

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 1 October 1985

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairman:

Mr G.T. Whitten

Members:

Mr E.S. Ashenden
 The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy
 Mr R.J. Gregory
 Mr G.M. Gunn
 Mr K.C. Hamilton
 Ms S.M. Lenehan

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: According to procedure adopted previously, I will first call on the Deputy Leader to make a statement, if he so wishes, and then call on the Minister. Questions will be directed to the Minister and not his officers. However, the officers may be requested at any time to supplement an answer or answer the question. I will allow three questions from one side of the Chamber, to be followed by three questions from the other side of the Chamber. Does the member for Kavel wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I welcome the opportunity to renew my acquaintance with officers of the Department of Mines and Energy in their annual pilgrimage to the Estimates Committees. Anything that I have to say is no criticism of them. I have the highest regard for the expertise of the officers in that department and share some of their undoubted frustrations, to which they cannot give voice. Nonetheless, the record of the Government in this area of mines and energy has been nothing short of miserable. In relation to all the areas that should be of concern to this State, we find procrastination, indecision or downright opposition from the Government, because of its policies, to what we should be doing—developing the resources of this State for the ultimate benefit of all citizens.

To briefly illustrate what I am talking about, the uranium policy of the Labor Party has even managed to throw a cloud over Roxby Downs. The Japanese cannot understand a policy which says that some mines can go ahead and some cannot. Significant sections of the Labor Party do their darndest to stop even that. After the Premier flew to Japan there was the report 'Blow to Roxby as talks fail', which stated:

It was revealed at the weekend by Mr Bannon that Japan had doubts about the long-term security of supplies from Roxby.

I can testify to the truth of that statement. I have had conversations with the Japanese since the event—Japanese at the highest level—and they tell me that they are looking for long-term security. They have doubts about it when other places in the world do not appear to be quite so eccentric as Australia. What was said in that report has been confirmed to me.

Only three years ago, in an addendum to the Roxby Downs indenture, which the Minister signed, he did all he could to throw cold water on the project. If the Minister wants further elucidation, I am only too happy to give it to him as the Committee proceeds. In the State budget we saw exaggerated claims from this Government, who has now taken this project to its bosom, indicating that a commit-

ment would be made by the joint venturers in September. That was echoed, along with the commitment for a balanced budget, by some of the commentators of Adelaide and South Australia that there would be a commitment in September. I will be very surprised if there is a commitment before the due date, which is in December; however, we will wait and see.

There has been no commitment to date from the joint venturers as was proclaimed in the budget papers. Any doubt over Roxby Downs is the direct result of the initial opposition of the State Labor Party, the continuing difficulties with their federal colleagues and the significant left wing section in their Party, who want to stop even that. One can understand the perturbation and the difficulty the Japanese have in looking down the track. The Labor Party closed the door on the other mines and closed the door on Honeymoon and Beverley. This is the last budget committee we will have before a State election so I think it is in order to just briefly review the three years record: the Labor Party banged the door shut there and threw people out of work; the Beverley office only closed down about two months ago; and the Labor Party banged the door shut on uranium enrichment.

We read in the budget papers on the one hand that the Government's aim is to promote further processing (page 5 of the Estimates). We had the chance of attracting a \$1 billion industry but that was sacrificed on the altar of the Labor Party's policy on uranium. On energy planning we had presented to the House quite recently about 10 pages on this much vaunted energy planning. The Government is setting up two new committees and getting rid of the energy council, although it is funded in the budget, to set up an energy forum. The Government has had FEAC to advise it but, when you look at the scorecard and the runs on the board, you see that the major energy planning problem that has confronted the State is the question of gas contracts with the Cooper Basin producers.

My view is that the other facets of energy planning pale not into significance—but they certainly pale in terms of what we must do to ensure South Australia's security in terms of our gas from the Cooper Basin. The Government's record there has been nothing short of abysmal. Here we are at the eleventh hour with the pressure of the State election on the Government and it is announcing phoney electricity tariff cuts. The people close to the scene tell me they had no choice. The Government can announce an electricity regime with a cut in tariff—measly though it is, it is a cut—and they do not even know what they are going to have to pay for the primary source of fuel to generate 80 per cent of the electricity.

Together with a lot of other Government announcements, that is completely phoney and irresponsible. They told the ETSA board that it had to agree. I do not know what assurances the Government gave them in terms of the cost of fuel. It would have to be predicted on an initial drop in the price of gas, I would suggest, to about \$1.50 a gigajoule, and the Government will not come clean on that. Their record has been quite abysmal.

If we look at the other areas which should be of importance to a Minister of Mines and Energy and a Government, we note that the mining board failure was downgraded; I suppose that was a minus for the department from day one. The Minister is well down the pecking order of the Labor Party hierarchy and that reflects the lack of importance they attach to this portfolio—the development of our resources.

If one discounts the exploration taking place at Roxby, the mineral exploration picture is pretty miserable. There has been an accelerated program in the Cooper Basin as a result of an agreement which was much criticised by the Labor Party but which for the first time dictated that there

had to be exploration solely for gas in the Cooper Basin. If we discount Roxby Downs and the Cooper Basin, there is a pretty miserable picture.

Another area which should be of concern to the Government but which it has shrugged off is the overriding desire of the Federal Government to take charge of all Aboriginal affairs and land rights claims in the State. The Government has been questioned on this matter and the Minister of Community Welfare has back-pedalled fast to try to defuse this as a possible election issue. He says, 'No, we have gone as far as we can with Aboriginal land rights' and the Premier has said the same thing—'Softly, softly, go no further'—but the plain facts are that the Federal Government wants to take decision making from the State Government and institute a claims mechanism that will allow for further land rights claims in South Australia. That is a fact. The Government is trying to sweep it under the carpet, but that is the state of play. The Government has done nothing to resolve the problem of exploration in the Pitjantjatjara lands, a problem with which we sought to deal and which we would have resolved (and we will resolve it when we are re-elected), but this Government has made no real effort to come to grips with that problem so that that land remains, and will continue to remain, unexplored.

The Government is not prepared to take on the Federal Government over this land rights legislation, but Premier Burke is prepared to do that. Perhaps it could be argued that Premier Burke has more to lose, but this State has a lot to lose. A lot of our land could come under claim as a result of the Federal Government's proposals. If the Federal Government has its way, the State Government will be forced to set up a claims mechanism with an arbitrator deciding whether or not mining will go ahead. There will not be a peep from this Government but, fortunately, there will be plenty from Premier Burke, who does not want to hand over his authority in this important area to the Federal Government.

The Government has a particularly miserable record over its three years in office in relation to going about the business of developing this State's resources in one area where I believe there was a real chance to expand the economic base of South Australia. The Government has turned away hundreds of millions of dollars, but it could not turn back the clock in relation to Roxby, I suppose. It was refreshing to note that, after saying that Roxby was a mirage in the desert, members opposite took it to their bosom, but the damage had been done and continues to be done while Governments with the record of this Government are in office and while a significant section of the Labor Party cannot be controlled.

It gives me no joy to say this (and I reflect in no way on the officers of the department) but I believe that the Government has a lot to answer for in terms of where South Australia could have been at this stage if there were more enlightened policies in this area of our activity.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the Minister to make his opening statement.

The Hon. R.G. PAYNE: One can always rely on the Deputy Leader to be consistent at least in these matters and essentially present the same arguments as he has presented previously. Undoubtedly the words were somewhat different but the essence and topics advanced by the Deputy Leader hardly varied in any detail whatever from his comments in previous Estimates Committees. I suppose on a scale of 10, he gets 10 out of 10 for consistency, even if he does not score that high on the grounds of sense, logic and reasonability.

What the Deputy Leader referred to first, and he did the same last year, was the undoubted frustrations of the officers. Having disclaimed that he had anything to say about the

officers, he then went ahead and said something about them. He imputed to them motives and feelings about which he had no way of knowing. It is an improper way of handling such matters. I would say that none of the department's officers present today has indicated any frustration in these matters, and I will leave it at that; that is proper in the circumstances.

The Deputy Leader went on to say that the Government was guilty of procrastination and indecision. However, he was unable to point to any occasion in the three years when the Liberal Party was in Government when it had taken decisions of any real importance or benefit to the State in the areas to which he has referred. As to the gas situation, we could point out that the only step taken of any note by the previous Minister, the present Deputy Leader, was to sign us into an arrangement which saw the cost of gas to all South Australians rise to its present level and which this year is even greater than the cost paid in New South Wales.

Indeed, it might be better to be guilty of procrastination and indecision if what the Deputy Leader did is the alternative. However, I do not accept that we have been guilty of procrastination or indecision. He referred to the uranium policy of the Labor Party. He did not say much more than that, other than to argue that in some way it was upsetting and difficult for the Japanese to understand, and that recently he had found unnamed persons from Japan still concerned over the effects of the ALP policy on this matter.

It is only a matter of some weeks since I spoke to the Japanese Ambassador. He visited South Australia and we canvassed this very area, that is, the question of ALP uranium policy both at federal level and the policy applying in South Australia. The Japanese Ambassador assured me that he had a complete understanding of our policy and, secondly, he assured me that he understood exactly where South Australia stood in regard to the possible supply of uranium to Japan or any other suitable customers approved by the Federal Government.

