really resulted in any improvement. In fact, it is one of the reasons why the Government agreed with my proposition to set up a committee such as the Stewart Committee to take account of the State's needs to see how they will be provided, taking into account the gas supply. I ask Mr Watts, the Director of the Oil and Gas

Division, to come forward to provide the information of the nature sought by the Deputy Leader.

Mr Watts: A convenient way of talking about reserves in the Cooper Basin is to talk in terms of the shortfall of the A.G.L. (the Sydney) contract. As Mr Goldsworthy has said, the shortfall on this contract is listed by the producers at 700 b.c.f. for a number of years, and this year's production schedule is no different. That shortfall is still listed. That production schedule is the unit producer's perception of available economically produceable gas, and it is derived by very conservative reserve definitions. It is used, for example, to raise loans on the liquids pipeline and to provide security, and the banker's guidelines require this to be very conservatively based.

In some ways it is both conservative and pessimistic. Much work has been done on the Cooper Basin reserves by the Department in recent years. Our work is directed at looking at those categories of reserves that are not now included in the production schedule. For example, we are looking at possible reserves that are extensions to known fields. Historically, there is a 70 per cent chance that these will ultimately be proved up as proved and probable reserves. Potential reserves are the undiscovered reserves of the basin requiring exploration, and now there are about 275 prospects or leads, as they are called, in the Cooper Basin that will require about 120 wells to prove up the reserves in that category.

There are tight gas reserves. In the Cooper Basin there are huge amounts of reserves locked up in so-called tight reservoirs: these are deep and hot, high-carbon dioxide low permeability reservoirs. An awful lot of gas in place can be attributed to these reserves. There is the deliverability problem of getting them out of the ground. If left to their own devices they may take 40 or 50 years to produce themselves. So, they have to be artificially stimulated by massive fracturing. There are other types of reserves, extra drainage of conventional fields down to lower abandonment pressures. This will require extra compression, more wells and the like including additional facilities.

If we take all these categories into consideration, remembering that much exploration and substantial investment are necessary, but still conservatively risking all these categories, our view is that there will be sufficient gas from these categories to satisfy A.G.L. and PASA contracts. Certainly, we need more proof of the viability of massive fracturing, for example; an experimental programme has already been established and the accelerated gas programme will test this over the next three years. The initial results of the first well drilled have been fairly encouraging, but we still have a long way to go. Basically, that is the story, and there is a greater mood of optimism regarding the Cooper Basin and its ability to provide gas for both New South Wales and South Australia.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: As a preamble to my next question, I want to correct a statement the Minister made which is obviously and patently false. He suggests that the former Government of which I was a Minister did nothing. This fracking process was initiated during the period of the Liberal Government, and it seems to me that that is the person on which much of the optimism is being hung. Also, I point out to the Minister and urge him to carry on. If he is convinced the problem is solved, he is more sanguine than I am from what I have heard today, and even from the answer of Mr Watts I do not believe that people who have to plan into the next century can base decisions on that information. I know that the Minister has the knowledge, but seeks to deny it, that the former Government of which I was a part saw this as a major problem. As Minister of Mines and Energy I saw this, and we did plenty about the Sydney and Adelaide contracts to the extent that we had

the best legal advice available. The Minister can read it if he has the time or inclination. Mr Hanley, QC, in Sydney advised the Government on its strength in dealing with A.G.L. so that we could rationalise those contracts. We got to the stage where draft legislation was proposed. The Minister knows all this, but seeks to suggest that the previous Government did nothing. The fact is that this Government is doing nothing to follow up the matter. In regard to petrochemical gas, 213 billion cubic feet is available to South Australia, and that is without argument. Indeed, we clarified the argument about the producers earlier. I want to follow up that question later in regard to petrochemicals.

That gas was available to South Australia, which gave us two years of breathing space—that is all it was—if we knocked the petro-chemical plant on the head. Then we could borrow gas from the New South Wales contract, and the Minister knows this too. We could promote legislation to the South Australian Parliament, and preliminary work had been done. The Minister knows that. South Australia could borrow gas from the New South Wales contract, and the only problem (and this was a matter of concern to me) was that if gas was not subsequently discovered, South Australia would be liable to pay compensation to A.G.L., the holders of the contract, for the unavailable gas. There was no impediment at all legally to withstand a High Court challenge for using gas after 1987.

The only problem was if we did not find enough gas to satisfy New South Wales, we would have to compensate. I make no bones that there were people—I am not suggesting that they were simply Government advisers—who thought we should operate on that basis. I had grave reservations about such compensation, and for the Minister to have the gall and tell this Committee that the former Government did nothing about the problem it inherited from an intemperate Labor Government which showed infinite lack of foresight—for the Minister to say that the former Government did nothing defies description.

We did an enormous amount of work and, if the present Government had the wit to build on it and make some decisions, South Australia would overcome the problems. In regard to what has been told to the Committee, I still have no precise answer. The Minister is saying that the position is more optimistic, but the producers are still stating in their official reserve listings that we are 700 million cubic feet short in reserves to supply the Sydney contracts. That is seven years supply for South Australia that we have to find. We have to spend money or, as a result of the negotiations to which I referred, producers will have to spend money to find gas to satisfy the Sydney contracts. We are spending South Australian taxpayers' funds.

This fracking process has been undertaken by South Australian Oil and Gas. I repeat: there has been no indication of how much gas can be freed up and what it will cost. I thank Mr Watts for the detail of his answer. As has been stated, the gas is deep, hot and has much carbon dioxide in it: it needs cleaning. We are interested in supplying gas to the South Australian market at competitive prices, and no-one has put a finger on how much gas is available or what it will cost while we sell relatively cheap gas to New South Wales.

I am far from convinced that the problem is solved. One cannot make Government decisions on the basis of optimism. If the Minister thinks he can do that—well, that has been the problem of the seventies—she'll be right mate, time will fix it; but I point out that time is running out fast.

Can the Minister indicate where the extra reserves will come from? The official figures indicate a 700 b.c.f. shortfall still. How many billion cubic feet are to be found from extra drainage in the known reservoirs? How many billion

cubic feet is it hoped will be unlocked from the tight reservoir gas? Has the Government received any indications at all as to the cost?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will correct an impression that the Deputy Leader appears to have gained, that is, that I have claimed that our gas problems have been solved. All I indicated to the Committee this morning was that that was one viewpoint based on the proven, probable and estimate scene that I put forward against the total contained in all the contracts. Some of the information now sought by the Deputy Leader might not be readily available. Mr Watts might be able to provide further information.

Mr Watts: As I have mentioned previously, over the past few years the Department has embarked on an independent evaluation of gas reserves using consultants. That work is continuing. I can provide some figures. For example, we estimate extra drainage from known fields will amount to about 500 b.c.f. of gas. The possible reserves converted to sales gas would be of the order of 570 b.c.f. of gas. The big problem with future gas supplies is that they are heavily dependent on the tight gas reserves. As mentioned previously, there are seven trillion cubic feet of gas in place in that category. That is as much as has been found in the Cooper Basin. The problem is whether those reserves are deliverable. Recent work is encouraging, but it is in the early stages. Of course, it will be expensive gas. We place a very conservative estimate of 730 b.c.f. on those categories.

The undiscovered category, that is, the yet-to-be discovered gas, is based on the risk analysis of prospects, leads, and so on, and amounts to a further 570 b.c.f. That requires a great amount of investment, expenditure and exploration; in fact, as much exploration as has been done historically in the Cooper Basin, and perhaps up to 120 wells. Certainly, the development of tight gas fields probably requires twice the number of wells and twice the compression of normal fields. I believe that the estimates that I have given are fairly conservative. For example, the tight gas fields could yield considerably more.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That indicates to me that the problem is far from solved. I have already outlined several initiatives undertaken by the previous Government, including the fracking process. We entered into negotiations with Australian Gas Light, as well as obtaining advice from Queen's Counsellors about the strength of our hand. I, as Minister, entered into negotiations with the Chairman of Santos, Mr Carmichael and with Mr Anderson, the Chairman of A.G.L., with a view to rationalising the contracts. On the surface, Australian Gas Light was co-operative, but underneath it did all that it could to delay and muck about.

In the first three years that my Party was in Government we set up a committee under Sir Norman Young to negotiate with A.G.L., and it ran him out of town. A.G.L. undermined him and said that it would not deal with him, even though Sir Norman is one of Adelaide's foremost businessmen. We then set up a departmental committee to deal with A.G.L. The company stalled the committee for several months. We seconded the Director-General of the Department on a full-time basis to lead a team to negotiate with A.G.L.—that is how important we thought the problem was. A.G.L. stalled, mucked about and did anything it could to keep South Australia at bay.

In the end, I, as Minister, and the Chairman of Santos, Mr Carmichael, who had some appreciation of South Australia's problem, flew to Sydney and had a nice, quiet civilised chat with the Chairman of A.G.L., who knew that we meant business. That was all very civilised. Unless the Government is prepared to take on A.G.L. and the New South Wales Government, we will not solve South Australia's problem. We have heard this afternoon that the most optimistic estimate in relation to the draining of reserves is 400 b.c.f.,

whereas we are short 700 b.c.f. To satisfy Sydney's needs we have to find another 300 b.c.f. What will we get from the tight gas reserves to satisfy Sydney and to supply South Australia—570 b.c.f. We have no idea how much it will cost, but it will be a lot of money. What will be left after we have satisfied Sydney's needs—two and a half years supply, which takes us through to 1989.

The optimistic estimate is that we can drain the reservoirs and obtain another 400 b.c.f. I think the Committee understands the mathematics: 700 b.c.f. for Sydney, 400 b.c.f. to drain the reserves, which means that we are 300 b.c.f. short. By spending a hell of a lot of money on the tight gas reservoir we might obtain 570 b.c.f., which leaves South Australia with only 2½ years supply until 1989. There is no way that the problem has been solved. Unless the Government is prepared to tackle the problem head on and use every stick, stone, weapon and lever available to it (and the previous Liberal Government tried in its three-year term) to take on A.G.L. and the New South Wales Government, we will be sold down the drain. In view of the information supplied to the Committee by Mr Watts, does the Minister believe that we can obtain 400 b.c.f. by draining the known reservoirs, that we can obtain 570 b.c.f., maybe, from the fracking process at a price unknown, and that that will solve South Australia's problems? Will the Minister pursue with some vigour every option available to South Australia?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think the Deputy Leader got a bit carried away. My understanding was that Mr Watts said that 730 b.c.f. would be available as a conservative recovery available from the seven trillion tied up in the reserves concerned. I mention that in passing. I do not understand the Deputy Leader, because he has explained to the Committee the difficulties that he experienced with A.G.L. in the three years that his Party was in Government. He went to the trouble of totally disclosing his hand in public in relation to the weapons, sticks and stones that he managed to get together in those three years and then asks why I am not doing something about it.

First, the Government is doing something about it. I do not intend to telegraph to the Committee or anyone else any approach that might be taken. I think that even the first principles in negotiating something of this importance and magnitude would suggest that one needs to be reasonably commercially confidential in matters of this nature.

Yet, the Deputy Leader has been burbling away in this Committee about things which I have known for at least the past 11 months but which in my judgment do not benefit from being bandied about in public. I suspect that that might well be the view of the very people who are involved—A.G.L. and the New South Wales Government. The honourable member is very anxious to say that something was done. Certainly, although advice was taken, the necessary steps were not taken. The Deputy Leader cannot get away from that. He said that he received advice and that the previous Government got it all together, but he did not go on with it. Now, he wants the Government to go on with it, and that is the situation.

Mr Lewis interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I could not agree more with the honourable member who has just interjected. We need more than hot air, and we have heard a lot of that from the Deputy Leader, who has suggested giving a wave of the hand. I find it impossible to understand the motive behind such action. Surely A.G.L. is entitled to have the direct approach rather than semi-threats issued in the Committee, to which we have just been subjected by the Deputy Leader. If the honourable member believes that that is the way to go about these matters, perhaps that is why South Australia was not able to progress to any extent during the previous three years. I leave the Deputy Leader to cogitate on what

I have just said and to perhaps reflect, either here or somewhere else, on why I do not believe that the correct method to use in matters such as this was to go around yelling out to all and sundry about what ought or ought not be done.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mrs Appleby): I call on the member for Florey.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have asked only two questions.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mrs Appleby): According to my notes, the honourable member has asked three questions.

Mr GREGORY: What was the value of mineral production in South Australia last year?

The Hon. R. G. Payne: Mr Johns will answer that question.

Mr Johns: Mineral production in the calendar year 1982 set new levels of output. Total South Australian mineral production amounted to \$305 million for 1982; in the previous year, the total was \$248 million, and in 1980 it was \$220 million. Thus, there was a very significant increase in the value of mineral output last year. The make-up relates particularly to gas, which in 1982 was valued at \$141.4 million; coal from Leigh Creek, \$40 million; copper, \$16 million; iron ore, \$15.8 million; and it then falls away in regard to limestone, gypsum, salt, and so on. Mineral products totalled \$231 million and to that is added the value of construction materials (\$44.8 million) and an estimate for opal production (\$28.7 million). That brings in a grand total of \$305 million.

Mr GREGORY: There has been provision under mining treatment and resources for payment in respect of an industries rehabilitation fund. How much was spent last year in that regard, and how is the money expended?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will ask Mr Hill to answer that question.

Mr Hill: Last year, expenditure from the fund was \$575 000. Readymix of Riverview received \$230 000; P.G.H. at Renown Park received \$190 000; P.G.H. at Glen Osmond received \$60 000; Quarry Industries of Stoneyfell received a final \$29 000; and Readymix at Aberfoyle Park \$18 000. The other sums related mainly to small quarries, making a total of 17 projects at a cost of \$48 000, giving a grand total of \$575 000.