It seems that the Deputy Leader was not talking to the sort of person to whom I was talking—the Japanese Ambassador to Australia. In fact, as to the words used by the Deputy Leader 'long-term security', that was one aspect which we canvassed and on which understanding was reached.

The Deputy Leader then went on to talk about those hardy annuals, Honeymoon and Beverley. He said that we had not helped the State or the firms. However, just prior to my going into hospital (I think that was the correct time) I was visited by one of the senior proponents of the South Australian Uranium Corporation, that is, the Beverley project, and that gentleman said that there is no doubt that we saved the State from an awkward situation and also saved the company from much expenditure because, as is well known, there has been a change in the market in relation to uranium.

If the Deputy Leader wishes to quote remarks that I made in a report some three years back (and he mentioned that report and held up a document), he should know that part of that report refers specifically to the future marketing of uranium and likely difficulties that would occur. It did not say that there was no possibility, but the remarks implied that there was a change in that early bullish scene of the 1970s. It said that it would be more difficult to market that product.

He referred also to enrichment. It almost seems as though he is asking a number of Dorothy Dix questions because I was discussing this very topic only a few days ago with Mr Ron Wilmshurst, Chairman of the Uranium Advisory Committee, which is advising the Government on the nuclear fuel cycle. One of the areas discussed was uranium enrichment. He says that there is a downturn throughout the

world in this area, that one plant in America is being closed, and that there is excess capacity already available throughout the world; so it seems that we may have had a rather awkward white elephant on our doorstep if we had taken the sorts of steps that the Deputy Leader says we should have taken.

One thing that the Deputy Leader did say which makes sense and about which I can cheerfully say I agree with him 100 per cent, relates to the matter of gas contracts: other events in South Australia pale into insignificance in comparison to that matter. It might come as a surprise to the Deputy Leader when I tell him that I agree with him. It might be hard to believe that we can agree on anything, taking into account our relationship over the years: however, it is a fact that this is a very important topic.

The question of gas contracts and their renegotiation, involving future supplies of gas to South Australia at a suitable price, has been addressed vigorously by this Government for the whole of this year and negotiations have been taking place for that period. Those negotiations are still in progress, so I do not propose to add details about those discussions. I simply refute the statement that the Government has done nothing about this matter: on the contrary, negotiations are in progress. I thought that the honourable gentleman rather spoilt that area of agreement when he said that here we were in the twilight of the Parliament before an impending election. As I remarked earlier, we were even closer to an election when he negotiated that famous agreement to which I referred earlier.

During the past few days I have considered the remarks of the member for Hanson a few days ago when debating the motion for the Estimates Committees. I thought that the honourable member made some sensible points as well as some with which I did not agree. The point he made was that the object of these committees is an exchange of information for the benefit of people in South Australia and not the personal aggrandisement of members of the committee, including the Minister being examined. I propose keeping in mind what the member for Hanson said, so I will not use words which perhaps come easily to my lips but which are perhaps not conducive to the climate to which I have just referred.

In the same spirit as that displayed by the Deputy Leader, I conclude my remarks by pointing out that it is a pity that in supporting various arguments he puts forward he persistently refers to unnamed persons who are close to bodies such as the board of ETSA, or whatever. In referring to his view in relation to the 2 per cent cut in electricity tariffs to apply from November of this year, which has already been announced by the Premier and which he attempts to dismiss out of hand as something phoney, I can assure him that the thought of a reduction in the cost of electricity is not a phoney matter to consumers outside this place.

Many people realise that, in effect, that is a real change in price of much more than a 2 per cent cut, compared to what could have taken place and what often took place under the regime of which the Deputy Leader was the Minister concerned.

In order to further those same objects that the member for Hanson spoke about only a few days ago, I will conclude my remarks by saying that the question of land rights for Aboriginal persons in South Australia is not strictly an area that is my direct province. This matter was raised by the Deputy Leader. I simply say that the assurances that I have had in a discussion with Mr Holding, the federal Minister, are that the legislation proposed by the Commonwealth is not supplantive legislation *per se*. It is legislation which is primarily directed at States that do not have suitable equivalent or parallel legislation. I see no reason to doubt what Mr Holding has indicated. There has been no evidence so

far that it is not the substance of what the Commonwealth has in mind in this matter and I have accepted his viewpoint up to now.

In relation to entry to the Pitjantjatjara lands, the Deputy Leader made one of the weakest statements that I have ever heard him make. We know that he is quite an able person in his choice of words and that he makes some pretty good statements at times. However, when he wanted to refer to our effort in relation to entry to the Pitjantjatjara lands, he said that his Government had a good record in that area, and said 'We sought to resolve that impasse which took place some time back,' during the time that he was the Minister concerned. The record shows that he did nothing at all to resolve the matter. There is no doubt in my mind that no real effort was made and it is very easy in hindsight to say that they sought to resolve the issue. This Government is addressing the matter and I trust that it will, in the interests of South Australians, come to a suitable conclusion.

The CHAIRMAN: During the answers to questions, the Minister may state that he will obtain information for the Committee at a later date. I ask that the information should be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard*. I also ask that those answers be in the hands of the Clerk by 18 October.

Mines and Energy, \$17 965 000

Witness:

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

Departmental Advisers:

Mr R.K. Johns, Director-General.
Mr T.R. Watts, Deputy Director-General.
Mr M.F. Whinnen, Director, Administration and Finance.
Mr M.J. Messenger, Director, Energy.
Mr P.R.H. Hill, Director, Mining.
Mr R.A. Laws, Director, Oil, Gas and Coal.
Mr W.R.P. Boucaut, Chief Government Geologist.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I want to start off by pursuing this important question of gas supplies, both in terms of quantity and price. It is interesting to hear the Minister admit that his Government started negotiating this year—this year, mark you—this question of supply and price of gas. The Minister says that I am consistent, and I take that as a compliment, because the major issues have not changed for three years. At the first opportunity I have raised this question of negotiations. As I pointed out, I, as Deputy Premier, Mr Carmichael, the then Chairman of Santos, and Mr Anderson, the Chairman of AGL, were undertaking at the highest level to try to resolve this problem. The Minister says that negotiations started this year. I have the transcript of the budget of 1983 when I questioned the Minister about this. He admitted that the Premier had done nothing for the 10 or 12 months up to that budget. I asked the following questions of the Minister: When will the Minister commence negotiations about the matter? Who does he intend to negotiate with? Does he believe that such negotiations are worth while? When will he start negotiations with AGL? Who will he be dealing with? The Hon. R.G. Payne, 2½ years ago, said:

I certainly had a meeting with Mr Williams then and I had a previous meeting earlier this year.

I took this matter up in Parliament. The Minister has always been very bullish about gas supplies until this year, when the eleventh hour was closing in on him. Two years ago,

on 19 October 1983, in a ministerial statement, the Minister said:

Today's announcement is a landmark—

this is in relation to about five years supply of gas—

finally laying to rest the myth that gas supply to South Australia would cease in 1987. The Government will be seeking increased effort in gas exploration and development from the producers to further enhance the security of South Australia's long-term gas supplies. Security of supply and price will be the key issues for discussion with the producers in ensuing negotiations.

This is in 1983. He continued:

The Government's efforts to pursue gas sharing, the establishment of a petrochemical plant and to deal with the question of the AGL/PASA price differential are continuing.

That obviously ground to a halt until the beginning of this year. Therefore, the Minister misled us two years ago when he made that statement. He has always been very bullish, and has said that I was always pessimistic. Here we are, at the end of this Government's term, with nothing concluded. It has got nowhere with AGL. I do not know what it did with AGL. On the same day I asked the Premier a question about the ministerial statement and said:

What discussions has the Premier . . . had with the New South Wales Premier or others in relation to rationalising the gas prices paid. . .

The answer by the Hon R.G. Payne, who took the question, was:

I am not saying that this question is totally solved to date. I am saying there has been some progress in a matter which needed to be solved; I am confident that further progress can be made, as I have indicated in the statement given to the House today.

He concluded with this note:

I have had indications from Mr Williams of AGL that it is very happy to enter sharing negotiations, and these matters are inextricably linked: the question of price, the price paid, and the question of sharing. So, I indicate, in answer to the question, that the matter is being addressed—

this is in October 1983—

that the proper time for disclosure of what is proposed is when it is commenced, and that at that time the Deputy Leader can expect further information.

Today the Minister says they started negotiations at the beginning of this year. What sort of record is that? This Minister has now admitted, after all this optimistic hoo-ha to try to paper over the problems of the past 2½ years, and said that it is the number one energy planning problem; all the rest pales into insignificance.

I have been pressing the Minister for three years about this matter. I have already indicated that he said two years ago that the Government was going to do something, yet today he says that it started at the beginning of this year. When does the Minister think these negotiations will be completed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think that the Deputy Leader is in an area of misunderstanding as to what I said earlier today. When I said that negotiations were in progress during the whole of this year I was referring—and he well knows—to the question of further supplies of gas to South Australia and a suitable price, in relation to negotiations with the producers—not gas sharing—which is the subject of some of his earlier questions.

In fairness, on reflection, the member for Kavel may realise that that is what I was referring to in my remarks today. The Deputy Leader also suggested that I was bullish in a ministerial statement I made to the House on 19 October 1983. My recollection of that ministerial statement is that what I said to the House was that, as Minister, I had been informed by the producers that a certain scene prevailed in relation to gas supplies to South Australia. Of course, that was a duty I would have in that circumstance, having been advised by the producers at that time.

One other matter that bears a passing reference is that, in his earlier opening remarks today, the Deputy Leader sought to show that in some way—as he put it—my position in the Party hierarchy indicates how the Party in South Australia regards the question of gas and so on for the people of South Australia. However, within minutes of the honourable member making that statement, he detailed to the House that a question from the Opposition—in that marvellous process of the Opposition quizzing the Government and keeping it on its toes and so on—to the Premier was immediately referred to me. I assume that that might indicate that, at least in the eyes of the Premier, I have some sort of status in the hierarchial structure.

I do not want to dwell there any longer. I point that out to show how quick the honourable member is on his feet without opening his eyes and seeing where he might be stepping. I think that we can all see that the honourable member has put his foot in something that was on the track. He concluded by asking me when the negotiations I referred to earlier will be completed. That is a circular question. They will be completed when they are completed, obviously. They are negotiations in progress—negotiations of a highly sensitive nature. The Deputy Leader knows that, because he had some goes at it in his time. Those negotiations are still taking place.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That is hardly a satisfactory answer for the public of South Australia. Back in 1983 the Premier said that he expected the question of the differential in gas price to be resolved in a fortnight. In the *Sunday Mail* of 18 September 1983, when I was trying to urge the Government to some fairly effective action, an article entitled 'Settlement soon on gas prices' written by Randall Ashbourne of the *News* and *Sunday Mail* shows why the Premier passed this matter over to the Minister when I asked him a question in the House. The article states:

Premier Bannon hopes to settle the gas price row within a fortnight. Neither he nor the energy Minister, Mr Payne, would be drawn yesterday on the Government efforts to equalise the price paid by South Australian and New South Wales gas users. It is not known at this stage whether South Australia will pay less for Cooper Basin gas or New South Wales will pay more.

So it goes on. However, the Premier was going to fix it up in a fortnight. Then we have this latest hitch to these negotiations that were reaching finality. The same journalist (Mr Ashbourne) reported confidently in the *News* about a fortnight ago that we were right on the eve of settlement. Yet, here the Minister is saying, two years later, that it will be settled when it is settled. What is the public to believe—that two years ago within a fortnight it would be fixed? Who is on this negotiating team? I have been told that the team has changed five times this year. That may be an exaggeration, but I know the team has changed. Who is currently on the team? I understand that the Premier has had to step in at the eleventh hour because of the impending election, and that the Premier took it over from the Minister. The Premier and the Deputy Premier are involved. Of course, the Deputy Premier, as Minister for Environment and Planning, has always had it over the Minister of Mines and Energy in this Government. We know that. Who is currently on this negotiating team?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Let us deal with some of the peripheral persiflage first. The Deputy Premier took part in the discussions, not as the Minister for Environment and Planning, but as the Acting Minister of Mines and Energy, so that disposes of who was superior to whom and who was standing over whom and so on. As the Deputy Leader knows, I was ill and was not on the scene.

Members interjecting:

The **CHAIRMAN**: Order! Interjections are out of order and, as the Minister answers them, he is out of order. I ask that the same courtesy be shown to the Minister as the Minister has shown to the Deputy Leader.

The **Hon. R.G. Payne**: To a degree, that also explains why I was not taking part in some of the negotiations for the period 24 July to the end of August. I could produce a medical certificate saying I was not fit to work from 24 July to 1 September; that would show why I did not take part in the negotiations. Enough of that.

One of the things that never fails to amaze me is the way in which (never mind who causes the problem) he will demand why someone else does not fix the problem, even though in many cases he was the one who caused it. In the question he has just asked me he asked what we were going to do about the price differential that applied in South Australia with respect to gas pricing *vis-a-vis* New South Wales on 18 September 1983, less than one year after he put us in that position. That is a fact. We do not have to sing any songs, strike out any compositions, or whatever: the Goldsworthy agreement for the three-year period 1982-85 is well known and its content is well known.

The agreement had singular salient steps: South Australia will pay that much in the first year; a 21 per cent increase in the second year; and a further increase in excess of 20 per cent in the third year. That is why we got into that position. I can understand why the Deputy Leader keeps plugging away trying to defuse what is the real scene and who put us in it. If he can throw up enough smokescreens, perhaps some of it will hang in the air long enough to make him feel better about it.

I want to give the Deputy Leader full credit at least in one area: he obviously has a conscience, because he keeps bringing it up. He knows that he is the one who did it and he cannot avoid airing it before all of us—this is something that bugs him. I will tell him that it bugs me and it bugs a lot of people that we were put in that position, but it was a contractually binding arrangement which a successive Government had to honour.

The Deputy Leader asked who made up the negotiating team. There has been more than one level of negotiating. There are occasions when officers are discussing matters with equivalent officers in a number of the producer proponents who are parties to the existing arrangements. On other occasions there has been a change in the people doing the negotiating, just as there has been a change in the membership from the producers side that has been at the negotiations.

At the present time negotiations are being conducted by Mr Bruce Guerin of the Premier's Department and the Premier has been involved in discussions; since my return to duty, I have attended meetings with the Premier and the producers. Some belief appears to be in the mind of the Deputy Leader that we have a fixed or hierarchical arrangement that we will not allow somebody else to be involved in negotiations for a period and then not be required. I do not see what he is driving at, but those are the people who have been involved in recent discussions.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The **Hon. R.G. Payne**: Yes, on occasions Dr Malcolm Messenger has been present. The membership is not set in concrete and depends on the topic or the area of negotiation.

The **Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY**: That is interesting. In fact, the negotiating team has been a movable feast, as I was told. Mr Chairman, you will allow me to correct some of the statements which the Minister has made and which are not factual. The only defence for the Government's lack of action and the disastrous situation the State finds itself in, because of the Labor Party contracts written in the middle seventies, is that the Goldsworthy agreement led to

the subsequent problems. They have tried hard to sell that publicly, with little success, because it is not factual and the public is interested in what is happening at the moment and the record of this Government.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The **Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY**: We will clear that up a bit later when I get the call again. Let me just restate the facts for the Minister so that he knows what they are and then he can have full knowledge of the deception he is seeking to promote to the public. As I observed earlier, I probably would have had a libel case—and probably still have—where the Government put out their blurb and attributed the 12 per cent increase in ETSA tariffs at the beginning of their term entirely to the Goldsworthy agreement. In fact, the Goldsworthy agreement ameliorated the ETSA increase from 19 per cent to 12 per cent.

However, let me just highlight the inaccuracies of what the Minister said today. There was a legally binding arbitrated decision in 1982 for \$1.10 for gas to South Australia, retrospective to the beginning of 1982. The Minister says that in the next year prices rose. In fact, we managed to get agreement—and all the major users were in agreement—that that would be reduced from the beginning of 1982 and that there would be no increase in 1983 from the arbitrated decision and that there would be two further steps with some guaranteed exploration on top of that.

The decision for AGL had not yet been made and, in due course, that came in under the South Australian arbitrated decision. The Minister is seeking to delude the public. The fact is there was a legally binding decision for an 80 per cent increase in gas price, which was the result of the Labor Party's contracts. Let the Minister get around that—the fact that the Government of the day sought to ameliorate that and hold it and to then agree two steps, which were agreed. We did not do this in isolation—we had the Pipelines Authority there, which is legally responsible for the deal; we had the Gas Company there; we had ETSA there and we had Adelaide Brighton there, the major commercial user.

Do not let the Minister try and say that next year they went up 20 per cent; in fact, the prices went down in 1982 and were held steady for 1983 and thereafter there were two agreed increases. However, that has run its course anyway and the public are worried about what is happening now. Do not let the Minister keep hanging on to that, because it will not fly. The fact is that there was an arbitrated decision for South Australia which was higher than the arbitrated decision for New South Wales and we were addressing the question of doing something about that if AGL came in at a lesser price.

That is past history and the Government wants to watch its step because there is a fair case for libel in the statement it put out not all that long ago. That was at a time when the Labor Party seemed to be sensitive and took out libel suits all around the place. The Minister does not seem to know what is going on. I believe that I would have a very high chance of success in regard to what was said, because it was completely false.

We should put the record straight. We cannot let the Minister get away with a complete misrepresentation of the legal situation. An 80 per cent increase was arbitrated and in due course the AGL arbitration came in at less than that. How far has the Minister got with this gas sharing arrangement? He said two years ago that it was an important part of the package. In fact, AGL is guaranteed gas until 2006, and that is part of the problem—it is not only price and supply. How far has the Minister gone with the gas sharing arrangements with AGL? Two years ago he promised to keep us informed, but we have had nothing at all from him except, 'We will wait and see.' I do not believe that the Government has even got the negotiations off the ground.