Mr GREGORY: For what services does the Department use the Australian Mineral Development Laboratories? I note that \$650 000 is proposed in this regard.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The funds provide for research, development and analytical services for the Department of Mines and Energy and other departments and the split-up of the proposed sum is as follows: the Department of Mines and Energy, \$400 000; and other agencies \$250 000. As I understand the system, the Department places its own work and arranges priorities in relation to other expenditure which is provided for in the total sum of \$650 000, that is, work required to be done by certain departments. There is a discussion and an arrangement in relation to what will be placed in a given year, depending on the finance available.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the Minister say how many meetings he or the Premier has had with Australian Gas Light Company in relation to the rationalising of the contracts? The Minister suggests that I have been divulging trade secrets, which is nonsense. We had discussions with these people and they knew that we meant business. When the problem that we foresaw arose last week because of the nature of the Adelaide and Sydney contracts it was not the Minister who sought to see Maurie Williams: it was Maurie Williams who sought to see the Minister about what was happening. In answer to a question asked in the Parliament, the Minister said that Mr Maurie Williams had asked to see him. I suppose that he came over to soft soap the Minister and in the process did a bit of squealing

about the Opposition having the gall to suggest that gas should be as dear in Sydney as it is in South Australia.

I notice that the Minister did not take the initiative in this matter and that Mr Williams asked for that meeting. Is the Minister able to tell us anything about this matter? All the negotiations in which the Minister has been involved since the Labor Government assumed office have been in secret, and the Minister says that he cannot tell us about them but that we should rest assured that all is well. How many meetings has the Minister had with A.G.L. in relation to these contracts and how many meetings has the Premier had? The Premier said that he would talk tough to Joh Bjelke-Petersen. He said in his policy speech that the Liberal Government did nothing about this matter, and we have heard the same garbage from the Minister today. He was going to make sure that oil flowed to South Australia! I ask the Minister how many meetings he has had. He has had none! He has made no approach. What initiatives has the Minister or the Government taken in relation to these contracts?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The member asked, first, how many meetings the Minister and the Premier had had with A.G.L. My understanding is that Mr Williams saw the Premier on the last occasion that he was here. That was not in my company. I certainly had a meeting with Mr Williams then and I had had a previous meeting earlier this year. However I cannot put a date on it without reference to my diary. The Deputy Leader seems to have a peculiar way of helping these matters along. One would assume that the *Hansard* record is sometimes read in places other than South Australia. To accuse Mr Maurice Williams of coming over to soft soap me seems to be, at the very least, presumptuous and, at the worst, insulting and demeaning. However, we have come to accept that kind of thing from the former Minister.

It may well be that there is a recognition in New South Wales that there is now a different Minister in the job because, as the Deputy Leader pointed out, it was Mr Williams who sought to see me: I did not have to go and see him. That is another construction that could be put on this matter. One cannot be as reckless and irresponsible as the former Minister in a matter that he quite willingly admits is of vital importance to South Australia and its citizens, yet he is happy to fling wild words around left, right and centre as if they have no real meaning or substance and as though they will not be noticed, read or seen by the very people with whom I will have to negotiate.

I am glad that the *Hansard* record will show who made these remarks. It is not my style to gather every stick and stone and other type of wording used here today as a way of conducting negotiations. There is nothing wrong with being firm while negotiating a matter, but one sees no reason to be abusive, abrasive and reckless in what one says. There is no need for that kind of behaviour at all.

The facts of this matter are that the legislative way out of this matter has always been available, and the Deputy Leader knows that. However, is that a fair and equitable way to proceed without first having recourse to fair and decent negotiations? I do not believe that it is. I do not propose to follow the course that the Deputy Leader suggests of picking up sticks and stones and all the other rubbish that he has talked about. The course that I propose to follow requires a fair degree of confidentiality, and I intend to adhere to that confidentiality and simply say that I have had discussions with Mr Williams in which he put A.G.L.'s viewpoint in relation to the arbitrated price increase and certain other matters relating to the possibility of gas sharing. I expressed the Government's views to Mr Williams and do not propose to go beyond that statement on the record.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has admitted that he and the Premier have effectively done nothing of their own initiative in the 10 or 11 months that his Government has been in office. They did nothing about Jackson Oil and have effectively done nothing about these gas supplies. The Minister thinks that he had one meeting with Mr Williams—not even the Chairman of the Board—some time ago. He and the Premier have seen Mr Williams recently, at Mr Williams' instigation. They have done absolutely nothing to further the gas negotiations that we were pursuing with some vigour while in Government. I make no apology in relation to my remarks about Mr Williams. If he sees fit to come to South Australia and insult the former Government, Mr Webb and his officers, I make no apology for saying what I think about Mr Williams. If the Minister and the Premier showed a bit more fight, this State might be in a better shape than it is at the moment, because we are losing opportunities right, left and centre because of the Government's inaction. Perhaps my remarks might have been better tempered if Mr Williams had not come over and sought to insult Mr Webb. I understand that he had a conversation with Mr Webb, the former Director-General. I will be surprised if he did not get short change from him. His remarks were highly insulting to the Opposition, simply because it was seeking to take out the bat and ball for South Australia—something that this Government is not prepared to do.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mrs Appleby): Is the member coming to his question, because it appears that the lead-up to the last two questions has been repeated?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: In fairness, one cannot not let the Minister's statements about lack of action by the former Government pass unchallenged. When will the Minister commence negotiations about this matter? Whom does he intend to negotiate with? Does he believe such negotiations are worth while? When will he start negotiations with A.G.L., and whom will he be dealing with?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The answer to the Deputy Leader's question is 'At the appropriate time.'

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Here we are with the first year of this Labor Government in office having almost expired and the Minister has done absolutely nothing about this matter.

I turn now to the price of gas. The Premier suggested that the Government had resolved the question of price differential within a fortnight, but here we are, all the ground work having been done by the former Government. I can tell the Minister that if he is going to get anywhere he has to deal at the highest level because the Board makes the decisions; we came to that conclusion after trying to get somewhere for a couple of years.

The Minister will not get anywhere by talking to Mr Williams; I can tell him that. If Mr Williams chooses to come to South Australia and insult the former Government, the members of that Government who were seeking to negotiate with them, and to insult officers of the Department of Mines and Energy, as he did, I make no apology for saying what I said, and I hope that Mr Williams reads my remarks.

Mr HAMILTON: You said that before. You're repetitious.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: If the honourable member opposite believes that he is never repetitious, he had better read the transcript of what he says in this place from time to time, but I make no apology for emphasising the point. I ask the Minister whom he intends to deal with. He really has not answered any of the questions, which have been too hard for him to deal with today. The uranium issue is in the too hard basket: we have to wait for a month to see what the Federal gurus come up with. The gas supply is in the too hard basket. I ask whom he is going to deal

with. At what level? Will he wait for Mr Williams to ring him up and come over and have a little pow-wow and to spy out the land? What is he going to do about it?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not really think that the Deputy Leader has raised any new matter in this latest question. I would say to him once again that there will be an appropriate time at which I will pursue certain matters. That is when what he is requesting will occur.

Mr HAMILTON: My question relates to the future electricity generation options that are open. On 5 May the Minister released a press release in relation to the formation of a five-man committee to provide advice to the Government on the best electricity generation options available to the Government until the mid 1990s. Subsequent to that—on 22 July 1983—the Minister released another press release in which he said on page 2:

During the second stage of its work, the committee will seek to further refine its understanding of the factors of local significance which may have some impact on ETSA's generation requirements. These include solar heating, energy conservation and the possible substitution of liquid fuels by electricity. Mr Payne said the report was a comprehensive and detailed evaluation of electricity forecasting and provided a sound basis for the second phase of the committee's work. In this phase, the committee is examining the various options available to provide new generating capacity and will advise me in early October on those preferred for further expansion of the ETSA system.

Can the Minister elaborate further on that? How far is it down the track? When is it likely that he will receive that report? Is it to be later on this month, next month or what is the situation? Can he elaborate on the options that are open to him?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have had one or two recent discussions with Mr Doug Stewart, of the Stewart Committee, and he has indicated to me that the committee will refine the estimations that have been made in relation to the future generating capacity requirements in South Australia for the next several years. Concurrently with that, he expects to be able to provide me with a status report (I suppose that is the best way to describe what is intended), perhaps one or two weeks after the original intended date; that is, towards the end of October.

I would like to take this opportunity of commending Mr Stewart and the members of his committee for the tremendous amount of work that they have done in the very limited time that they were given by me. Perhaps full of far more zeal than the Deputy Leader is prepared to give me credit for, I set a fairly tight time schedule for the Stewart Committee to do one exacting task (that is, provide the estimates of the future capacity that might be required) and, secondly, a very much harder task, to provide advice to the Government as to how those needs, when defined by the committee, might be met, taking into account the fact that the options that they ought to consider range from a third 250 megawatt unit at the Northern Power Station at Port Augusta to possible interconnection with Victoria and the importation of black coal to try to maximise the use of a local resource, taking into account the various lignite deposits at Sedan, Bowmans, and all the other places that are familiar to members of the committee.

As the member for Albert Park has quickly pointed out, it was not all that long ago that they were given this task. Apparently, at times I am able to make firm decisions and to act and to ask people to be even firmer than I have been, and to say that I want answers by a certain time. That part of the answer illustrates that as time went on the full ramifications of the matter that I had referred to them became clear to me, Mr Stewart and members of the committee. Some of it—the future of the gas supplies concerned, and so on—we have spent time on this afternoon in a peripheral way. Yet, the committee has addressed itself in

an incredibly hard-working way to these matters and has got well along the way to being able to provide for the first time (and certainly not within the previous three years of the Deputy Leader, when his Party was in Government) some firm facts, assumptions and estimates which have a degree of reliability and which can be examined by anybody concerned and stand up to provide the best kind of advice to the Government to meet its requirements, of which I have been talking.

Mr Stewart informs me that most likely he can give me an up-to-date status report about the end of October and that in all probability the committee will need a somewhat longer period to produce its final report—perhaps by the middle of March next year. I do not know what is in the report at this stage; I am not trying to suggest that. However, over the months that have ensued since the committee was given the task, I have been able to learn about the magnitude of the task that I have given it. I think that people, in seeing the results of the report, will realise what a great effort has gone into this whole matter. A lot of credit is due to very many people concerned in this area in relation to the committee: first, the members of the committee; the two co-executive officers working with the committee—John Easton, from ETSA, and Lou Owens from the Department of Mines and Energy. Many other people, both in the Department and in the energy industry outside, have accepted the fact that the Government has taken this decision to set up an important, worthwhile committee, and have been going to the committee and putting forward their various submissions in a responsible way.

In fact, if I needed any justification for what I have just claimed in the previous answer to the Deputy Leader, that there is a responsible way to work in these matters, and that is the way that gets the right results. The way in which this committee has been functioning in a responsible and forthright manner has drawn that kind of response from the proponents of developments which they foresee may provide the electricity capacity required in the future and from the people who have ancillary knowledge, whether it be persons on an underground waters committee, or whatever. There has been a general acceptance that this has been a worthwhile and genuine attempt to provide the Government with the best advice possible so that a decision or decisions, depending on what they need to be, can be made in the best interests of the people of South Australia.

I have not yet given to this committee my feelings about the use of South Australian resources, but I have a very strong belief that one of the assets which this State already has but which has not yet been given proper recognition—and I think deserves it—is the fact that we have extremely large reserves of lignite in South Australia.

They are here and it is really a matter of the particular technology used in regard to these resources, whether it is combustion or some other use. Of course, some of that will be due to the technology which is in existence or which is evolving now as in the case of gasification and liquefaction and all the other 'in' words of the energy decade or two that we have just been through. It spawned these new household words. In the past there was a tendency to overlook that we had these large reserves in South Australia of what appeared to be low-grade coal. However, for the benefit of South Australia technology will provide a means for their economic and long-term use.

Mr HAMILTON: Is that for the reserves at Meekathara?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There is coal in the north of the State at Wintinna, or Meekathara as it is known, and they appear to be large reserves. On the early figures available, those deposits are of a somewhat higher grade. All of these things augur well for the future of South Australia. The Stewart Committee has had to examine and still is examining,

a range of possibilities providing for the future requirements of the State. I am trying to tell the Committee that I hung one on it: I said, 'Tell me all the answers to all of this in 3½ to four months.' I did that with a purpose in mind. About the only thing that was said by the Deputy Leader today with which I agree is that some of these things have gone on for long enough. That is my view, too. I was trying to illustrate to the member for Albert Park, who was genuinely seeking information, that I had given the committee an extremely hard task. I wanted to show him the range of factors it had to consider, and I indicate that the committee will be reporting to me in what is essentially a short time for such a large task.

Mr HAMILTON: I would like to continue questioning in this area. I refer to the ETSA Report of 30 June in regard to Victoria, and the following statement:

Interconnection with Victoria: The extension of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria's transmission system to serve the proposed aluminium smelter at Portland has narrowed the gap between the South Australian and Victorian electricity grids. If present construction programmes in the Latrobe Valley are maintained, Victoria is likely to have a surplus of generating capacity in the late 1980s and, if the two systems are interconnected, this could be used to meet South Australia's short-term power needs at that time. In the longer term interconnection would allow opportunity transfers of power to be made in either direction and enable the capacities of each system to be more effectively used.

Can the Minister say what that means—'short-term power needs at that time'? Is it five years, 10 years, 15 years or 20 years? What does it mean? What further discussions has the Minister had with his Victorian counterparts in regard to this statement?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will answer the last part of the question first. I have had only a brief discussion personally with Mr White, the Victorian Minister, on this topic, but an officer group involving ETSA and the department is involved in ongoing talks with similar level officers from Victoria about interconnection. The member was seeking information about the time period involved and asked what was 'short-term'. The question of interconnection has been covered almost Australia wide in a report that has been available for some time, the Zeidler Report, and reference is made in that report to some of the possible advantages of interconnection.

Certainly, I agree with what the member suggested. The best advantage to South Australia of interconnection is that it is on an opportunity basis rather than on a formal commitment for a continuous supply of power over a long or fixed term. There could be an opportunity for an interchange of power if an interconnection existed, as I understand the peak maximum demand in Victoria is in winter and in South Australia the peak maximum demand is in summer. Clearly, members can see that the maximum capacity required in both States to meet the peak demands is such that it could be mutually acceptable in regard to interconnection. That is one of the sorts of things that needs to be considered.