AGL went to arbitration about a fortnight ago in relation to its price, and that seemed to indicate that the Government has got exactly nowhere in terms of an agreed package with AGL. How far has the Minister got and who is negotiating with AGL?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will address the question of negotiations with AGL later. I refer first to the increases that were agreed as part of the Goldsworthy agreement for the price of gas in South Australia from 1982 to 1985. The former Minister said that all the parties had agreed, and he named some parties. To my recollection, that is the first time he has ever gone as far as naming parties.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I have named them frequently; the Minister just did not listen.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not recall that they were named, but I note that they have been named now and I ask the Deputy Leader, if ETSA agreed to that schedule of charges, why is a former General Manager of ETSA making statements at public meetings in South Australia criticising the prices that were agreed at that time?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The board of ETSA agreed.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Now we can see who is running and ducking for cover.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Does the Minister think that the General Manager would have agreed to a price reduction?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have requested the honourable member not to interject and now I am telling him that interjections are out of order. I ask the Minister not to answer interjections.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister is asking me questions, Mr Chairman. That is his problem—he does not know.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: At least those present realise the importance of what I have just said, judging by the reaction of the former Minister. Quite clearly, there is more in that area to be explored on some other occasion, and it may well be explored, because I have had a little bit of contact with some of the people who, the former Minister says, agreed at that time. Perhaps we can develop that argument at another time.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister should approach the Gas Company and Adelaide Brighton Cement. They were in it. The Minister asked me questions, so he must want answers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It seems to me that the question of the gas sharing negotiations can best be answered by my explaining my approach in relation to the future supply of gas to South Australia. This is one matter with which the Deputy Leader would not quarrel, and I do not believe that members would quarrel with it for too long. There have been too many statements about how much gas has been found and how much is likely to be found in South Australia.

In order to decide who gets gas and in what quantity, it was necessary to undertake a totally independent assessment. I put this proposition to the producers and to AGL. After an initial period of consideration, there was agreement. On behalf of the Government I stated that the Government would accept the situation as outlined by the independent consulting group. In the event, it took a few months for the consultancy group to be agreed by the three parties. The Deputy Leader would understand that a number of consultancy groups in this area were competent to carry out that kind of work but unfortunately some had had previous contact with one or more of the producers,

with AGL, or with the producers and AGL. So that all parties would agree that the consultancy group was independent, it took some time to come up with the names of people who were acceptable to all parties. The members of that group were Messrs Coles, Niki Foruk and Panel, the last being an international firm of consultants. That group was agreed by the three parties. If we were in another scene, the Deputy Leader might agree that to achieve agreement on a matter like that was not a bad effort. That was one occasion on which I was not procrastinating on behalf of the Government as the Deputy Leader has accused me of doing.

The assessment is in progress and when it is concluded it might be more appropriate to determine whether there is any gas to be shared rather than to determine who will share it. I believe that I have been sensible in tackling this matter. Before we share something, there has to be something to share, and that is what the present exercise is about. Future citizens of South Australia will be grateful that that assessment was carried out. I would like to commend AGL and the producers for accepting that that was a way to establish, not once and for all, because this is not an exact area but in all probability the reserves and the known gas situation.

Mr GREGORY: The Bremer River has been a source of pollution over a number of years. The source of that pollution varies—it includes sewerage panels in the upper watershed, the old Mount Barker tannery and the Brukunga mine. What is the department doing to reduce the effects of that pollution?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have some knowledge of the effects of the Brukunga mine in that area. The question of the pollution of any watershed or body of water is very important, and we have seen evidence of this in the past few days. Mr Peter Hill, who has had direct involvement, may be able to comment.

Mr Hill: Earlier in the year the E & WS Department and the Department of Mines and Energy carried out a study of the Brukunga area to see what had to be done to ameliorate the problems there. The problems come from two main sources: pollution in the creeks—before it reaches Brukunga—and from acid water escaping from the tailings dam and mullock dumps in the actual mine itself. The pollution of the creeks before the water gets there has been reduced. On the Nairne or Mount Barker creek side the tannery has closed and there is no more pollution coming from that. Any pollution from the sewerage ponds in the headworks of the creeks that runs through the mine has been reduced. If there is any pollution the acid from the mine precipitates it.

In the actual mine area, with the help of Amdel and E&WS engineers a careful survey has been carried out of where the pollution is coming from and a number of reports have been written. We have put up budgets to the two departments and the two respective Ministers asking for more capital works to be carried on the lime plant. That work has been approved and we are reasonably confident that we can now empty the tailings pond in three or four years. From the pollution coming from the mullock heaps we intend putting in another collection point. We are reasonably confident that we can catch most of it before it goes into the creek.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister indicate the extent of savings achieved through the program of Government energy management, and the basis upon which this program has been reflected in reductions throughout the budget?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Government's energy management program was announced some time ago with the aim of making suitable energy savings in the considerable spending on energy use by the Government, including the

use within buildings of airconditioning and lighting, liquid fuels for motor transport, and so on. When the Government entered into this program—it was approved by Cabinet—we had the advantage of knowing that in New South Wales, I think, a similar program had been instituted that aimed to make a saving of about 10 per cent of the Government's energy bill. If one takes such figures and applies them to the South Australian scene, especially the figures that I saw at the time the project was commenced, they showed that we might make a saving of about \$6 million a year. That was the original proposal. Since then there has been much progress on the original program, both assessing where savings can be made and in devising methods of how the program should work and how the use of modern technology can be brought into effect to achieve the savings. In order to provide the Committee with some of the detail and information of the savings already made, I will ask Dr Messenger, Head of the Energy Division, to provide additional information.

Dr Messenger: As the Minister said, one of the first things one has to do, and we were able to benefit from the experience in New South Wales, is to ascertain the nature and use of energy, determine the costs and zero in on what the potential savings might be. In the first stage of the project we undertook an extensive survey of exactly where energy was being spent in government. We then identified areas where savings could be made most readily. In all, the Government spends about \$70 million a year on energy. Two areas on which we have not yet zeroed in are the E&WS water pumping system and street lighting. We have identified about \$7 million that can be saved. Before that can be tackled the question of cross-charging and the way in which individual departments are responsible for their energy budgets has to be tackled, and that is being worked out with Treasury. It limits the \$7 million saving target to about \$5.6 million, which is an area that can be immediately evaluated.

The approach adopted was to look at how this could be phased in over a number of years. The Government's approach was to gradually identify and progress these projects to build up to a reasonable proportion of the \$5.6 million savings target over time. As an incentive to departments it is intended that half the savings will flow back to departments to be spent on other projects under the control of the Minister. This year we are looking at a target of \$1 million, which we will achieve. Next year it will be \$2.2 million and then building up to \$3.5 million and progressing thereafter.

As to the types of projects, the most obvious and easiest one to implement is lighting savings. This year we have identified lighting savings of \$237 000, much of which simply involves fitting in with the demonstrated or established code, using more efficient lighting arrangements and simply better maintenance procedures, including cleaning the tubes and so on. That \$237 000 will be obtained at a capital cost of about \$86 000. That is simple and straightforward.

Some of the more complicated areas involve airconditioning, where there will be improvements in efficiency, better use of the quantity of fresh air introduced, and optimisation of the use of chillers and other components in the airconditioning system. About \$378 000 worth of savings can be achieved for a capital outlay of about \$320 000. The important point involved here is that most of the capital outlay is less than or similar to the savings achieved. In other words one is getting one's money back or in one year, which is either a high level of outlay of funds, after which savings continue with no further outlay or simply a payback within a year. That is a good project and a good saving for the Government.

A third area involves boilers and heating plants in government buildings. About \$150 000 can be saved through a

capital outlay of about \$180 000. Savings of about \$1 million are on the way to being achieved with no reduction in the level of comfort, in many cases via better microprocessor control system and general surveys through buildings and departments. They are a far more efficient and effective control of a plant as well as reducing the cost of energy involved.

That sums up where savings are being made, and the fairly impressive magnitude of those savings. These savings and the levels that we are achieving are effectively equivalent to levels of achievement in New South Wales and Victoria.

Mr GREGORY: The Roxby Downs developers are not yet committed to the project: are they continuing to develop the underground workings, or did most of this work cease when the feasibility study was completed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My knowledge of the work is somewhat dated as the last time I was there was some months ago when I attended with a party of eminent members of the Uranium Institute and interested potential customers for Roxby Downs.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Is it a little better than a mirage now?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The question of Roxby Downs has never seemed to me to be a mirage. The Deputy Leader seems to have doubts about it, I assume, from the words he is using. I have no doubts about that project. I expect that a notice to commit will come forward in due course from the proponents. I look forward to that happening and to the benefits that it will bring to the citizens of South Australia as that project goes ahead under a Labor Government. On the occasion of which I am speaking I saw evidence of work progressing. Mr Peter Hill, Director of Mining, is best fitted to tell us what is the current state of play in relation to this matter.

Mr Hill: When the feasibility study on the Roxby Downs project was completed by Fluor there was really no requirement for the company to continue developing the mine until it was in a position to sell the product and give a project notice for the project to go ahead. In fact, development has continued at the mine. There are roughly 120 people employed in the mine. The 28 day period of development is continuing at the rate of about 300 metres a period. They have completed a total of five ventilation shafts as well as the Whenan access shaft. There is much underground drilling completed each month—in the area of 22 000 metres per period.