Also, I have briefly mentioned to the Federal Minister, Mr Peter Walsh, that at least we have an interest in this area and that I felt that he should know about it. I can say that he was interested to hear that we were having such discussions. It is still early days and I do not want the press to be saying that South Australia will tie up with Victoria next week or the like as a result of my comments. It is one of the areas that the Stewart Committee is considering. It has formed a subcommittee of its members with most expertise in this area to make further progress in its investigations into that connection.

Mr HAMILTON: On page 24 of the ETSA Report of 30 June, I refer to the heading 'Electrical Articles and Materials Act, 1940-1967'. I was interested to know that at page 25 of the report it is indicated that some articles require several

alterations and re-examinations before they can be approved, particularly in regard to safety inspections. That matter concerns me; it is of concern that that practice exists in the community. On how many occasions has it been brought to the Minister's attention that people have suffered electric shocks, have been seriously injured or killed as a result of appliances being incorrectly wired? What, if any, education programme either in the trade or in the community generally is being considered by the Government in regard to alteration or playing around with electrical appliances? I am greatly concerned that there are people in the community who have little knowledge of how electrical appliances are wired and who in stringent times decide to try and mend appliances themselves, thus placing them and their families in jeopardy if they use such appliances. Can the Minister provide more detailed information in that regard now or at a later date?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have not had any instances of the occurrences outlined by the honourable member brought to my attention as Minister. Certainly, because I was in the electronic/electrical field before entering Parliament, I am aware of mishaps and accidents of the nature referred to by the honourable member occurring because of faulty wiring and incorrect wiring carried out by some people who believe that they are competent to make repairs to electrical equipment. I think that the honourable member's question highlights the fact that there is a degree of safeguards: when people wish to obtain approval for electrical goods of this nature, they are required to obtain that approval from ETSA.

I think it speaks well of the system that, when improvements are necessary, they must be effected before approval can be obtained. I also understand that ETSA, not as a result of any action of the Government, distributes leaflets which draw attention to the dangers that may be associated with unskilled people carrying out repairs to electrical equipment. I will try to obtain the information requested by the honourable member from ETSA and forward it to him at a later date.

Mr LEWIS: My question relates to the Kingston lignite deposit. I am concerned to establish the mathematical probabilities, literally, of seawater entering the Dilwyn aquifer if the cap was ripped off it to get at the lignite beneath the cap and it is depressurised and dewatered to enable the lignite to be extracted. I am not necessarily seeking a precise answer if that is not available, but simply an estimate of the probabilities, recognising that expert professional officers are available. I am seeking information about the probabilities of, first, certainty and also the probabilities of zero certainty—the converse of such a proposition, whatever that is. How certain are we in some measure that there will not be an ingress of seawater or other saltwater from underneath the sea into the Dilwyn aquifer once it is depressurised and dewatered? Of course, I ask my question based on the hypothetical assumption that mining of the deposit will proceed.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I ask Mr Boucaut to provide a reply to the hypothetical circumstances raised by the honourable member.

Mr Boucaut: Between the coalfield and the sea there is a ridge of rock that we refer to as the Kingston ridge, which is made up of granite rock. In terms of passage of water, it is virtually impermeable. There is no chance of seawater intrusion into the Dilwyn aquifer directly west of the coalfield. The Kingston ridge ceases to the south in the vicinity of the Kingston township. There must be a slight chance of seawater intrusion in that area due to dewatering. I stress that the chance of that occurring is slight. Because that possibility might be realised Western Mining will be required to carry out some detailed investigations in the next stage, should the coalfield proceed, to determine the effects of dewatering in relation to the Kingston township itself, the

Kingston town water supply and the possibility of saltwater intrusion.

Mr LEWIS: What are the comparative probabilities in a completely different location or locations in relation to the risk of contamination as a result of the *in situ* leaching process for the recovery of uranium at Honeymoon and Beverley in relation to any adjacent aquifer in either of those sites? Would the risk of contamination be greater or would it be less?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In so far as I understand the question, I think it would depend on the circumstances that were geologically present at the site concerned.

Mr LEWIS: I understand then that the Minister is not prepared to obtain expert opinion on the matter.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am trying to indicate the limit of my knowledge. The member could have addressed the question to one of the departmental officers.

Mr LEWIS: Mr Chairman, I understood that questions had to be addressed to the Minister and it is purely his prerogative to refer them to the professional advisers present. I thought that I could not, as a matter of protocol, direct questions to the departmental officers.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has indicated that Mr Boucaut will provide a reply.

Mr Boucaut: I think the first difference between the two techniques is that the dewatering is actually an extraction of large volumes of water and the disposal of that water outside the environment of the mining activity. There is actually a physical extraction of water which results in the movement of other water into that area. With the *in situ* leaching technique, the water is extracted to obtain the ore and it is then reinjected into the system, so there is no net loss to the system. To try and compare the two systems is very difficult: it is almost like chalk and cheese.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Florey.

Mr LEWIS: Mr Chairman, how many questions am I allowed?

The CHAIRMAN: Three.

Mr LEWIS: Mr Chairman, how many questions have I asked?

The CHAIRMAN: I have the member for Mallee down as asking three questions.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Chairman, Mr Boucaut was simply clarifying the honourable member's second question.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the honourable member regard his third question as supplementary to his second question?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Chairman, I think what you regard as the honourable member's third question really amounted to the honourable member asking for a referral of the question to a departmental officer.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Mallee can ask a further question.

Mr LEWIS: I did not really expect, believe, or imply that the two technologies were in any way comparable. I was merely seeking an estimation of the probabilities of something going wrong as a mathematical statement about its risk of happening.

I understand that the technologies involved are vastly different. Now that I have discovered that certain of the professional officers have been given riding instructions about some proposed mining projects (or that is what it looks like), any statement of comparable probabilities of risk that bear no relationship in their statement to the technologies involved is forbidden. What are the geomorphological differences between the *in situ* leaching process that has been used in the United States and the circumstances in which it could be used at Honeymoon and Beverley in South Australia?

I acknowledge that the Minister has already pointed out to the Committee that he is not competent to answer that question; nonetheless, as a matter of formality, it is legitimate that I put the question, because it will enable the Committee to make an assessment about whether the United States situation, where *in situ* leaching has been carried on over a number of years, can be compared with the *in situ* leaching process that might be possible in South Australia at both of those sites where significant quantities of uranium ore are to be found. I would like a definition of the differences between the geomorphological structures, in broad terms, so that the Committee can understand whether we are comparing like with like. In comparing like with like one could say that, because a certain method does not work so well in the United States, it would not work so well in South Australia.

To illustrate how one can compare like with like, one may say that, whereas a four-wheel drive vehicle could cross the dry, hard pan surface of a salt lake, once that surface becomes wet, that is not possible. Alternatively, one could say that birds can fly in the air, but they cannot fly under the water. Accordingly, I want to know whether we are comparing birds flying in the air in South Australia with birds flying under water in the United States in regard to geomorphological comparisons. I want the Committee to understand that that is the nature of my inquiry. I want to understand the difference in the geomorphology in general terms.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I propose to ask the officers to provide an answer to the important question asked by the honourable member. However, I want to make quite clear for the record, contrary to what the honourable member has stated, that no officer who is present here today has been given any instruction by me whatsoever as to what he shall and shall not say to this Committee.

Mr Johns: The method of extraction of uranium in the United States is based on an alkali leach. The major production centres are in Wyoming and Texas. When the method of *in situ* leaching was first investigated in regard to Honeymoon, that same technology was practised using sodium carbonate with ammonia as a leach aid. However, that method was unsuccessful because of the high salinity of South Australian groundwaters as compared with United States groundwaters.

Because that method was not applicable, the company addressed itself to the use of acid leach, and it is that technology that has proved to be successful in leaching uranium and in obtaining reasonably high recoveries. Therefore, the methods are entirely different in terms of the medium. It was proposed that an acid leach be used here, whereas an alkali leach is used in the United States. I understand that the refusal to grant new licences in Wyoming relate to the acid leach technology and not to alkali leach technology.

Mr LEWIS: How do the geomorphological structures compare? At what depth does the ore body occur in Wyoming as compared to South Australia?

Mr Johns: The ore bodies are hosted by rocks of similar lithology, and they occur at similar depths. In the case of Wyoming and Texas, the rocks are associated with high quality waters, but in South Australia the groundwaters are rather brackish. The mineralisation at Honeymoon is related to an old stream channel rather than to an open basin, so geomorphologically the environment is rather comparable.

Mr HAMILTON: One of the ongoing projects of the Department relates to the low-energy demonstration house. What kind of ongoing project does that incorporate, and what result has been achieved? The Committee would like this information, but more importantly people in the building trade would like information on conservation of energy. I

would like to impart information to those who wish to build similar accommodation.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Dr Messenger will provide that information.

Dr Messenger: The low-energy demonstration house project was funded by the South Australian Energy Council and it was mounted on the basis that most or all of the low-energy houses, or what were purported to be low-energy houses, in South Australia were either terribly expensive or unusual. They were not generally houses that would appeal to a lot of people. It was intended to demonstrate that, in regard to conventional houses, and hopefully project homes, it was possible, without a great deal of expense and without in any way making the house different, to save a considerable amount of energy. On that basis, an agreement was entered into with the Downer Hewett company whereby the minimal amount of changes would be made to the company's Beachcomber house.

Some of these changes were such things as adequate insulation and shading and a pergola and solar hot water system, which together amounted to an added cost of the order of \$3 000 or \$4 000. It demonstrated that, by orienting glass areas towards the north and providing sufficient shade in summer and sun in winter significant energy savings could be achieved. That house was built at Wynnvale and was open for public inspection. A quite attractive brochure was put together showing the features such as adequate insulation in roof and walls, shading from the eaves, north-facing glass, minimum numbers of eastern and western facing windows and a fair amount of thermal mass to store heat from the sun. It was an extremely well presented project that a large number of people visited.

At the same time as the visits, a separate study involving a questionnaire on impediments to low-energy housing was undertaken which resulted in a fair amount of reaction coming from people. The details of this subject will be in a report released fairly soon. Details of the house and its features were presented in a brochure, which will be made available to anybody approaching the Department or the Energy Information Centre. In general, the reaction, either from people interested in building such a house or in obtaining ideas to implement in an existing house, we believe was very good.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I just add that, by chance, last Thursday evening I attended a function at Birkenhead relating to Navy Week and where I met one of the principals of Downer Hewett. He advised me that inquiries they were getting were being followed up and resulting in sales. In their opinion one of the main aims of the project had been achieved, that a low-energy house does not need to be so unusual that people do not want a house of that nature.

Dr Messenger: I add that the only external difference one would note with this house was a roof-mounted solar hot water unit. Nothing else looked different from the standard Beachcomber house. Also, the glass areas were facing north. To ensure that the benefits are quantified there is an ongoing programme to monitor the performance of this house as against the performance of other Beachcomber houses Downer Hewett have built, so there will be a data base to confirm actual savings.

Mr HAMILTON: As the Minister is well aware, the Government has announced a programme involving the spending of in excess of \$200 million on the South Australian Housing Trust programme during the next 12 months. Will the Minister say what consideration has been given to the incorporation of such savings in South Australian Housing Trust homes built in future? Also, what discussions, if any, has he had with the Minister of Housing about this type of home? If he has not had such discussions, will he enter into them with his colleague and other Ministerial colleagues

whose departments will require departmental housing in future? If it is feasible to introduce similar schemes into departmental housing in South Australia there could be considerable savings to the State. Will the Minister comment on whether or not he has had such discussions and whether he is prepared to take this matter up with his colleagues?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have not had discussions with the Minister of Housing about this matter. I know from my experience as Minister of Housing for a short period in 1979 that there is a degree of recognition in the Housing Trust that energy saving methods of construction can be used which provide future benefits for the occupants of the homes concerned. If I remember correctly, the Trust sponsored a dual project in what used to be the electorate of the Hon. Glen Broomhill in 1979. Two homes were built, one as a control and the other incorporating a number of energy saving improvements. A programme was implemented that I did not see the results of because we lost an election at that time. However, various measurements were taken and monitoring instruments installed in one of the houses in an attempt to quantify actual savings in energy and improvements in living conditions inside the house during both summer and winter. Therefore, I am quite sure that there is an awareness in the Housing Trust about this matter. Dr Messenger may be able to provide more detailed information about this matter. I would not be surprised to know that ongoing consultation took place with him, or with his officers.

Dr Messenger: There has been significant interaction with the Housing Trust which, in turn, has tried a number of innovations both in its Grange and experimental houses and in an earth-bermed house, which is somewhat more *avant garde*, situated at Port Augusta. In general, I think the Housing Trust does have an energy policy regarding features that it puts into its homes. Obviously, it is limited by the amount of capital available to it. However, such things as orientation, north-facing glass, shading and concrete floors which go into these houses as a matter of course cost little to do correctly and would be almost impossible to incorporate later. The Trust is putting these basic sorts of energy conservation ideas into its houses, which obviously means lower running costs both in the short and the long term.

Mr HAMILTON: The matter of water needs in the Leigh Creek area was raised in the ETSA report. Will the Minister advise the Committee of the current situation in relation to water resources in that area. Also, what is the current situation in relation to the desalination plant at Leigh Creek? Is it expensive to operate and what is it costing the Government to operate each year? How does the Department expect to meet the water needs of residents and workers in the Leigh Creek area now and in the future?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am aware that there have been some recent further locations of underground supplies in the Leigh Creek area. Beyond that, I will ask Mr Boucaut to give more detailed information to the Committee.

Mr Boucaut: Considerable work has been done over the past couple of years in relation to water supplies for Leigh Creek. The present stage is that more than adequate groundwater has been proven to supply Leigh Creek for the foreseeable future. Of course, the Aroona Dam still exists which will continue to provide Leigh Creek with water in the future. The recent work in that area has proven groundwater of better quality than has previously been found, and ETSA at the moment is looking into different ways of treating this water.