The lower level of the mine has been developed over an area of about five kilometres by one kilometre. Adding that development to development on the other two levels gives a total development of 8.5 kilometres of underground development. There has been close to one million tonnes of rock moved. That is a sizable development for a mine even after committal, but before committal it represents a very large investment.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I will pursue the question of gas supplies. All the Minister has been able to tell me about where they have got with AGL is that they have agreed to get an independent assessment of the reserves in the Cooper Basin. The Minister said in 1983 that the question indicated that Mr Williams of AGL was very happy to enter into sharing negotiations and that these matters were inextricably linked with the question of price—the price paid and the question of sharing. I agree.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I said that very well, did I not?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Let us pursue that matter a bit further before the Minister gets too excited about this newfound measure of agreement. I agree that the question of reserves (that is, how much gas there is in the Cooper Basin), the question of AGL's involvement and the price are linked; there is no doubt about that. There is

plenty of gas there. If the Minister's predictions are fulfilled, obviously that will affect the price. When does the Minister think the reserves will be delineated?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My understanding is that we should be in the position sought by the Deputy Leader in mid-December of this year.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister would then surely agree that any question of setting a long-term price should await the delineation of reserves. I agree with him that the questions of price, sharing and reserves are all linked. Does the Minister intend to persist with his public statements that we have almost agreed a price before he knows how much gas is being talked about?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: What the Deputy Leader is seeking to do is play a game of semantics which will not benefit him, this Committee or the people of South Australia. The negotiations taking place with the producers cover a range of areas, such as further supplies, price, conditions under which gas will be delivered or taken, etc. There is a whole range of parameters involved. The Deputy Leader knows that, when one is in a negotiation phase, to try to prise from a Minister (in this case me)—a party to those negotiations—details of that nature is a gross breaking of the commercial confidentiality which currently applies to those negotiations and which has been upheld by both groups to the negotiations to this point in respect of public announcements on that topic. I do not propose to supply the kind of information that the Deputy Leader seeks.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister cannot dodge the fundamental issue in that facile way. The question of price is linked with supply. I remind the Minister again that in 1983 he said that the question of how much gas we have, which is not yet determined, is inextricably linked with the way we will pay for it.

The other leg of this triangular question is where AGL fits in. I did not ask the Minister to disclose details of confidential negotiations with the producers, who seem to be the only people with whom they are negotiating. AGL has gone off to arbitration so that very important sector has been completely neglected by the Government. I am not asking the Minister to give me details of commercial negotiations: I am asking whether he still believes that the question of supply, the amount of gas reserves, and price are still linked as he thought they were two years ago, or whether he does not think that: that is what I am asking, in plain terms.

I believe that they do. He agreed with me. In the one breath he is saying that he does and in the other, he is not, and they are off fixing up prices without knowing what are the reserves. I am asking a plain question. It has nothing to do with the commercial negotiations. Does he still think that they are linked?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes.

Mr HAMILTON: In the light of the attitude or stated policy of the Liberal Party in terms of privatisation, can the Minister advise as to the likely consequences and effects upon ETSA should that be implemented? God help us if the Liberal Party comes into office next year.

Mr GUNN: I rise on a point of order. This matter in relation to privatisation does not appear in the budget documents. Secondly, the Minister of Mines and Energy is no authority on the policy of the Liberal Party and he is therefore in no position to answer for the Liberal Party. Thirdly, if the honourable member wants to seek information about the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Opposition's office or the Leader would be very happy to provide the honourable member—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Lenehan): There is no point of order.

Members interjecting:

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Mr GUNN: Order! Madam Chairman, I have had some experience in chairing these Committees and I take strong exception to being cut off when I am endeavouring to explain what is an important point of order. I was about to conclude my remarks by saying that it is not within the province or the authority of the Minister of Mines and Energy of this State to give an answer which relates to the policy of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. Therefore, I ask you to rule the question out of order, as being inadmissible.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, I will take advice. I am going to rule the point of order out of order because we are dealing with the Government's responsibility for ETSA under the Minister's lines and the financial implications for ETSA which the question has raised.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I take a further point of order.

Members interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would the Committee come to order, please.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We are examining the lines of expenditure which the Government proposes to undertake during the ensuing 12 months. Those lines are quite clear and, in fact, the Government's program is under examination. That is what this Committee is all about. I would dearly love to move disagreement, but we would have to go through all the nonsense of getting here tomorrow at 9.30 and that acts as a deterrent. I would dearly love to move dissent to your ruling, because it is absolute nonsense. We are examining the lines of the Government's expenditure, not inviting the Minister to comment on Liberal Party policy, which he does not know about anyway. What this has to do with the Government's line of questioning, I do not know.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: It is to do with the fact that the question raises financial implications for the Government. As we are dealing with the financial lines over which the Minister has control, the question will be allowed on that basis and I have sought—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Would the honourable member not interrupt the Chair. I would sought advice from the Clerks and I am going to allow the question to proceed.

Mr ASHENDEN: A further point of order. The question is hypothetical because it asks about the Liberal's so-called policy of privatising ETSA when the Liberal Party does not have such a policy. I therefore ask how the Minister can answer a question which is based not on fact but which is purely hypothetical?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. I allow the question because it involves Government expenditure.

Mr ASHENDEN: Could you explain how a question can be in order when it is not based upon fact but is hypothetical? At the start of the question, the member for Albert Park asked about the Liberal Party's policy to privatise ETSA. I have made the point that that is incorrect and that the Liberal Party does not have any such policy, so how can a Minister answer a question which is not based on fact?

The CHAIRMAN: From what I understand of the question, it is asking what financial effect would a hypothetical case cause. I will allow that question.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It certainly is a question which has very wide ramifications. I was very interested to be assured by the Deputy Leader and other members on that side of the Committee at the moment who assert that there is no policy to privatise ETSA. I assume that that means they have had second thoughts and are supporting Mr Howard in his thinking on these matters—at least from what I have been able to see in the media recently. I suppose, if they really have that view, I would commend them for it. The question of any financial implication would depend on

what were the arrangements in relation to, I take it, the sale of ETSA to a private organisation. As you rightly pointed out, Mr Chairman, that is somewhat hypothetical in nature and I cannot get down to the detail. What I could say is that, if such a thing were to be done, then obviously it would have a financial effect on the affairs of the Government and of the State.

Mr HAMILTON: I can understand the sensitivity of the Liberal Party to questions on privatisation. My second question is in relation to the officers of ETSA. The Minister would be aware that on 18 September I raised the issue of a liaison officer for ETSA. I understand that one is appointed in ETSA's counterpart in Victoria. As with most members of Parliament, we do from time to time have queries from our constituents, and indeed business people, on a range of matters pertaining to consumers and some of the difficulties that they get into. To give an illustration, questions of lightning strikes, power surges and courtyard lighting are just three questions directed to members from time to time, concerning the attitude of ETSA. What consideration has been given to the setting up of a liaison officer in South Australia on the same or a similar basis to that which I understand applies in Victoria?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: If I remember correctly, the honourable member raised this matter in the House on the date he mentioned and referred to the situation in Victoria that now applies. ETSA has what I would call a customer inquiry service, where consumers are able to obtain information and which can lead to remedies for dissatisfied customers or consumers. At this stage I do not know of a specific officer deputed—and I think the honourable member was raising this in relation to members of Parliament who have had problems brought to them by customers and consumers—at ETSA. There could be some merit in it, and I will further examine it. Although I am aware that the honourable member raised it on 18 September, I have not had time to address it fully. Now that the honourable member has pursued the matter further, I undertake to raise it with ETSA and see what viewpoint it has, and then get back to him.

Mr HAMILTON: At a later date I will pursue lightning strikes and power surges, and the effects they have on consumers in South Australia and the compensation, if any, those consumers can obtain. In relation to pages 14 and 15 of the yellow book, what types of research projects were funded by the State Energy Research Advisory Committee (SEN-RAC)? What progress has been made in the underground coal gasification investigation at Leigh Creek?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In relation to underground coal gasification at Leigh Creek, this is an ongoing project that has been funded both in respect of drilling effort and other aspects of the project, which have been supported by SEN-RAC. I do not have up to date details. A figure in my mind in relation to expenditure is about \$50 000, and in relation to drilling effort, a figure of about \$120 000. I will ask Dr Messenger to provide more details.

Dr Messenger: The numbers given by the Minister are correct. The underground coal gasification project is a long-term project which involves initial geological delineation of the dipping coal deposit at Leigh Creek, all of which is intended to identify the best areas in which a development involving a test burn and then a subsequent development of a small power generation unit could be progressed. Over the past year a series of drillings by the departmental drilling team has seen three deep holes and three shallow holes, which have been intended to show the degree of faulting, the thickness of the deposit, and to look at things like rock strength and the general conditions in the areas we are interested in.

We are facing up to the fact that eventually a test burn would cost about \$5 million and it obviously requires very careful consideration about funding. The longer-term intent was to have something like a 50 megawatt power station (a pilot operation) based on the underground coal gasification prospect. However, the level of budget at present only extends as far as the nature of the figures that the Minister talked about. In fact, that is quite an appropriate level for the delineation work we are now doing. Following this redesign and further evaluation of the nature of the test burn, the test panel and power development will be carried out. We will face up, in the future, to the much larger sources of funding required for further progress in that development.

In relation to the question of types of projects, SENRAC has a very wide remit, and the intent is to spend the funding of about \$340 000 to make as much progress across a wide range of areas as possible. The sort of projects that are involved range from the low energy dwelling project (known as the glass mass insulation program); the Leigh Creek underground coal gasification project, which I have just outlined; a heat recovery system to recover energy from hot bore water and to generate electricity from it; work on the upgrading of lignites; the Energy Ideas Village at Woodville (part funding); the Statewide wind energy program; some work on the assessment of hardwood species for firewood; dewatering of South Australian coals; and solar energy irradiance measurement. Therefore, it is a very wide remit, all of which is directed specifically towards South Australian problems.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It might be of interest to the honourable member if I undertook to supply him with a complete list, so that he has more time to study the very interesting range of projects.