The R.O. plant is specifically designed for water of high salinity—5 000 to 10 000 parts to 1 million of water—but the recent water that has been discovered is less than 5 000 and can be as low as 2 000 to 3 000. Cheaper methods of desalination appear now to be feasible. I cannot quote costs for the R.O. plant off hand, but I know that the one that

is there at the moment is working quite successfully and that another plant is due on line very shortly.

Mr GUNN: I would like to bring to the Minister's attention some of the problems of the opal mining industry. Recently, the Premier was in Coober Pedy. The member for Hartley thinks that it is funny.

Mr GROOM: It has nothing to do with your comments. I want to apologise to the honourable member if he thought so.

Mr GUNN: A group headed by a wellknown Labor Party activist in the area, Mr James, was reported in the local paper to have taken certain actions.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Is he the fellow who tried to muck up the amendments when we were up there?

Mr GUNN: Yes. I will quote from the article, as follows:

On 18 September the Action Committee threatened to blockade the runway and prevent the Premier, Mr Bannon, from taking off until they were granted time for talks with him.

That was a fairly irresponsible course of action. I further quote:

The Premier met with representatives of the Action Committee, Mr Bassett and Mr James, early Monday morning, 20 September.

The article goes on to explain the problems of the opal industry, and the high cost of diesel oil and explosives. Mr James is quoted as saying:

... for too long, the miner who does the hard work and takes the risks, is suffering the most. Governments and the rest of the industry have been ripping the miners off for years through taxes on fuel and explosives and poor prices for opal.

At the end of the article it states:

At the end of the meeting with the Action Committee, the Premier agreed to look into the complaints and reply to the committee within three to four weeks.

Have the Minister and his Department been investigating this complaint? Also, in that article there was criticism of the Chairman of the Progress and Miners Association, which was most uncalled for. Mr James has from time to time been involved in a number of courses of action which have sought to attract a great deal of media attention, but my concern is for the local industry. In view of this representation that was made to the Premier, has the Minister's Department been involved in any consideration of the matters raised with him?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Premier advised me after he had returned from Coober Pedy, I think in relation to the film, *Fire in the Stone*—

Mr HAMILTON: It was a good film, I might add. I watched it last night at the Academy Theatre.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne:—that he had had some approaches while he was in the area and that no doubt it would come through to my Department in due course. I can say to the honourable member that, when I was in the area some month or two before the question of the cost of diesel oil was raised; so was the question of the cost of the explosives, and to some extent the efficacy of the explosives. I undertook, (and did) to get in touch with I.C.I. on my return to Adelaide to see whether some explanation was forthcoming relative to the requests that we had received from the Association about the cost of the explosive. On receipt of that reply I forwarded it to the Association. That would have been not all that long ago. I have not received a response from them, as far as I know, at this stage as to what they thought of the reply.

Whilst I do not recall it now, a reasonable argument seemed to be put forward in the reply. I recall that there was an offer from I.C.I. to be available at any time if any problems were involved with the explosives—as distinct from the cost. I will follow it up now that the honourable

member has reminded me to make sure that the requests made to the Premier are answered.

Mr GUNN: The next matter that I want to raise—I hope that this is the right line; it is a pretty broad area—is the high recent increases in electricity costs.

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Eyre does not need any assistance.

Mr GUNN: That is quite right. I can get on quite all right, even though I am a rather reserved and shy person, without assistance. I want to refresh the Minister's memory slightly because during the period of the previous Government we heard a great deal about the high cost of electricity. The Tonkin Government was accused of using electricity charges as backdoor taxation, and various other scurrilous attacks were made on it. In a document, 'South Australia's Economic Future', with a smiling photo of the present Premier on it, it says at page 50:

ETSA tariff charges illustrate the trend which has developed since Mr Tonkin came to office.

I know that members opposite are unhappy about this; they exploited this matter to the utmost, but when they get a little bit served back to them they do not appear to be enjoying it. However, I will continue.

The article gives a table. In July 1980 the average tariff rise was 12½ per cent; in July 1981 it was 18 per cent to 20 per cent; in May 1982 it was 16 per cent. The article says:

The compound impact of the three increases in ETSA tariffs is in the vicinity of 54 per cent. Under the Tonkin Government, charges for water . . . (and) electricity . . . (have significantly added to) industrial costs.

In view of those comments, what positive action has the Government taken to ensure that electricity charges do not rise? I point out to the Minister that there have been some significant rises in the past few months. Is the Minister prepared to admit that the Labor Party's comments during the previous Government's term were for political purposes only?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not sure what the honourable member is referring to when he says that there have been some significant rises. There have not been any rises in electricity charges, which is the import of the question that he asked me, in the past few months. He is quite correct in pointing out that electricity went up in May 1982 by 16 per cent; at that time his Government was in power. The next rise that occurred was on 1 December 1982 as a result of the gas prices negotiated by his colleague who is sitting on the benches alongside of him. I would have thought that there would have been some reluctance on the part of the honourable member to raise this matter in that respect. I really think that the honourable member has a little tongue in cheek about this question because on other occasions he can be reasonable and he knows that there are certain costs that the Trust, like any other undertaking, has to pass on. In fact, that was the reason for the increase in May 1982, as I recall. The explanation given then was that there were unforeseen increases in costs and charges that had to be met by ETSA, and it was passing them on.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Are you saying that it was backdoor taxation?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not know whether it was backdoor taxation, but charges were increased in May 1982 by 16 per cent. I guess that the honourable member is entitled to draw attention as he has to the booklet to which he has referred, but I can only say that the Government does not actually control the price rises in electricity, as he well knows. The prices are under the control of ETSA itself.

Mr GUNN: I thank the Minister for that information. He has indicated clearly to the Committee and the people

of South Australia that the policy of the Labor Party in Opposition was purely political. Now, with the responsibility of office, the Minister has indicated what we all knew—that the Trust sets its own tariffs. Trust tariffs are set on the basis that it must have a certain amount of revenue to run the Trust efficiently and effectively and to ensure that there is adequate power. The Minister has indicated from time to time that unfortunately it is necessary, as the previous Government found out, for such changes and the Labor Party seems to have two sets of guidelines: one while in office and one while in Opposition. I will take this a little further because some time ago the Minister indicated that the committee, which was looking at the problems of electricity charges, especially in country areas and which is a matter that I have pursued for some time, would make a report. Has the Minister received that report and can he indicate what course of action will flow from that committee's recommendations?

For a long time I have been concerned about the 10 per cent surcharge which applies in certain parts of the State and the charge which applies to certain undertakings operated by the Outback Areas Trust. I refer especially to the problems associated with the Marla Bore enterprise because the actual cost of electricity has caused great problems to the operators of that undertaking.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is surprising, in view of the previous question from the honourable member, that he now asks whether I have a report which will require me to increase ETSA charges in some way to many consumers so that people in the honourable member's district get some assistance. However, I will not be hard to get on with in that respect. I have before me a couple of proposals on the matter raised by the honourable member. I am still giving them consideration, but there is one aspect that I want to check.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What is your thinking?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This matter was raised about three times in the life of the former Government and the former Minister did nothing. It is fair of me to remark on that because I recall the same motion that has been moved in the House appearing then. At least the member for Eyre has been consistent in attempting to obtain a result. He would agree that he did not get any results in the three years of the previous Government, and I indicated to him on one occasion before that there appears to be some areas that need to be looked at. I have had that done, but there are still alternative proposals involved, and I need to work out that which I will support.

[Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: I advise that the required notice of discharge and substitution of members has been given, as follows: Mr Mathwin will replace Mr Ashenden.

Mr LEWIS: What expert advice can the Committee obtain concerning the accuracy of information contained in the e.i.s. on the Honeymoon mine that has been printed and accepted by the Government? There has been expert, useful and frank advice from the people assisting the Minister earlier today about the e.i.s. for the proposed lignite mine at Kingston. Can we obtain the same kind of expert advice about the e.i.s. prepared in relation to Honeymoon, especially as it relates to the likely risk of damage to any underground aquifers in that vicinity? Can mining in the area cause damage to the aquifers and, if so, what is the probability of that damage and, if not, what physical reasons are there for there being little, if no, likelihood of damage?

Mr Boucaut: The Underground Waters Technical Advisory Committee has previously been mentioned. Similarly, the committee, of which I am a member, was in close liaison

with the proponents for the Honeymoon venture. The committee was in agreement with the hydrogeological factors proposed by the proponents in relation to the underground aquifers and the method of extracting uranium using the *in situ* leaching technique. On the aspect of the e.i.s., we were in agreement with what was stated in it. It was also realised that much additional work should be carried out, particularly in relation to the protection of the regional aquifer system. Most of the work that has been carried out to date relates to improving the *in situ* leaching technique. While the company realised that there were other aquifer systems in the area, even though they were saline and of little use but could be used for stock purposes, there was an element of risk in that they might become polluted during the extraction technique.

The next phase of the investigation involved a regional study of the groundwater systems in the area with particular reference to the potential of pollution of those aquifers should an excursion occur during the *in situ* leaching process.

Mr LEWIS: What would expert opinion be of damage to the aquifer, even though the Honeymoon aquifer, to quote expert information, is so saline as to be of little value for stock water purposes, irrigation or anything like that? I am interested to know whether or not you regard any risk of pollution to that aquifer as being greater or lesser than any risk that there may be to the Dilwyn aquifer in Kingston for the mining of lignite.

Mr Boucaut: As previously mentioned, the risk of pollution in the aquifer systems at Honeymoon would be related to movement of pollutants into the aquifer system. The Underground Waters Technical Advisory Committee believed that that potential was low, particularly as the gradients in the water table in the various aquifer systems were very low. The movement of water naturally is very slow, and any excursion from the *in situ* leaching process would consequently also be very slow. So, we felt that there would be ample opportunity, should an excursion occur, to trace and, by wellknown techniques which have been proven, stop that excursion and retain the pollutants.

I still find it difficult to compare that with the Dilwyn formation. That is not a pollution problem; it is an exploitation problem, because of the loss of the groundwater resource. As previously stated, the committee does not believe that the extraction of lignite from the Kingston area will damage the Dilwyn formation aquifer in a regional sense. There will be only local damage within 20 km of the mine site itself.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Does the Minister accept the advice of the expert committee in relation to the further work that it felt was required concerning the protection of the aquifers at Honeymoon, or does he persist with his point that, as problems have been experienced elsewhere in the world, it is therefore not desirable to proceed at Honeymoon because he is not satisfied in relation to evidence of the pollution of underground aquifers?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I can best illustrate my feelings by saying that the equivalent of an e.i.s. was issued in relation to the *Titanic*: something happened that had not been foreseen. I am suggesting that, where there is a doubt regarding the introduction of a new technology, it is not unwise to go on experience already known concerning the use of that technology elsewhere over a long period of time. By way of the illustration, I have attempted to answer the question. I do not necessarily say that any of the technical advice given was wrong.

I am saying that, on balance, the decision taken by Cabinet and the Government in this case was based on genuine concerns and fears that there could be something in the technology that could not be foreseen when the decision was taken.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister advise me what is the future of the Leigh Creek deposit in terms of years and the supply of coal to the Northern Power Station in South Australia? What needs exist in terms of the importation of coal from interstate, which has been suggested in some areas to assist South Australia's needs?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: As I pointed out in general terms earlier today, one of the options that the Stewart Committee was asked to examine was that mentioned by the honourable member. I think the suggestion of the importation of black coal cannot be divorced from the question of the time scale involved. One of the tasks of the Stewart Committee was to try to indicate as accurately as possible, using the best-known methods, what the likely increments of electrical power would be over a succession of years from now. It then had to address a second question and at least offer advice to the Government by way of a report on how those increments could best be met.

I understand that ETSA had some thoughts that, within the time scale involved, in setting up a power station and a boiler to drive the generator, and so on, because of the fairly long lead times, if that was tied to the setting into operation, and so-on, of what might be described as a local mine, the additional time period involved might be such that one could not guarantee, for example, a 300 megawatt station *in situ* and operating in time. I think that is the type of problem that the Stewart Committee's estimates in relation to the likely power needs over the years that I have mentioned suggest (and I am not trying to anticipate the committee's final decision) involves a little more time before a decision needs to be taken than was known before the committee commenced its work. I suggest that in a few more months time we will have more guidance as to what should be done and which fuel should be used to provide the electrical capacity concerned.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister say what is the future of Amdel in South Australia? What specific areas and, in terms of relocation, where will the Amdel Laboratories, and so on, be located in this State?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: A question has been asked on Amdel, but I do not think that it was asked in those terms. I believe that Amdel's future in this State is good. Certainly, I think that it would be fair to say that Amdel is going through a difficult time at the moment.

Mr GUNN: John Scott.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That really has no relationship to the gentleman mentioned by the member for Eyre. The current level of mining activity is affecting Amdel, just as it is affecting other aspects of the industry, such as drilling, and so on. There is an Australia-wide down-turn, and that fact is well known. That has meant at a time of economic decline that the amount of outside work that has normally been readily available to Amdel has been reduced. Therefore, Amdel has been going through a difficult period. I am led to believe by Amdel that the beginning of an improved period is in sight. Hopefully, the level of work that it will be able to gain on the open market will increase.

I think all members would be aware of the expertise, status and standing that Amdel has built up over the years, during periods under Governments of both political persuasions. I do not think that there is any quarrel whatsoever between either Party in South Australia as to the need for Amdel, the validity of such an operation taking place in South Australia, or its valuable work in this field. In relation to any possible moves by Amdel, it is proposed that Amdel move some of its operation to a site at Osborne on land to be negotiated with ETSA. The activities that would take place there would be in keeping with the type of work that already occurs on land adjacent to that site. That does not mean that there would be any activity in relation to the

grinding, measurement or whatever of uranium. The Government believes that that kind of laboratory and/or proving of uranium could quite logically take place at Roxby Downs. Considering the size of the development proposed for Roxby Downs, I think members of the Committee can see why that reasoning is being applied.

It was suggested that Amdel could locate part of its activity as part of the activity associated with Technology Park. The present thinking is that it might occupy some portion of the space in the building that is currently being constructed at Technology Park as part of the Government's effort. That is the situation in respect of any possible move by Amdel. Any move is dependent upon the ability to finance such a move. It would be apparent to the honourable member that, because of what I have just outlined in relation to Amdel's current situation, there would need to be further discussions with ETSA and/or even the Government as to what method of financing might be employed to provide for the moves that I have mentioned.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 111 of the Estimates of Payments and 'Drilling and Mechanical Services Staff' under the Engineering Services Division vote. Why is the 1983-84 proposed allocation significantly less than the actual allocation for 1982-83?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I refer the financial aspects of the question to Mr Whinnen.

Mr Whinnen: The estimate referred to by the honourable member relates to salaries for all persons involved in our drilling and mechanical services function located at Thebarton. The reduction in the proposed 1983-84 budget compared with last year's actual payment reflects a significant reduction anticipated in the number of people employed at the depot.

This reduction in employment will result from two moves. One is the natural attrition of a number of staff who have retired or left the Department's service, some transferring within the Public Service. In addition, the Minister has proposed to Cabinet, and received approval for, an early retirement scheme to be offered to the waged employees of the Department, most of whom are at the depot because the Department finds itself with a surplus workforce capacity of people possessing engineering, drilling and mechanical skills. The reduction is the Department's best estimate of the number of people who will leave and not be replaced or who accept the offer of early retirement.

The early retirement option has been made available to those persons from 1 September until the end of November. We have an indication only at present of who will accept that offer. Those who do so have the right to change their mind prior to the date on which they have chosen to retire. Nobody has done that yet, and we are going out of our way to ensure that people receive good counselling so that they do not make a quick decision and have to change their mind or regret that decision later.

Mr MATHWIN: On page 16 of the yellow book under the heading 'Broad Objectives/Goals', it states:

To stimulate exploration, and to foster development of energy resources and alternate energy supplies.

The paper goes on to mention field investigations and inspections, reports, maps and liaison with industry and organisations involved in energy resource exploration and development, and undertaking or co-ordinating assessments of energy supply options. Will the Minister say how much the Honeymoon joint venturers claimed by way of compensation from the Government following its refusal to issue a licence for that project?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have been asked similar questions in the House. I propose to give the same answer that I gave in the House when those questions were asked: I regard this matter as confidential between the proponents who made

the claim and the Government. I have received no indication from the joint venturers that they wish the amount of this claim to be made public. Until I receive such an indication, I do not propose to release this information.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the member for Glenelg that it would be rather difficult to relate that question to any line in the financial statement presently before the Committee.

Mr MATHWIN: I relate that question to the Mining Division, mining inspection, operation expenses, mining equipment and sundries, mining tenement and resources management, operation expenses and minor equipment and sundries. However, I bow to your ruling, Mr Chairman. Will the Minister say for what period the Honeymoon joint venturers have been granted a retention lease?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I take it that the honourable member is asking whether, as a result of the offer made by the Government subsequent and ancillary to the refusal to proceed—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Not all the questions that I was asked today made sense, but I was not going to mention that. I can only say that, in the circumstances put forward by the honourable member, there has not been any request that I can recall. I indicated earlier today that I have received a letter notifying me of the intention of one of the proponents to apply for a retention lease. Negotiations will then commence. The conditions of leases, as the former Minister knows, are normally discussed and organised by the departmental officers concerned before they come for confirmation.

Mr MATHWIN: My next question relates to a recent visit that I made to Olympic Dam just prior to the fiasco that occurred there, when 100 people were reported to be there. At that time I flew over the area and there was one tent and two people on the road. Will the Government say what action it had taken, before announcing on 28 June that it had approved the Olympic Dam environmental impact statement, to ascertain whether or not there were any sites of significance to the Aboriginal community in the area known as Canegrass Swamp?

On the trip to which I referred, we flew over the area and, although I am not an Aboriginal tracker, I do not think there seemed to be much there to cause the problems that eventually arose. The Minister announced on 28 June that the Government had approved the e.i.s. In his statement, the Minister made specific reference to the approval of the establishment of a northern road corridor from Roxby Downs to Borefield A, from which the company will draw its water supply. The Minister would be aware of the problem here. In fact, the people were good enough to supply the protestors with water. Subsequent to the Minister's announcement, the Kokatha people claimed that this road corridor would interfere with their sacred sites in the area known as Canegrass Swamp. Will the Minister enlighten us on the situation in this area?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Speaking from memory, I think that the announcement was made in June. The Government had already provided funding to the Kokatha people through the Minister for Environment and Planning.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am speaking from memory. When I have finished, somebody can tell me where I am wrong, if he so desires.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It involved \$26 000 or \$28 000.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes. It is my belief that funding had been provided at that time.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Before you approved the e.i.s.?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: At the time of approval of the e.i.s. My recollection is that one of the reasons for the other 12 conditions was that there was a need for the further survey of the area of the Borefield Road to be done by the Kokatha people.

It was this that resulted in the 12 conditions and a couple of side letters, one of which had no reference to the Aboriginal interests, being part of the approval, as it were. However, I might accept the offer by way of interjection of the Deputy Leader and suggest that Mr Peter Hill, who was also involved at the time might either confirm my recollection or, if he is able, correct it.

Mr Hill: Mr Goldsworthy would be aware that during the early days of the project there was some difficulty in getting the Kokatha and the company to talk. During the preparation of the e.i.s. a fairly thorough archaeological survey of the area was done, but the anthropological section of the report remained in limbo. To break the nexus on this, the present Government decided that it would fund an anthropological survey by Rod Hagen, and this was undertaken before the e.i.s. was approved. Previous to this the company had done an anthropological survey of the Borefield Road, and this was carried out by an anthropologist named Hercus, who was a woman. She spoke to the people whom she believed were the Aborigines to whom she should have been speaking.

You will be aware that the Olympic Dam mine site lies on the boundary between a number of Aboriginal tribes. The exact boundary is still in dispute; some tribes believe that it is some miles from where other tribes believe the boundary is. At that time Hercus believed that the swamp was in the northern tribe area, and she identified one site in the swamp. As a result of this, the company moved the road corridor a distance of 400 yards from that site, which it believed was an adequate distance; it said so in the e.i.s. The study done by Rod Hagen took longer than initially intended and, at the time of the approval of the e.i.s., was pending. The actual wording of the approval of the e.i.s. allowed for this slight time overlap.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I want to follow this question of the Hagen Report. As I understand, the e.i.s. was approved in the first part of this year; from memory, I think that it was June; the Government approved that, and the Committee has been told that the Hagen Report was pending. Up until probably three weeks ago, the Government had not seen the report. What is the current situation in relation to the Hagen Report?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Prior to the Government's receiving the report, it was promised on a certain day at the end of the week, but it did not arrive. Prior to that day, officers from the Heritage Division in the Department of the Environment were on site on occasion; I cannot be any more specific than that. The Deputy Leader would appreciate that he is asking me about matters which more properly lie in the province of my colleague, except that I needed to have an oversight and understanding of them in my role as the Minister responsible under the indenture. It is my understanding that those officers saw evidence that survey work was in progress. The report finished up being about a week to a couple of days more than that later than promised before it reached the Government. If I remember correctly, it reached the Heritage Division on a Sunday around mid-day.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Of which month?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: If I had known that the Deputy Leader wanted all this detail, I could have got it all written down, but I did not. I think that I can safely say that it would have been in September, and I ask his leave because I am trying to recollect. It was about the end of the first

week in September; I cannot be any more specific than that; it may have been the second week.

I think that the Deputy Leader also asked me where the report is now. My understanding is that it is with the Heritage Division of the Department of the Environment. For the benefit of the whole Committee, I do not know whether Mr Hill wants to add something to that, because on a day-to-day basis he sometimes has more direct contact with these matters than I naturally do.

Mr Hill: The report has been received by the Department of the Environment, which has studied the report and has been assessing it. The nature of the report is such that quite a bit of assessment was needed. A copy has been released by the author to the company, which contained the first two volumes. The second two volumes are confidential, being records of matters that were given in confidence by the Aborigines to the author. There have been a number of meetings since checking on sections of the report, and this would be the normal thing for any report of this type.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What is the Government's attitude to the statement made by one of the leaders of the group (from interstate) who purported to be spokesman for the Aborigines—his name escapes me for the moment. He said, 'What we are really interested in is a land claim.'

One of the leaked documents which *Nationwide*, for one, sought to clobber the former Government with was a letter. The person leaking the documents had it totally confused or misrepresented the documents, but one of the documents was a letter signed by former Premier Tonkin to the joint venturers who were then in the early stages of negotiation and who were seeking an assurance that the Government would not grant a land claim in regard to any of the Roxby land similar to that granted to the Pitjantjatjara. The joint venturers were not interested in proceeding with Roxby in that circumstance—that is what we clearly inferred. They wanted that assurance before they would proceed. Premier Tonkin sent that letter off and gave the assurance that the Government had no intention of granting a land claim.

One of the spokesmen, and I do not know whether he has departed the scene, but his involvement was great at the time of the Canegrass Swamp controversy (I cannot remember his name, but he came from interstate and was a leading spokesman), said that this was all about a land claim. The clear conclusion was that the business of sacred sites was all about the Aboriginal people claiming this land. What is the Government's attitude to that? That statement put a new complexion on the claims which were suddenly appearing.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have not had any approaches from anyone purporting to making a land claim in respect of the area. This is the Government's position: it is seeking to resolve the concerns of the people who are calling themselves Kokatha (I do not mean that in any disrespectful way), and I am involved in checking claims made with respect to sites, because those people are concerned about sacred sites in the development area and the road. The former Government is on record as having concern for Aboriginal heritage and protection of sacred sites. The Government is to supply funding to allow for the location and identification of such sites, if they exist in the area. That report has been received by the Government. It has gone to the relevant Government department, the Department for Environment and Planning, and is being assessed.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: What about your attitude?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not need to have an attitude: it is not my job to take notice of some person who is described as having said something on *Nationwide* that this was all about a land claim. I have not received any approaches along those lines either from the Kokatha people

who have spoken to me or, in the one case, a person representing them. The whole tenor of their approach has involved their concern for the need to identify and protect sacred sites.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister just will not answer these questions. It is not unreasonable for companies to get, and they want it, the same sort of assurance that they got from the former Government—that this Government will not entertain a land claim in respect of these lands. It has been stated by a protesting spokesman—a leader of the Aboriginal movement whose name escapes me, although I will obtain it at the first opportunity—that this is all about a land claim. It is just not good enough for the Minister to say that he does not have to have an attitude. If the Government is entertaining anything of that nature that does not reaffirm the assurances given by the former Liberal Government to the joint venturers, the whole project is at risk.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The circumstances outlined by the Deputy Leader are hypothetical. The Government has not received such a request on the basis of a land claim that I know of or can recall. The project is not at risk. As far as I can remember, I do not recall approaches from the joint venturers expressing concern that they are placing veracity on this alleged statement by a man whose name I cannot remember (I think I remember the person to whom the Deputy Leader is referring; he was at Port Augusta and then appeared on television although previously coming from interstate). It is funny that both the Deputy Leader and I cannot remember his name.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: He came from interstate and said, 'This is all about a land claim.'

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not disposed to consider a land claim: I am here as the Minister charged with the responsibility of the indenture on behalf of the Government to ensure that the expressed and original desire in regard to the identification and protection of sacred sites is dealt with reasonably and responsibly. That is what the Government has done on this occasion.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Is the Minister saying that he will not entertain a land claim?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have already said that I am not in receipt of any such claim. I am required to listen to matters put forward, more properly to the Minister for Environment and Planning, relating to Aboriginal sites, their identification and location in the area and their protection. I am not called upon to decide on a land claim or otherwise. Normally I do not listen to alleged statements on television or whatever.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister said he knew of the man himself.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not recall his name. I think I said I knew the chap about whom the member was talking, because he claimed that the man was from interstate. There was a person of Aboriginal descent featured prior to and during the blockade as being well known and from interstate, and I assumed we were talking about the same person.

Mr HAMILTON: In regard to page 111 and the reference to the Mining Division and 'Mining Inspection Staff', I see that in 1982-83 the actual figure was \$583 630 as against a vote of \$487 000. Why was there this substantial overspending in 1982-83?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: A similar question was answered this morning. I will provide an answer. I have been in this position myself and it is hard to keep up with all that goes on in the day. The main reason is that the line provides for high priority to be given to the more specialised tasks associated with large-scale underground mining, in compli-

ance with the codes of practice in respect of mining, milling etc., of radioactive substances.

It includes the allocation for inspectorial staff employed at Coober Pedy, Andamooka and Marla. Actual expenditure exceeds that proposed for the previous year because mining engineers received a substantial salary increase in 1982-83. The present increase demonstrates what I have just said about the greater need for priority to be given to inspectorial and other tasks associated with large-scale underground mining, which is being provided for at least to the degree of the funding proposed.

Mr HAMILTON: The Auditor-General's Report, at page 158 under 'Licences, leases and royalties', states:

The audit revealed—

- non-enforcement of fines and penalties for late payment;
- a lack of follow-up of outstanding debtors and royalty returns; and
- a loss in revenue through the non-application of increased licence fees operative from December 1978.

The Department advised that action will be instituted to ensure that fines and penalties are enforced, that outstanding debtors and royalty returns are subject to regular review and that the correct licence fees are applied.

Can the Minister advise what amounts are outstanding in relation to those three areas and what amounts have been collected so far? Why did this situation develop?

Mr Whinnen: Concerning the non-enforcement of fines and penalties for late payment, what is in the Auditor-General's Report is correct. However, I do not think that it expresses the entire story. We have been tardy in the follow-up of the collection of debts mainly because we are running at a bone level of staffing. However, the enforcement of fines and impositions of penalties can be fairly Draconian. It can involve the removal or withdrawal of a lease or licence to mine, usually in relation to people who are active in fairly marginal areas.