The CHAIRMAN: I remind the Minister that that should be in the hands of the Clerk by 18 October.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I want to further pursue the very important question of gas supplies. The Committee will recall that the last question I asked the Minister was whether he still believed, as he did 2½ years ago, that the question of price, quantity and sharing with AGL were all intertwined. The Minister gave the blunt answer, 'Yes'.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That is not the question you asked me. You said the price of supply—

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

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I added the question of supplies to AGL, of course. The Minister rolled those together two years ago.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: You just popped them in then.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: No way. In explanation to the question, I read the Minister's own words:

I have had indications from Mr Williams of AGL that it is very happy to enter sharing negotiations, and these matters are inextricably linked: the question of price, the price paid, and the question of sharing.

Of course, part of that equation is the reserves, because unless one knows how much gas is in the total pool one really does not know what one is talking about in terms of allocating that gas and what will be paid for it; and the Minister said, 'Yes'.

I asked him whether the newspaper report was incorrect. If one accepts that, then one must accept that until the reserves are delineated in December—as the Minister told the Committee a while ago—one really could not come up with the right answer in terms of price. That is what he told us; that they are linked. Which is correct: the Minister's statement that they are inextricably connected, or the statements that have been floated to the press that the Govern-

ment is on the point of agreeing a schedule of prices with the producers?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is quite clear to every member here, and will be to anyone who reads *Hansard*, that the sort of thing I have complained about on numerous occasions in relation to the Deputy Leader is the way he tries to put words in people's mouths, as demonstrated here today.

He has been caught out at it. He asked me a simple question: is the question of price and supply linked? I answered in a single word, 'Yes'. He then recycled that and included a few extra parameters and said that I had also said 'yes' to that. The question will be quite clear in *Hansard*, and I answered 'Yes'. I think the former Minister is asking me whether we can continue negotiations in view of—

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: No way. You have an agreed price—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You have asked a question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister is recycling the question.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In my opinion there is no reason why negotiations cannot be in progress while some other action is also taking place.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I could not agree more.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: What did you ask such a silly damn question for?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I will ask the same question in precisely the same terms and I hope it will not count as another question. Nobody has suggested the Minister should not be negotiating; I am saying they should have got off their bots and negotiated from day one instead of the beginning of this year. The Minister agrees that price and quantity reserves are inextricably linked—I could not agree more. Will the Minister agree a price before the reserves have been settled?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will repeat the answer I gave: I see no reason why negotiations cannot continue whilst the two matters are live.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Mr Chairman, the Minister dodges the question yet again. The newspaper reports, fuelled by the Government, by the Premier no less—have indicated for some time—Randall Ashbourne reported it in the *News* about two or three weeks ago: settlement on price imminent. He said it two years ago when the Premier said it would be fixed. The Minister cannot have it both ways. Nobody is arguing about negotiations going on. The Government said a fortnight ago that it was on the eve of agreeing price. Will the Minister agree price before the reserves are delineated in December? The same question, but I want an answer—yes or no?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The chagrin of the former Minister is evident to all; he floated a statement in the House not so long ago in relation to a certain price being agreed between the Government and the producers, and he handed that out as if it were manna from heaven. The press picked that up, and now the former Minister has the gall to say that it was fed out by the Government. We know that he fed that out because he stated that viewpoint in the House during a debate—that the Government had reached a certain price agreement with the producers. He is trying to get a clue about what might be an election date. We all know that. We know how many wrong guesses they have made already. It is common knowledge around the town that they have started their campaign three times already on what they have said was irrefutable evidence.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Get on with the question.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Deputy Leader is not going to get any answer from me other than what I gave him in

the beginning. We are in a negotiating phase and there are commercial confidential sensibilities involved.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister dodges the question. He talks about statements I have made publicly, and for his benefit, I might indicate that far from him giving us information over the past two years, as he promised, we have had precious little factual information from the Minister—and we are getting none now—on this critical question of reserves, how much gas we are talking about, and what we pay for it?

I mentioned a range of prices, which did not come from anything the Government has told us; I read it in the *Gas Journal* in a speech given by Mr Drew Polglase, who is the General Manager of the South Australian Gas Company, who obviously has some knowledge of what the Government is up to. He was giving a speech about gas supply and price. Mr Polglase stated in that article that it was understood the Government was negotiating a range of gas prices with the producers of about \$1.50 to \$2.50 in 1985 prices. I have also mentioned that publicly, because many people in the media had not read that statement, but that is public knowledge. I am not asking for that sort of detail.

The Government has said (and Randall Ashbourne of the *News* has quoted it) that it expects a settlement soon. What do they mean by 'soon'? Two years ago 'soon' was a fortnight; now 'soon' is within a day or two. It was rumoured, and it was confirmed by Government sources, that agreement was about to be reached. Early election has nothing to do with it. The Minister says, 'Why should negotiations not continue?': of course they should continue. However, is the Government going to agree to gas prices before those reserves are delineated or not? That has nothing to do with commercial confidentiality.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Of course it is.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Rubbish! Either the Government is going to agree to those prices without knowing what those reserves are, or it is not. As the Minister said two years ago, and repeated again today, the two are inextricably and critically linked. We know where an election comes in and the Government does not know where to jump; it is toey. The Government has mucked about for three years on this critical question.

On the eve of an election the Government announced a phoney electricity tariff. What does the Minister calculate the gas price has to be to justify that ETSA tariff? No way in the world can you justify an ETSA tariff without knowing what you are going to pay for the fuel; no way could the Premier have stood over the ETSA board, as he did—of course, I cannot name the board members who told me that. The Minister has the lunch hour to work out his calculations. What have ETSA been told it will have to pay for gas to justify that cut in tariff? Eighty per cent of our power comes from that source. The Minister is the one who is worried about the election, not us. Does the Government intend to agree on a gas price before the reserves are delineated? It has nothing to do with commercial confidentiality: it is a plain question requiring a plain answer.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not know just how much authority one can put on it, but it has been put to me by medical people that continually pounding the desk is injurious to the finger and indicates that one may have a possible incipient hypertension problem. It is quite clear that the Deputy Leader has let me down once again. I said earlier today that at least he is consistent, and he had let me down until that last question and all the peripheral stuff we were subjected to. He has now vindicated himself. In other years he has always, within a few minutes of the show starting, demanded that I go overseas and do something or other and have a look.

Today the Deputy Leader waited until only a few moments ago to point out that I would not go to have a look—those were his words (and I wrote them down). However, I do a lot of reading.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Waffle!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have let the Deputy Leader down, because I went to have a look. I went overseas: I possess a passport. I went to New Zealand, leaving our shores for the first time since 1945.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Waffle!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Of course it is waffle, but it is like the waffle that the Deputy Leader put forward, and relates to remarks made previously, which were absolute nonsense. The question involves commercial, confidential, and tactical information. The honourable member expects us to sit down in this Committee and tell the other parties to the negotiations our tactics and what we will settle for. He says that that is the way to carry out negotiations. We know how the former Minister works. I recall that he previously abused people like Mr Maurie Williams from AGL, and it is in *Hansard*. That is the way to carry out negotiations! Be abusive! He says that we should put it in the open and play our hand before it is time. That is what the honourable member is asking me to do. However, in the interests of the people of South Australia, I will not do that. Negotiations are in progress. The sorts of things that the Deputy Leader is asking about are subject to negotiation, and those negotiations will continue.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I cannot help but observe that that is absolutely pathetic. Round and round the mulberry bush we go, suggesting that this is mucking up negotiations with the producers. That is absolute twaddle, and the Minister knows it. The Government does not know where to jump. It has said publicly that it is on the eve of settling the price, but the Minister has backed off. Either the Government will agree to a schedule of prices for those reserves as delineated, or it will not, but the Minister will not give a plain answer to that question.

I now ask the other question that I foreshadowed—what calculations have the Minister or the Government done in relation to the price of gas to ETSA next year, in view of the fact that they have already announced their price schedule for electricity? Obviously, the Minister would be well aware that there is no way in the wide world that one can responsibly agree to an electricity schedule and a reduction in ETSA tariffs unless one knows for certain what will be paid for fuel. What price does the Minister anticipate ETSA will pay for fuel to justify that reduction in tariffs?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, I must correct the record once again. If the former Minister means me when he says 'the Government' announced or we are about to announce a price agreement, I ask him to tell me when I said that.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Premier said it, and the Premier is the Government, is he not?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Premier could well have said something, but I am not a party to what the Premier said on that occasion. I was not there. The Premier is entitled to his point of view on this matter. I want to make quite clear that I did not say that. If we give the Deputy Leader an inch, he takes a mile: next he will be attributing other remarks to me. The question of what price ETSA pays for fuel is a matter for ETSA to address and, clearly, it has addressed that matter. When the Premier made the announcement in relation to the 2 per cent electricity tariff cut, in his press release he also said 'ETSA has agreed.' Clearly, ETSA fully considered what it would have to pay, or it would have disagreed.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It did disagree. ETSA was told that it had to agree.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: ETSA did not disagree: it agreed, as was stated in the press release. I have had no communication whatsoever from ETSA to negate the statement that was made by the Premier that 'ETSA has agreed'.