If a lease was withdrawn or a person chose not to pay on time and we acted too promptly, we would be reducing the Department's income. So, sometimes by being lenient, but not too lenient, we can collect more revenue and have more people involved in the development of resources. I admit that we did go a bit too far and, as the Auditor-General reports, we have agreed to institute a tighter procedure.

Concerning the lack of follow-up of outstanding debtors and royalty returns, this is similar to the first point. The reason is that royalty returns come into another Division in the Department. There has not been the degree of communication between the Divisions that ought to exist. Again, we have rectified that.

The loss of revenue through the non-application of increased licence fees is significant in that the amount involved since 1978 is in the vicinity of \$40 000. Only two debtors are involved: one is the Cooper Basin partners and the other is the Pipelines Authority of South Australia. There was an amendment to the Petroleum Act and the Accounts Section did not pick it up when it was gazetted. We cannot find any notice where those companies were advised of the change in rates, so the renewal notices that were sent out remained at the old rates. It was picked up in the audit, and we were advised of the error. I point out that it took the auditors four years to find the error as well. We have instituted the recovery of the \$40 000.

I cannot answer the question regarding the value of the accounts involved in the first two points, because it is constantly changing. We have a system of final recovery where we refer our debtors to a private collection agency; rarely do we write off a debt. However, I think that we can lift our game and collect the revenue a little earlier, rather than let it run over and be late. I do not think that it gets to the point of one's acting in a Draconian manner and

withdrawing the lease: one just cannot act too harshly too quickly.

Mr HAMILTON: On page 5 of the Programme Estimates, under 'Implications for Resources', it deals with 'Technological Change' and 'Staff and Forward Plan'. Can the Minister elaborate on the specific areas in which these needs will be met?

Mr Johns: This points up the need to keep abreast of new development. It relates particularly to new technologies that are being developed continually, specifically in the area of geophysics and in the development of geophysical methods. Likewise, it relates to the need for increased use of computers and the assessment of data. So, it is just pointing up that we will increasingly be required to adapt methods to meet changing circumstances in the development of new technologies and equipment.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Concerning the position at Canegrass Swamp, how does the Hagen Report line up with the report and findings of Mrs Hercus? Both these people are anthropologists. Mrs Hercus, an elderly lady with an enormous amount of experience in anthropological studies, particularly in relation to Aborigines, was engaged to ascertain the situation at Canegrass Swamp in relation to these sites. I understand that Mrs Hercus is also capable of speaking the Aboriginal language and can converse with the Aboriginal people. I understand that she came up with some conclusions in relation to a sacred site which was accommodated.

I ask the Minister whether Hagen came up with the same conclusions. I gain the impression from information that I have been given that the situation is a bit like that in relation to economists. One can always get an economist to support an economic theory, whatever it may be. That also applies to political science; it depends on which colour card electors take when they go in to vote. My only contact with anthropologists occurred when, as Minister, Mr Dan Vachon came on the scene to help the Pitjantjatjara people to identify their sacred sites.

Dan Vachon was billed as a French-Canadian. He turned up about three years ago. He was a young anthropologist and I was told that he was a French-Canadian who came out to locate the Pitjantjatjara sites. Some observers have commented to me that they find it hard to understand how a French-Canadian anthropologist could help Aborigines find their sacred sites. Be that as it may, it was anthropologist Vachon who went through the Roxby site initially and gave it the all clear. Of course, in the early days the company was keen to see that it did not fall foul of Aboriginal problems from day one. The company knew that that area would be a minefield, so to speak.

Anthropologist Vachon went through the Pitjantjatjara lands and said that there were no sacred sites. He was acting for the Aboriginal community. Anthropologist Hercus then went through the same area and said that there was one site. Anthropologist Hagen has now gone through the same site and I am very interested in what he has found because, suddenly, there are 40 sites. If anyone can give any credence to these matters, it seems that if you pick the right anthropologist you get the right answer, similar to the situation with economists. How do Hagen's findings line up with Hercus's findings?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is sometimes interesting to listen to the Deputy Leader. Apparently, it is all right to be one kind of anthropologist but not another. He seems to base it on race or nationality; I could not follow that part of his reasoning. I would have thought that the principles of anthropology and the elements that make it a near science would be rather like the situation in relation to the law. Lawyers do not have to come from one country to be sensibly qualified, and so on. It seems a bit rough on Dan

Vachon, because he is a French-Canadian, that he is apparently no good as an anthropologist.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I did not say that at all.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That seemed to be the suggestion in the Deputy Leader's remarks; depending on the anthropologist that one chose, one might get a wide discrepancy. That is true of any profession. We all know that in the medical profession, if one is not satisfied with the advice given by a specialist, one can call in another specialist to look at the diagnosis. The Deputy Leader's question is unusual. I am the Minister of Mines and Energy and I have been asked to pass judgment on two reports. At the present time, I assume that the reports are lodged with the Department of Environment and Planning.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: You said you had a copy.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I did not say that I had a copy.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I must have misheard you.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am afraid that the honourable member did mishear me. I understand Mr Hill to say that the first two volumes of the four-volume report have been lodged with the joint venturers. The last two volumes make up the confidential part of the report which, under the Act, the Aborigines have entrusted to the Heritage Branch. That system seems to work all right and the volumes have been lodged. I assume that the Hercus Report has been made available. In fact, I know that, in relation to the e.i.s., and so on, the Department of Environment and Planning has done that. I am not in a position to comment on how the two reports line up. I understand, from secondhand information, that officers of the Minister of Environment and Planning's staff think at this stage that the Hagen Report has some substance. I have not been able to contribute very much to the Deputy Leader because I think that he has asked an impossible question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am appalled at the lack of knowledge that the Minister has displayed all day. The Minister has refused all day to answer questions of vital importance to him as Minister of Mines and Energy charged with the oversight of the Roxby Downs venture. He has also been unwilling to be frank and provide answers or, indeed, to have available information that is essential to him as Minister to see that the project proceeds without undue hindrance. I suggest that he does not know what the situation is in relation to the sites and what the various anthropologists say from time to time. One only has to read the press to understand that Hercus is suggesting that there is only one site. He knows that Vachon said there were no sites. I wish to correct the false impression that the Minister seeks to give the Committee to the effect that I am denigrating Vachon.

I have stated to the best of my knowledge that Vachon is a French-Canadian who was hired by the Pitjantjatjara people to advise where their sacred sites are located. I do not think that that is insulting to Vachon, because that is a statement of fact. Within a year or two Vachon became one of the chief negotiators to the Pitjantjatjara people, along with Toyne and Gaston from Melbourne.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mrs Appleby): Does the honourable member have a question?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I sure do.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: Order!

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: How does the Minister intend to resolve the question of the veracity of the claims in relation to sacred sites that have suddenly proliferated at Canegrass Swamp?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think that that question is far more sensible than the honourable member's previous question. I do not think that it is within my province to be required to have read both reports from end to end and to make a judgment on them without a qualification in anthropology. Such a suggestion borders on the absurd. I suggest that, in conjunction with the Minister of Environment and Planning and his officers and staff charged with that responsibility, I will be able to come to an opinion and make an assessment of the reports.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Unfortunately, I cannot return the Minister's compliment. The Minister suggested that that was one of my more sensible questions. Of course, the Committee has been told precisely nothing, which has been the case all day in relation to this problem. Can the Minister say whether a track already exists through Canegrass Swamp, whether it has been used for a long period of time, and can he say whether the company is basically seeking to upgrade the track?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I understand that there is a track through the Canegrass Swamp area. I would not say that it goes through Canegrass Swamp because I do not know that to be a fact. Certainly, it is the Canegrass Swamp area that I understand over a period of some years has been used by vehicles for pastoral and other pursuits.

The second part of the question was whether the company proposed to upgrade that track. The answer to that question is that that is one proposal that was considered in an endeavour to resolve the present issue relating to the traversing of the area in the vicinity of Canegrass Swamp.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have a number of supplementary questions but do not know whether I must delay asking those questions in relation to this track that already exists.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mrs Appleby): The honourable member may ask one supplementary question so long as he gets to the point.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The point is obvious. It is perfectly clear that any damage to be done to sacred sites along this track has already been done. The joint venturers are seeking to upgrade this track. Photographs available through the news media and television from time to time have shown the track and the machines on it. Will the Minister say what was the outcome of discussions in relation to upgrading this track, has that option been ruled out, or what is the position available in relation to the existing track?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: A number of alternatives have been canvassed in relation to the Canegrass Swamp area. Mr Hill might be in a better position to offer more up-to-date information than I am.

Mr Hill: Throughout this exercise one of the difficult things has been getting information that seems finite—it has been a maze. Three anthropologists have been through the area and each one has added to the knowledge of it. We have been on a learning curve. It has taken much longer than we ever dreamt it would take to get anywhere with this matter.

The company has built the southern section as far as the swamp and stopped. It is still working on the northern section, which is nearly completed. There have been a number of negotiations proceeding over the past couple of weeks in an attempt to resolve the problems relating to the section of road in between. Those negotiations are still proceeding.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I still have not received an answer from the Minister as to whether or not the company is seeking to upgrade the existing track across the swamp.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: To the best of my knowledge, I have already answered that question. That is one of the alternatives proposed in an endeavour to gain resolution of the ultimate route for the road in this vicinity. Whether or not that was to be a proposition has been complicated by the emergence of other persons claiming to be Kokotha or claiming to have a sphere of influence which encompasses this area of the proposed development. Mr Roy Warren, I think is his name, has come forward in company with other Aboriginal persons and a Mr John Bannon (no relation to the Premier) putting forward the claim that he is the sole person who has authority to decide what are Aboriginal sites of significance, or sacred sites, in the area.

This statement has been contested by other Aboriginal persons and presently the proponents in the matter have been requested by Mr Danny Coulson, the N.A.C. councillor for the area, to attend a meeting either at Coober Pedy or Stuart Creek station. I am informed by Mr Hill that in the end it was held at Canegrass Swamp yesterday. This request having been made and Mr Coulson being an Aboriginal person elected to the N.A.C. council for that region, as members of Parliament we understand that he would have some influence in attempting to get the parties together. I agreed to send a representative from my Department to listen to the discussions that took place. I have not yet received a report on this matter. I do not know whether Mr Hill has received such a report because I have been here since this morning sitting at this table. I will be following up as soon as I can to ascertain what was the result of the meeting. There may have been no result and they may have decided to have another meeting.

I am simply suggesting to the former Minister that this is not a simple question of whether the Western Mining joint venturers decide to do something but has become a somewhat more complicated matter which I believe will be resolved satisfactorily, which the Government and joint venturers want resolved satisfactorily and which I am sure that the Deputy Leader and his Party want resolved satisfactorily. I have tried to give the Committee all the information that I have. I think that the Deputy Leader would know from when he had this job that communications from the more remote parts of the State are not all that sometimes would be helpful in the circumstances, and I am at the mercy of those communications at present. I have told the Committee everything I can remember and everything I know about the present situation.

Mr LEWIS: Will the Minister say why it was necessary to wait until the Labor Party State Council had met before he decided to grant an application for a licence to mine clay for making bricks from a site at the top of Ansteys Hill and another site on the eastern side of Paracombe, near Inglewood, by two companies who applied for that licence early this year? By way of explanation, I point out that, since we are talking about sacred sites, that is one of mine as that is where I grew up and have a lot of friends and relatives. Local people are concerned about the delay that is taking place and, on investigation, it seems that there was no reason whatever for the Minister delaying the granting of this application, other than that the State Council of the Labor Party had not made up its mind whether or not it agreed to the mining of clay from those sites for brick manufacture. If that is the case, it is a pretty sorry state that has come to pass in politics if we have to wait for faceless men to make their minds up about a matter before a Minister can issue a licence to proceed with mining.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The issue of the licence in respect of what I think is called the Johns property—and I am looking for confirmation from the Deputy Leader—is the matter which was being referred to.

Mr LEWIS: Another one on top of Ansteys Hill—P.G.H.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think the one on top of Anstey's Hill is not in question in the way in which the one on the Johns property was at the time about which I am speaking. I received a great amount of representation in relation to the issue of a licence to the Inglewood Brick Company and also from very many residents in the vicinity of the clay deposit on the Johns property relating to whether or not such a licence should be issued, whether it was an absolute necessity for the Inglewood Brick Company, and whether the employment concerned at the Inglewood Brick Company was at risk if the supply of clay was not available. I even received what one might term sensible and reasonable representation on the matter verbally from the member for the area—the Deputy Leader. One can see—and I accept it—that it was a responsible approach that he made to me.

The question with which I was faced was that the residents who were not employed at the Inglewood Brick Company but who lived in the area where the clay was to be mined saw it as a rape of the hills, an assault on the area, and a despoliation of the environment—no term was not used. The number of phone calls that were received at my Ministerial office daily on the matter have not been exceeded by anyone involved in even (dare I say it) the uranium issue, and this was over whether some clay was to be used to make some bricks or not.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Steven Wright?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes, Mr Steven Wright made approaches to me.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Did he live near the clay pit?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not think that he lived nearby, but I think that a relative did. I have never been to Steven's house; so, I do not know exactly where it is, although I think he lives in the area. There were claims and counter-claims as to whether the brick company was just trying to get the clay pit approval and then would try to flog the whole lot without trying to make a profit on it. It was stated to me that as soon as the company got the licence it would make a profit and that the employment was never in question, and so on. I would rather try to adjudicate on Roxby Downs than on that local issue as it blew. I will tell the Deputy Leader that. I wish that the I had some of the exact detail here, but I know that petitions were presented.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Were they genuine?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not know. One does not have the time to check them all out. The council went from approving the clay pit to being open to opposing it in a matter of two or three weeks. I have never had such a thing of such intensity to handle over what I thought was a reasonably straight forward issue. In the meantime, I was also presented with a resolution from State Council that before issuing any licence I should properly investigate the matter in relation to the activity which was proposed to take place. I do not see anything wrong with that. The resolution came into the State Council of the Party from the sub-branch adjacent to that area, which obviously contained persons who felt that they were affected by it one way or the other.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Steven Wright, was it?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Steven was one of the delegates, as I understand it. The whole tenure of the matter was such that up until now I was feeling quite proud of myself that I had managed to satisfy all interests on a reasonable basis by placing fairly agreed restrictions on the lease that provided (from memory) seven years tenure in which it was not transferable. That was applied to take care of the allegation that the thing would be sold as soon as the lease was issued just to make a profit. I visited the site on the ground and met with groups of persons who said that they were residents;

I had no way of knowing, but I think that they were by the way they spoke.

Mr LEWIS: Were they wearing rubber boots?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes, we all were. I think that I was wearing a pair of red ones that were supplied to me. I think that someone took a photograph; I would like to get hold of it so that I could destroy the negative. First, we were able to show that a reduced operation would be still viable for Inglewood Bricks, and that it would not be a despoliation of the environment and everything else that many people feared. The other conditions that I arranged were agreed by Ravenstein; and I thought that that was a satisfactory resolution of the matter. It seems now that for some reason or another the member for Mallee was interested and concerned. As the Minister with responsibility in this area, I am prepared to listen to the points brought forward from residents in an area; I make no apology for that.

Mr LEWIS: I was interested in the Minister's answer and at long last grateful that the matter was resolved when I heard that it was, but I was disappointed that it had to go to the State Council of the Labor Party for decision before he was game enough to bite the bullet.

That aside, I want to turn now to the question of CANE—and not the grass that grows on it. In some part it relates to the Olympic Dam mine. I want to know from the Minister—I put this on record now—whether or not he believes that his statement earlier today is one of balance and credence given that another Minister in the current Government does not view too seriously the activities of the group called CANE, which opposes mining at Roxby Downs, and even acknowledges that funds from his Department may have been used to promote that opposition to the mine. I am concerned, and I wonder whether the Minister is equally concerned, that public funds have been appropriated for the purpose of financing an organisation which is opposed to the development of the mine site at Olympic Dam.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, Sir, with your indulgence, let me take care of a little snide remark made by the honourable member in commencing this question. I did not have to go to the State Council, as he suggested, before biting the bullet. I issued a report to State Council, which was requested by, as I have explained, the sub-branch concerned, which had members who were concerned and lived in the area. The decision to issue the lease was already taken. I think that it can quite clearly be seen that the snide suggestion by the honourable member has no credence.

I really do not know what the hell he has asked me. He did not tell me who the Minister was who has said that funds had been provided to CANE or whatever. I seek clarification from him as to who put up the funds that I am supposed to make a judgment on, or whatever.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the Minister that, first, I did try to interrupt and ask the member to link his remarks to the financial statement. The honourable member's response was that he was concerned that Government funds were supporting CANE. That was the import of his question. He asked whether you upheld the use of Government funds in support of CANE.

Mr LEWIS: And thereby oppose the establishment of the mine at Olympic Dam.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: If the member is referring to the matter that has already been canvassed in the House, when it was alleged that funds were provided in another State for use by CANE in this State to register and voice its opposition and concern about uranium in the nuclear fuel cycle, I remind the member of the answer given by the Premier then in the House that that matter is not within our jurisdiction in South Australia. Accordingly, I cannot give him any more of an answer than the Premier has already given.

The CHAIRMAN: Further, it is my firm opinion that that type of question is not within the Minister's area of responsibility.

Mr LEWIS: I regret that that is your ruling, Mr Chairman, because it was the Minister for Environment and Planning who made that statement before the Estimates Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: He is not the Minister with whom we are now dealing.

Mr LEWIS: It conflicts with the goals of the Minister's policy as stated earlier before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the member not to pursue that question any further and to ask his next question.

Mr LEWIS: I will let my last question pass to the Deputy Leader.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Last year when the Roxby Downs Indenture Select Committee was making its inquiries, two Opposition members (now both Government Ministers) on that committee chose to write a dissenting report on the details of the indenture—a most unusual procedure, I am advised—and in that report the following statement appeared. It was signed by those two Opposition members (this is as recently as May or June last year on behalf of the Labor Party before it had its change of heart on the venture). They stated:

If Roxby Downs is to proceed, it will produce up to 400 million pounds of yellow cake during its life. In the present world scene some of this must find its way into bombs, because existing international safeguard arrangements are ineffective and unenforceable.

Does the Minister still believe that this statement is valid, namely, that some of the yellowcake from Roxby Downs will find its way into bombs? If the Minister has changed his mind on that matter, which was highlighted when the A.L.P. was desperately trying to scuttle the indenture, what new evidence is available to the Minister which enables him to assert that none of the yellowcake will now find its way into bombs? I will not go on and ask another question; otherwise, the Minister will get confused. He is having trouble answering the single question.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will try not to be confused in answering the question. The main change that has occurred since that statement was made is that we now have in this country a Federal Government that will be involved in the contractual arrangements relating to the sale of yellowcake from Roxby Downs. Strenuous endeavours would be made by the present Federal Government to arrange the contractual arrangements to areas where the most stringent controls and non-proliferation requirements, and so on, would apply.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 112 of the Estimates of Payments and the heading 'Administration Expenses'. In 1982-83 \$453 000 was voted and \$444 112 was actually spent, yet in 1983-84 the sum of \$712 000 is proposed. This is a rather big variation. Can the Minister explain the dramatic increase?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: One reason for the increase is that the opportunity has been taken to bring a number of costs under one Budget area in order to provide better control. This line funds all general departmental expenses, telephone, building services, security etc., which cannot be readily allocated to user Divisions. The 1983-84 allocation includes items such as \$238 000 for departmental overheads, \$100 000 for workers compensation, and \$138 000 previously spread to other lines (now consolidated in one area).

Other information that may be of interest is \$50 800 for the transfer of the technical information services, clerical area from the Resources Division, Geological Survey. There is contained in the overall figure in that line a reduction of \$49 400 consequent upon the transfer of the Registration Section to Mining Tenement and Resource Management, and the library to Resource Division, Geological Survey.

As can be gathered from the explanation that I have given so far, a number of internal financial reorganisations have taken place which on inspection are not readily apparent because of the very large increase contained in the Estimates.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 112 'Building and Property Maintenance—Maintenance, minor additions, alterations, etc. to departmental buildings'. The proposed sum for 1983-84 of \$67 000 involves a large increase compared with last year. What is the reason for this?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This is another transfer arrangement, and Mr Whinnen may appreciate giving more direct information.

Mr Whinnen: Last year, under the Engineering Services Division, we provided \$46 000 and spent \$44 800 under the heading 'Building and Property Maintenance—Maintenance, minor additions, alterations, etc. to departmental buildings'. The maintenance and minor additions to the depot were not included in that \$44 000 but were embraced in the general line 'Drilling and mechanical services'.

Consistent with the proposal to bring lines under one person, and to make one person responsible for the entire budget, we have taken the opportunity this year to take out of the Drilling and Mechanical Services budget that amount which was spent on maintenance, added it to last year's provision of \$46 000 and put it under the Building and Property Maintenance Section, part of Administration. The \$67 000 is the grouping of \$46 000 plus that small part spent out of the Drilling and Mechanical Services line on the one line. It has been put under Administration and Finance because part of my responsibility is the building and property maintenance function.

Mr HAMILTON: Can the Minister say what percentage of ETSA clients experience problems in relation to the payment of their accounts? What assistance is available to clients to budget for the ETSA accounts so that they do not find themselves in the position where they may be subject to their power source being cut off? Also, what various types of assistance are available to those ETSA clients?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: ETSA operates a budget payment scheme. Recently, I discussed some details of the scheme with the Chairman and the General Manager of ETSA when they visited me on another matter. Arrangements can be made with the Accounts Section of ETSA for regular payments to be made in advance. I recall an occasion when you, Mr Chairman, advised me that you were able to arrange a facility of this nature for one of your constituents who had a problem meeting the accounts which came quarterly and often represented a somewhat sizable sum of money in relation to the weekly or fortnightly income of the person concerned.

Since this scheme first came to my notice, I have been able to avail myself of that facility for a couple of my constituents. I understand that the scheme has the possibility of working quite well, but that it still requires the person who undertakes it to make a small weekly payment on a budgeting basis and to continue in that vein to enable the maximum benefit to accrue to him.

I wish that I could report that the General Manager told me that there was a high degree of adherence to that method of payment by the people who attempt to meet their accounts in that way. I was told that quite a large number of people do it for only two or three accounts and then stop doing it. I assume that that is because it is difficult for people on lower incomes to put aside even a small amount on a regular basis. The member for Albert Park would know that the Government recognises the difficulty of people on lower incomes. We all know that the ETSA concession scheme was instituted, and this has been of great benefit to a large number of people who find themselves in the circumstances to which the member has referred.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I return to the question that I asked the Minister previously, concerning a statement which appeared in his so-called minority report in relation to what would happen to the yellowcake from Roxby Downs. The Minister's answer will not do. He cannot hang his hat on the new Federal Government. The Labor Party did a switch for the State election last year. The Minister signed the minority report, which said:

If Roxby Downs is to proceed it will produce up to 400 000 000 pounds of yellowcake during its life. In the present world scene some of this must find its way into bombs, because existing international safeguard arrangements are ineffective and unenforceable.

The Labor Party did its switch in time for the State election in November last year. It had not spruced up Mr Hawke to be Prime Minister and it had not even knifed Mr Hayden at that stage. The fact is that the switch was made in the latter half of last year soon after the Minister signed the statement.

Can the Minister tell the Committee of the evidence which enabled him to confidently support his Leader in saying that Roxby Downs would go ahead? If the Minister cannot give us that evidence, does he now believe that that is an insignificant fact, and that he believed then that bombs would be made from some of the yellowcake at Roxby Downs?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The total quantity of yellowcake and the statement that accompanies it was made taking cognizance of what had occurred in the history of the nuclear fuel cycle. During the period since that time there has begun to be a far greater awareness all over the world of what ought to be the peaceful use of nuclear energy and what ought not to be the use of products involved in nuclear energy, that is, for non-peaceful purposes. I believe that the scene throughout the world, which is supported almost daily in the press, is such that there is a world-wide revulsion against the possible use of atomic weapons in warfare. I am hopeful enough to believe that that is a continuing tide that will not ebb—that it is going to increase. I still stand by my statement that my feelings are such that, with a Federal Labor Government in power, when contracts are negotiated, they will be negotiated under very strict controls in relation to the ultimate use and destination of yellowcake.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has changed ground yet again. I pointed out the irrelevance of his statement that we had in 1983 a Labor Government federally. The Minister previously sought to hang his hat on the fact that we had a Federal Labor Government. Did he have the foreknowledge of that Labor Government when he changed his mind before November for the State election?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Everyone in Australia knew where Fraser was going.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Perhaps I am helping to rescue the Minister. He was able to change his mind after a few months, having signed that minority report, and scuttle the Roxby Downs indenture. He was able confidently to change his mind. He has now changed around and said that this happened because the world scene was changing. I do not believe that one scrap more evidence was available to the Minister before November than was available to him in June last year. It will be fruitless pursuing this line of questioning, because obviously the Minister was desperate to scuttle Roxby Downs. They were thrashing around to find reasons. The Minister made this statement. Either he believed it in June or he did not. My hunch is that he never believed it. Obviously, the Minister cannot answer the question.

One area of considerable interest to the Opposition and public of South Australia relates to what is happening to

exploration in South Australia. I made some statements when the Liberal Party was in Government concerning the levels of mineral hydrocarbon exploration, and the Minister sought to decry those statements. I believe that the statements were factual and indicated that in 1981-82 something like \$82 million was spent on mineral exploration, which was more than was spent during the whole 10 years of the Dunstan decade: those pace-setting years.

However, the Dunstan Government certainly did not set any pace at all in relation to mineral exploration and discovering the resources of this State, which would have added to the general pool of wealth that would enable us to finance some of the social welfare initiatives that were so dear to the heart of that redistributive Government.

How many companies are currently exploring for minerals in South Australia, and what is their commitment in terms of money during this year? I do not mind whether the figures are provided in relation to the financial year or the calendar year. What are the levels of exploration in relation to the amount of money committed, how many companies are involved and what are they looking for? Previously, companies were exploring for copper, uranium, and some coal. I am also interested in the levels of exploration in relation to oil and gas. Is it a fact that all the offshore licence holders have now withdrawn from their commitments? What is the situation across the whole exploration scene?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think the Director-General might have information that is of value to the honourable member and to the Committee at large.

Mr Johns: For the 1982 calendar year, 96 companies were engaged in exploration for a diversity of mineral commodities throughout a wide area of the State. The particular commodities of interest with regard to Stuart Shelf exploration, which was a Roxby Downs style of exploration, saw \$26 million expended. With regard to copper, \$2.6 million was expended, and the figure in relation to coal was over \$6 million. The Minister also mentioned diamonds, and something like \$2.5 million was expended on that commodity. Total expenditure in 1982 amounted to \$45.469 million.

The level of exploration activity this year is difficult to establish. Companies are required to report on a quarterly basis. Since they are required to report from the date on which licences are granted, inevitably there is a lag over a quarter. It is very difficult to establish the precise level, although there is no question that it is down on last year. This relates in part to the coal sector, where deposits of coal have been identified at a number of centres. We have canvassed those matters one way or another this afternoon.

There is an expectation now that some decisions will be made in relation to the development of one or other of those deposits. It is a fact that coal exploration is down considerably on the \$6 million expended last year. I am not saying that it has cut out entirely; a certain amount of exploration is continuing at all the deposits, but it has tailed right away from last year's exploration level when I suppose decisions on development had not reached the stage that they have now reached. Of course, in regard to what one might relate to exploration for uranium, which is a principal mineral of interest, there has been a marked reduction of activity. Having said all that, I believe that exploration is continuing at perhaps a slightly reduced level on what was the case this time last year.