Ms LENEHAN: I note that there is an allocation this year in relation to safety in and near the workplace. How often does the Department of Mines and Energy carry out detailed radiation monitoring programs at Olympic Dam to ensure that radiation exposure for mine employees is below the limits set out in the code of practice for radiation protection in the mining and milling of radioactive ore, 1980?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There is a regular program of monitoring at Roxby Downs in relation to radiological measurements, but I cannot say how often that occurs. During my term of office I have had the opportunity to discuss this matter with Mark Sonter, one of the radiation protection officers employed by the joint venturers at Roxby Downs. Mr Hill can give further information.

Mr Hill: Every three months there is a detailed survey of the ventilation system and other radiation areas of the mine. This is normally carried out by a team of scientists from the Department of Mines and Energy. They carry out a very thorough survey, checking airflows through the mine and workplaces. In addition, once a month the district mines inspector carries out spot checks in places that have been indicated as of particular interest or where people are working.

Ms LENEHAN: The yellow book (page 10) states that dust from quarrying operations has the potential to be an environmental problem and a health hazard. What action is the Department of Mines and Energy taking to minimise dust emission in mines and quarries? Quarries are situated in my district, and constituents have brought to my attention problems relating to the dust factor and other problems associated with them.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This matter comes under safety in and near the workplace. The regulatory process would involve the mines and works inspection legislation, which is also under the purview of Mr Hill.

{Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.}

Mr Hill: We have three main causes of dust in mines; crushing and screening, moving of vehicles, and firing and blasting. Mines around Adelaide have a problem or weather conditions for blasting, but this problem is becoming better understood so that in times of adverse weather conditions where people and housing are downwind, most quarries cease firing until those adverse weather conditions change. In the crushing and screening sections much better dust collection gear is becoming available, and we are monitoring that at most quarries in Adelaide twice a year. In country areas it is not on a regular basis and is undertaken when people are available to visit country quarries.

As to the movement of vehicles in quarries, larger equipment is becoming available and a relatively smaller number of equipment is moving, and with increasing pressurising of cabins in trucks and loaders this is becoming less of a problem.

Ms LENEHAN: My next question relates to page 144, Program 3, Energy Coordination, Development and Management. As the Minister is aware, I have had an interest in this for some time and there has been discussion in Parliament about the question I am about to ask. What progress has been made on the remote area power supply project under consideration for Wilpena? I know the member for Eyre will be as interested as I am in the Minister's reply.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN: Perhaps I might just get on the public record—

Members interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Ms LENEHAN:—that neither I, the Minister of Tourism, nor any other member of the committee promised that there would be power, that power would be provided. What we did promise, and in fact the Minister promised, that there would be discussions held with the relevant Ministers, namely, the Minister of Mines and Energy and the Minister of Water Resources, to look at the provision of a whole range of services and facilities at Wilpena and other areas in the north. It is important that that is once and for all put on the public record, because quite a bit of misinformation has emanated from the member for Eyre on this matter. Notwithstanding that, I am still interested to know—

Mr Gunn interjecting:

Ms LENEHAN: I believe the Minister of Tourism has, and the clerk is not correct. I actually took minutes: I tape recorded the meeting (with the agreement of the meeting) at Wilpena Pound, and I would be happy to provide that for the member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Mawson should proceed with her question.

Ms LENEHAN: Yes. Can the Minister advise what progress has been made in the provision of a power supply to Wilpena?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, I was interested to hear the explanation of what actually transpired at the meeting, which has had some airing over several months. I was not a party to it; there is nothing factual I can add, but I was interested to hear the way the member for Mawson put the facts. The projects to which she is referring is one that involves the Energy Council and the Research Advisory Committee, and also relates to the National Energy Research and Development Council, the federal body. This is in respect of both the organising of the project and funding. I believe I am correct in saying that there has been additional input, that the Department of Environment and Planning is involved in regard to some financial contribution.

On an earlier occasion in the House I gave information about this project that could do with an updating because there has been further development carried out and also research into the types of equipment that might not only be available but which also might be quoted for, as it has a bearing on the future of such a project. A battery inverter is the type of development about which we are talking. This technology is emerging and improving, and I know from the information that comes over my desk that there is detail that could be useful to the Committee. Dr Messenger is in the best position to provide that information, and I ask him to do so.

Dr Messenger: This challenge or problem is one on which we have been working for some time. The problem is that the power requirements at Wilpena can be seasonal and can vary greatly during the day. A couple of large diesel generators have been installed at Wilpena. They are probably well over size for their normal job, and for the small power demands and requirements at night, they have to be operated in a throttled back way, which does not do them or their operating costs any good. Also, there are problems in regard to noise. One prospect that has been put forward involves the power lines going through the Flinders Range. Generally, that has not been proceeded with on the grounds of both cost and the scenic aspects.

We have been working for some time with the National Parks and Wildlife Service on ways in which either the efficiency of the generators can be improved or a better system can be installed. This has led to about three different paths, one of which could be simply improving the efficiency of operation of the generators by having a small and

a large generator paralleled. This is known as a rural paralleling systems. For periods when there is low demand the small generator is used, and in periods of high demand the big generator is used. Although the fuel efficiency is improved, one still has the noise problem.

Another alternative is to feed the generators into a battery inverter system, which can also be bypassed, whereby at peak periods in the day—the peak day period is normally early morning and late afternoon and is not in the quiet of night—these generators can feed into the system. During the period off peak—the middle of the day and the middle of the night—the power supply is from batteries via an inverter system that converts the energy back to 240 volts.

The background to that story is that SAEC and SENRAC have cooperated, SAEC by monitoring actual demand to get the background to what I have outlined to you, and SENRAC from the point of view of working on how the project—the idea of the battery inverter to improve efficiency—can be funded. Unfortunately, the cost of batteries and their replacement is a great cost item, and we have been pursuing with the National Energy Research Development and Demonstration Council (NERDDC) the question of funding this project that will cost about \$360 000.

NERDDC has already given us \$69 000 and the Energy Council and National Parks and Wildlife have put aside \$70 000 for this project. We have a current application for grant before the NERDDC people for \$226 000 about which we expect an answer within two months. If that request is granted, we should be able to go ahead with that battery inverter program which will lead to a better utilisation of diesels, lower cost, and less noise. An even more interesting and exciting prospect is that this battery inverter arrangement may also serve as the forerunner for what could be a large photovoltaic project in that area.

We have been working with the Federal Government and the New Energy Development Organisation of Japan on the prospect of such an alternative energy development in South Australia. There are similar developments proposed under the same Australia-Japan technical cooperation arrangement in Western Australia. However, none of those projects has the benefits that we see in the Wilpena case where there is already established infrastructure, which will cut the cost.

One of the key aspects of this project is that it is a demonstration one, and for it to be involved in a tourist area is also ideal. We are talking here of about \$800 000, which we expect the Japanese Government and the Commonwealth Government to fund in large part when the project is developed further. To sum up, there are three stages to this project: first, improvement of diesels; secondly, there is the battery inverter project relying on the NERDDC and SAEC funding; and thirdly, the prospect of an integrated project with photovoltaics and an inverter funded by the Japanese and the Commonwealth Governments. I hope that that deals with not only the question of a reliable, quiet, and adequate power supply but also that as a demonstration project it would serve as a tourist attraction.

Mr GUNN: My question relates to the land rights legislation mooted by the Federal Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Holding. Why has the South Australian Government not joined the Government of Western Australia in expressing concern about the implications that this legislation will have on future exploration in South Australia? The map that appeared in the *Australian* on Thursday 29 August shows the areas now covered by South Australian legislation, amounting to about 18 per cent of the State's total area. When one looks at the land claimable under Mr Holding's proposal, one sees that there could be a greatly increased amount of land subject to Aboriginal claim.

Because of the difficulties and prohibitions that the Pitjantjatjara Council, in particular Mr Toyne, has placed on exploration on Pitjantjatjara lands, and the apparent failure of the Government to grasp this matter and take positive action to resolve this problem, we have already seen BHP spend a considerable amount of money overseas that was to be spent for exploration in the Officer Basin where it would have benefited all citizens of this State including the Pitjantjatjara people. Has the Minister or the Premier made representations to the Prime Minister and Mr Holding in relation to the effects of the Federal proposal, and what action is the State Government taking to resolve the present impasse? In relation to negotiation with the Pitjantjatjara, and in view of the fact that the matter could easily be resolved by the Bill I introduced into the House of Assembly last session, will the Minister bring us up to date in relation to this matter, because it has ramifications that affect everyone in South Australia? It is important that our resources are adequately developed in the interests of all South Australians.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First: have I made any approach to the Federal Minister? The answer is 'No'. Secondly: what are we doing about entry to Pitjantjatjara lands?

Mr GUNN: Exploration of Pitjantjatjara lands.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I understand that a number of applications for exploration rights in the area concerned have been called for, are now before the department, and are being assessed.

Mr GUNN: Can the Minister advise the Committee whether or not those applications will be subjected to front-end payments similar to the sort of irresponsible claims made by Mr Toyne on a previous occasion, claims which had the effect of frightening away from South Australia Haemotite or BHP petroleum, a group of people I think we want to encourage to operate in South Australia? Has the effect been one of bringing the whole mining industry before another select committee where it expressed grave reservations about similar proposals that were to have been placed in the Maralinga legislation.