With regard to the search for petroleum, the Director of Oil and Gas could provide more precise figures in relation to commitments both onshore and offshore. While we recently received surrenders for four areas offshore, several have been granted onshore. The surrendered licences relate

particularly to what I regard as light-weight explorers. The Director of Oil and Gas will provide more precise figures on the commitments.

Mr Watts: Total expenditure for 1981-82 on petroleum exploration amounted to \$24 million offshore and \$50 million onshore, making a total of \$74 million. For the financial year 1982-83, the offshore figure was \$4 million, and onshore it was \$49 million, making a total of \$53 million. In relation to future projections, most petroleum companies set their budgets around this time. I have canvassed their plans for next year and the estimates are \$12 million offshore and \$60 million onshore, for a total of \$72 million. The overall figures seem to have returned to the high 1981-82 level. The large figure in 1981-82 of \$24 million offshore relates to two offshore wells which were drilled in that year and which cost between \$11 million and \$12 million apiece. This year we will probably have one offshore exploration well, costing about \$8 million.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I would be very interested to know whether we are comparing like with like. I want to isolate the Cooper Basin from this level of activity because to lump it into this comparison gives no real indication of the level of interest in exploration throughout the rest of the State. We all know that there is a Cooper Basin resource. The Minister knows full well that part of the deal he seeks to denigrate (a deal that the Pipelines Authority was charged with negotiating for gas supplies, energised and assisted by the former Government and me as Minister) was that the producers had to, for the first time, make a commitment to a specific exploration programme for gas of \$55 million minimum. Will the Minister isolate the expenditure in the Cooper Basin? Obviously the producers are interested in proving up oil because that is a bonanza. They are now compelled to spend money looking for gas. To get a true picture of what is happening and of the level of interest in mining in the State, we must look around the rest of the State.

I was puzzled by the figure given a moment ago when it was said that one well off-shore would cost \$8 million when the level of expenditure was reported earlier as being \$12 million for an off-shore well. I am interested in the net figure and in more detail of what off-shore licences are still extant. When we came to Government there was not one off-shore oil licence in place and no exploration going on at all. When we left office every available area had been offered and taken up for off-shore exploration. I think, from memory (and I suppose this would include the Cooper Basin), something like \$440 million was committed to be expended over six years. I would like a finer breakdown of what is happening off shore in relation to oil exploration and what companies are involved if, in fact, there is more than one well to be drilled for a cost of \$8 million. And if the Cooper Basin expenditures are taken out, what is the comparison of expenditure around South Australia?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Chairman, I am not sure that I understand what the Deputy Leader is talking about.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I think that the officers will know.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The officers will be able to provide some figures. It seems to me, as long as we are considering like years with like years, that there was activity in the Cooper Basin and that, therefore, there should be some incremental difference from year to year. I ask Mr Watts to provide the break-downs requested.

Mr Watts: The accelerated gas programme this year is budgeted to cost \$19 million. Over a three-year period the amount will be \$55 million, or something less than \$20 million a year. The rest of the expenditure I quoted for 1983-84, which totals \$60 million, is emphatically oil oriented in the Cooper Basin; so out of the \$60 million an amount

of \$19 million is dedicated under the accelerated gas programme. The remainder is oil exploration which will accidentally find some gas, but not a great deal.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

Mr Watts: Not totally. I will come back to that.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest, Mr Watts, that you ignore interjections.

Mr Watts: Very well.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That was not an interjection.

Mr Watts: I have the figures and merely have to pick them out. It is true that the two wells drilled in 1982 in the Poldas Basin cost \$11 million to \$12 million apiece. These wells were drilled at a time of great rig shortages. There is now a glut of off-shore rigs and the price has dropped dramatically, so the deep off-shore well planned in the South-East this year is scheduled to cost \$8 million. That is as a result of having excess rigs in Australia. The other question concerned the number of licences off shore and on shore. There are currently 14 such licences. As Mr Johns has said, five off-shore and one on-shore licence have been relinquished in the past 18 months, and three have been granted. Two of the licences, E.P.P.17 and E.P.P.20, relinquished were relatively inactive licences. A newcomer in the past 18 months is E.P.P.21 where there has been an active seismic programme.

There will be another one starting in December. Perhaps I could consult my notes and come back later to this question about splitting out Cooper Basin expenditure. Most of the \$60 million is contributed by the Cooper Basin, but approximately \$1 million is assigned to on-shore work outside the Cooper Basin, but I can be more precise about that later.

Mr HAMILTON: I address my question to the Minister in relation to approval given by the Department of Mines and Energy to conduct limited exploration activities along the strip generally known as the western face of the Heysen Range, on the inside of the Flinders Ranges National Park. The Minister will recall issuing a press statement earlier this year. In part, on page 4, it states:

Cabinet has approved a two-stage programme, each stage to take about three months to complete.

Further on, in the last paragraph on page 4, it says:

Stage Two is detailed geological mapping and geochemical sampling.

Can the Minister advise whether these stages have been completed? If not, what work has been carried out, and what further work is to be completed in relation to this project?

The Hon. R. G. Payne: The advice that I can give the honourable member is that we are certainly part of the way along the second stage. I gave some information to the House a couple of weeks ago in respect of that work. At that time I was able to make public the exact details of the work that has been done, including the methods of entering the park area—the way in which equipment is brought in, and so on. Hopefully, I was able to allay the fears that a number of persons, and also the conservation movement, expressed when the Government first announced the decision that this limited exploration activity would take place. Members will recall that the whole aim of this limited programme was to be back-up work associated with an attempt to target suitable areas for the location of lead/zinc feedstock for the Port Pirie smelters—no doubt well out to the west and outside the park.

Although it took some time, I believe that the genuine nature of this work and the fact that the details that have been announced about it are correct and accurate in respect of the aim of the work have resulted in its being accepted by the public, and to some extent by the conservation groups. I understand from the reports that I have received

from the field parties that there have not been any inspection visits, that have been seen or observed anyway, by the field parties from the conservation groups, although, as promised, there has been liaison on site and consultation with Department of the Environment people. I trust that the completion of the work involved will proceed in the way that it already has.

Mr HAMILTON: What projects in relation to rehabilitation of quarries, etc., have been set aside from the Extractive Areas Rehabilitation Fund this financial year; and in what specific areas will that money be spent, and what are their locations?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: A question along these lines has already been asked, but I will ask Mr Hill whether he has any additional details that will be of benefit to the Committee.

Mr Hill: I do not have those figures with me. I will supply them tomorrow.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 113 of the Estimates of Payments and the item 'Oil and Gas—Exploration and development—Operating expenses, minor equipment and sundries'. The sum of \$106 000 is proposed. I cannot recall this question being asked, but what is the current status of the accelerated gas programme, in particular, the massive hydraulic fracturing programme of tight gas sands?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will ask Mr Watts to provide details.

Mr Watts: As has been previously stated, the accelerator gas programme is scheduled to expend \$55 million on gas exploration over the next three years—1983, 1984 and 1985. There are three components in the programme. A wildcat drilling programme aimed at discovering new gas fields is to be preceded by a 1400 line kilometre seismic programme. After a slow start this seismic programme has been completed; in fact, there are 46 line kilometres more. Because the wildcat wells were contingent on the seismic—there were some problems in choosing locations and they were delayed until later in the year—two wildcat wells are due to spud within the next two weeks. The two wells are Pondrinie and Childie. The Pondrinie well is to address a large stratigraphic trap in the northern Cooper Basin, whereas the Childie well is a more conventional anticlinal trap.

The second component in the programme is an appraisal well programme. Appraisal wells are designed to convert possible reserves into proved and probable reserves; that is, possible reserves that occur adjacent to known fields. This year's programme has five appraisal wells scheduled. Only two have been currently drilled: Dullingarie No. 26 and Toolachee No. 22. The results of these were somewhat disappointing in that they only proved up about 32 billion cubic feet between them. Dullingarie No. 26 proved up 30 billion cubic feet, whereas Toolachee No. 22 proved up only 2 billion cubic feet.

The appraisal well programme was to be continued with Kidman No. 3 well but, following representations from the Department, and as this well was only due to address 20 billion cubic feet, it was felt to be too small, and therefore was replaced by Moomba South No. 1, which reached base-ment yesterday and, although we have only just received the logs, it seems that it has been a fairly successful well and could have added between 50 and 80 billion cubic feet to the reserves.

The third component is the so-called tight gas sands programme. As I mentioned previously, quite enormous quantities of gas in place are mapped in the Cooper Basin of these so-called low deliverability gas reservoirs which require massive hydraulic fracturing. In this year's programme there are three wells, with two in the Big Lake field. The Big Lake field is a conventional Permian gasfield which has

been on production for many years but, underlying this free-flow gas zone in the lower Permian, are two tighter reservoirs which contain gas in place of 3 trillion cubic feet. Big Lake 29 and Big Lake 30 have been drilled and cased but have not yet been massively fractured.

The massive fracturing is still being performed on the Big Lake 27 well, so we could have no result from it. However, Big Lake 26 and Big Lake 27 were drilled under the SAOG sole risk programme. Results are available from only one of these wells. So far the results have been fairly encouraging. Flow rates from the two formations tested were 5.3 million cubic feet a day and 4.7 million cubic feet a day, which was a significant increase over the pre-frack flows. The credible feature of these massive fracks is their ability to flow over long periods. It is not good if they peter out after a few months. Big Lake 26 has been put into the gas-producing network and will be produced over the next six months when its performance will be monitored. It is difficult to assess reserves on a per well basis. If I was asked to attribute reserves on an individual well basis, it is extremely difficult.

Big Lake 29 we might assign 20 b.c.f. and Big Lake 30 we might assign 80 b.c.f. But the results so far give us increasing confidence, especially in the Big Lake gasfields, that we may have a minimum of 500 b.c.f. of gas, and it could be considerably higher. So, the scenario this year, as mentioned previously, is a firm commitment to an expenditure of \$19 million, which is the amount scheduled for the programme in 1983.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am interested in the drilling programme of the Department. The only officer who sat facing me all day was the man in charge of the drilling section. I am interested in any details in relation to the Department's drilling programme.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I refer the honourable member's question to the Principal Engineer, Mr David Lock.

Mr Lock: The drilling programme this year, as in previous years, is really based on a priority and funds system. It is divided into three sections: first, water resource evaluation and assessment, which takes into consideration the Great Artesian Basin Rehabilitation Programme; a stratigraphic programme that is a geological investigation programme, and a mineral investigation programme. On this basis a series of programmes is selected and then costed. According to their priority and funds available, the programmes are completed. Possibly some of the major programmes this year in the water resources area are in the Murray Basin on salinity investigations, Wanbi/Pinnaroo on groundwater resources, the metropolitan area on ground water resources, and the rehabilitation of the Great Artesian Basin.

Pollution studies are to be conducted in relation to buried sheep following the South-East bush fires and pollution, also in the South-East, in relation to factory waste. In the mineral investigation stage we have done some drilling at Orama Hill for a gold project and other projects are proposed in relation to gold. We have done some seismic shot-hole drilling in relation to mineral investigation. We have proposed a couple of stratigraphic wells in relation to petroleum and underground water; one in the Poldia Basin and one in the Great Artesian Basin. I think that about covers it.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I thank the Minister and particularly the officer for that useful information. I return to the subject of exploration. Mr Johns stated that there had been a significant downturn in uranium exploration this year. If I recall correctly, the major interest in South Australia was for copper and uranium. There has been a marked fall-off in coal exploration in this State. Did Mr Johns say that there had been a marked decline in exploration for uranium? What is the position in relation to copper, because I understood that the two minerals were linked?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I call on the Director-General, hopefully to provide the information to the Committee in time for the vote to be considered.

Mr Johns: Yes, those are the facts. When I referred to the downturn in interest with regard to uranium, I was relating that to uranium as the principal mineral of interest in the search for what one might term Roxby Downs-style mineralisation, and where there is an expectation of copper and other metals, interest has increased quite markedly. Of course, a lot of that relates to the activity at Olympic Dam itself.

Mr GUNN: I rise on a point of order. In view of the fact that there are a number of other questions to be asked, would I be in order moving for an extension of time?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Eyre is completely out of order. There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Minister of Mines and Energy, Miscellaneous, \$640 000—
Examination declared completed.

Works and Services—Department of Mines and Energy,
\$1 200 000—Examination declared completed.

Works and Services—Australian Mineral Development
Laboratories, \$230 000.

Chairman:

Mr G.T. Whitten

Members:

Mrs J.E. Appleby

Mr E.S. Ashenden

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy

Mr R.J. Gregory

Mr T.R. Groom

Mr G.M. Gunn

Mr K.C. Hamilton

Mr I.P. Lewis

Witness:

The Hon. R.G. Payne, Minister of Mines and Energy.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr K. Johns, Director-General, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr M. Whinnen, Director, Administration and Finance, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr P. Hill, Director of Mining, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr W. Boucaut, Chief Geologist, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr D.K. Lock, Acting Principal Engineer, Department of Mines and Energy.

Mr T.R. Watts, Director, Oil, Gas and Coal Division, Department of Mines and Energy.

Dr M.J. Messenger, Director, Energy Division, Department of Mines and Energy.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Amdel was in some trouble recently in relation to its staff levels and profitability. Can I have a quick report on how Amdel is overcoming those difficulties?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In consultation with me as Minister and officers of Treasury, arrangements are being made which will have the approval of the Government to maintain employment at Amdel at about current levels.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Does that mean that taxpayers will be subsidising the Amdel operation to a greater extent?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: No, not at this stage. I can advise that there are proposals which might well prevent the further subsidisation that the Deputy Leader has referred to.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: When will those proposals be known to the Parliament?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The proposals are currently under consideration. No doubt when we get back into the Parliament I will make this information known by way of an answer to a question or in some other way.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed. I thank the officers who have been in attendance today for their indulgence and the frank manner in which they have answered questions.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.59 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 5 October at 11 a.m.