Can the Minister give a categoric undertaking to this Committee that those mining companies will not be required or forced to enter into any arrangement that will amount to a front-end payment?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That was a bit of an extrapolation of information about the applications. The way in which the system works (and I think that the honourable member has knowledge of this) is that applications are lodged with the department within a timeframe, and departmental officers do the assessing and make a recommendation to the Minister. At this point I have received no recommendation so I cannot, in the words used earlier by the same member when a question was raised by a Government member 'enter into a hypothetical area for discussion'.

Mr GUNN: In view of the fact that the Minister is nominally responsible at this stage for the Electricity Trust, has he requested that it examine the statement made by the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, under the headings 'Reform of the South Australian Taxation System'? I raise this matter because Leigh Creek employees of the Electricity Trust live in accommodation that would have to be described as 'subsidised' by the trust. As I understand it meals from the canteen are cheaper if one is an employee of the trust.

At page 33 of the Treasurer's statement, he says that the taxable value of employer provided residential accommodation will generally be equal to the market rental value of the accommodation less any rental charge paid by the employee. Where there is insufficient evidence of market rental value, the benefit will be valued as such an amount as the Commissioner of Taxation determines is fair and reasonable. The commissioner will be required to determine

an amount that approximates as close as possible a fair market value.

I ask the Minister this question, because the trust may have to pay that charge to the Commonwealth Government and, if it is required to so pay, will that cost be passed on to my constituents at Leigh Creek? It is widely accepted that cheap accommodation is an attraction to get suitable people with particular qualities to go to Leigh Creek and this is part of the salary package. Will they be required to pay this charge indirectly? I believe that this matter will have to be addressed fairly quickly. The Minister will recall that some years ago a similar attempt was made in Queensland where I understand extensive industrial action was taken by employees that had the effect of closing an operation for a number of years.

Therefore, if the Minister and his officers have not looked at it, will he get the trust to make an examination very quickly, because I believe that the people at Leigh Creek are entitled to know where they stand in this matter and what the effects of this tax will be on them. Obviously it will have an effect on police officers, school teachers and other State Government employees throughout the State. These ETSA officers are the first ones that come to my mind.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: This is a valid point to raise. Only a couple of days ago I read some comment about Mr Keating's statement, and the very same point occurred to me. I have not yet had the opportunity to take up the matter with ETSA, but I certainly will. Certain other areas have already been covered by statements made by the Premier in relation to what might be termed Government employee housing and other benefits available to people who have to make a career in the remoter parts of the State. It was interesting to note that, in raising the question, the honourable member was able to explain that Queensland has a very bad record of industrial relations. I suppose that is well known by now that there has been quite a bit of industrial trouble in Queensland not related to the aspect that he has raised. It is a fair question and I certainly intend to take it up with ETSA, because it could have some effect.

Mr GREGORY: The issues in the mineral resources program include the involvement in training of overseas geologists. What has been the department's involvement in the training of geoscientists from other parts of the world?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: South Australia has been to the forefront in assistance to overseas countries in very many areas and disciplines of society. In particular, our departmental resources and our officers in the Mines and Energy Department have a record already of being of great assistance in training and the interchange of information in relation to various groups of professionals from overseas. I can recall a visit here by a group from the Republic of Burma, I think earlier this year. The Director-General has just confirmed that geologists and mining engineers were involved. Several other programs have taken place or are postulated. I would ask Mr Johns, the Director-General, to provide additional information.

Mr Johns: Over the last several years, the department has been approached both by Commonwealth Government and Amdel at other times to provide assistance for reviews of geological surveys overseas. These have included visits by the Chief Geologist, Mr Boucaut, to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. We have recently had an officer in Oman. We have also had two geologists recently in Burma. Two of our officers are presently in Saudi Arabia on an assignment in connection with underground water supply. I would have to express gratification at the requests that we have received. It reflects favourably on the type of people that we have and it obviously reflects satisfaction in the past, recognising

that more often than not the inquiries are from the same authority, namely ADAB and the World Bank.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In the interests of good financial management, to illustrate that the Government keeps this in mind, when officers of the department travel overseas in the circumstances outlined by the Director-General, it is the host or recipient country that pays the expenses involved therein.

Mr GREGORY: What was the income to the extractive areas rehabilitation fund in 1984-85, and what were the major projects that received money from that fund?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My recollection is an amount of about \$900 000 but, in the interests of accuracy and up-to-date information, I would ask Mr Hill to provide the information sought by the honourable member.

Mr Hill: The income was about \$904 000 last year. The expenditure was \$340 000. A lot of that was spent on fairly small projects. A lot of small ones in the \$5 000 to \$10 000 size needed cleaning up. The bigger ones last year were Moniers at Rowland Flat, which was \$228 000; Southern Quarries, \$20 000; Moniers at Spinifex Bluff, \$22 000; Halletts pug hole, Thebarton Council, \$43 000; and Moniers at Golden Grove, \$21 000.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Before pursuing those topics opened up by the member for Eyre, I want to get back to the topics that we were dealing with just prior to lunch. The Minister agreed that for a realistic and sensible price for gas to be struck, the question—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: You are trying to embellish it again. Just stick to what I agreed with.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister is uncommonly touchy. The fact is that he agreed. The Minister gave a bald answer 'Yes', and I thank him for answering at least that one question. It is about the only one that he did answer this morning. When I asked if he agreed that the questions of price for gas and reserves were inextricably bound together, the bald answer he gave was 'Yes', and I thank him for it.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I agree with that one.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I pressed the Minister for some time to indicate whether the Government would agree a range of prices for gas for South Australia before those reserves were delineated, and the Minister wobbled all over the place and refused to answer. I then asked the Minister how ETSA could agree to a schedule of tariffs if it did not know what it had to pay for gas. The Government—not ETSA—through the Premier (and the Minister was at great pains to indicate it was not him) announced a scale of ETSA tariffs with a reduction of 2 per cent to operate from November.

I have pointed out on several occasions that ETSA must know what it is paying for its fuel—its gas—if it can announce not only that 2 per cent reduction from the beginning of November but also a schedule into the future. We have been told that, for the foreseeable future, any ETSA increases will not exceed inflation, the cost of living. The Minister must concede that ETSA has been given some assurances in relation to the price of gas. Before lunch the Minister tried to shrug this matter off by saying that it was ETSA's business, but it is not ETSA's business when Government announces the tariff. I now ask him what price he understands ETSA will pay for its major source of fuel so that the Government can announce that 2 per cent reduction and the continuing tariff scale.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, I need to correct a statement made by the Deputy Leader when he said that for the foreseeable future an undertaking had been made in respect of the way in which possible increases in electricity charges might occur. When the honourable member talked about

CPI and the foreseeable future, he was dead wrong. In making the announcement, the Premier said:

To ensure—

he is there referring to the 2 per cent cut already announced— that this is not just a one-off event, I have told ETSA that next year electricity charges must be frozen below the inflation rate. ETSA has agreed.

There is nothing there about the foreseeable future. Let us get that point squarely—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Not really. One finds that it is continually necessary to prevent the Deputy Leader from putting words into people's mouths that they did not say. For the record I am putting that square. In relation to the question he has asked, quite correctly he said that before lunch I declined to give him that information. I still decline in the way he seeks information and on the same grounds, which are, that the matters on which he is trying to extract information are currently part of the negotiation that is taking place with the producers, and it is of a commercially confidential nature. That is the end of the penny section.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Around the mulberry bush we go, with the Minister refusing to give information that should be available to the public in view of other statements that the Government has made. The Minister tries to hide behind this so-called cloak of commercial secrecy surrounding these negotiations. It just will not wash. The fact is that the calculations would have to have been made—and pretty precise calculations—in terms of the cost of fuel for the Government to announce this ETSA tariff schedule for two years—this year a 2 per cent cut and next year below the CPI. It is completely—

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It is certainly well into the future in terms of ETSA pricing. The base point I make is absolutely valid: no way in the world could anyone responsibly give that undertaking without knowing what the major source of fuel was going to cost. The Minister, if he has any sense of responsibility, must have calculated the cost of fuel to ETSA for the Government to be able to announce that tariff schedule. The Minister is being very coy about this commercial confidentiality, which he thinks is a wonderful screen. However, the fact is that the negotiations are continuing. The only conclusion that one can draw from that is that it does not know what the price will be.

Of course, I cannot name the member or members of the board who told me, but I was told that the board was told by the Government—the Premier no less—that it had no option and had to agree. We know that the Premier stepped in at the eleventh hour. The Minister stated that this morning when talking about these gas negotiations. We have had frequent announcements from Government sources that they are about to agree. Does the Minister agree that it would be completely irresponsible for a Government, of which he is a part, to announce ETSA tariffs without knowing what the major source of fuel will cost?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: As I have already indicated to the Deputy Leader, on I would have thought sufficient occasions, the Government and ETSA have given careful consideration to all the costs faced by ETSA over the ensuing 12 month period. That, of course, would include the cost of fuel, and the 2 per cent tariff cut is definitely achievable. The detail that the honourable member seeks is of a commercially confidential nature and is the subject of current negotiations.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Here is a Minister trying to get this Committee and the public of South Australia to believe that there is a credible immediate pre-election ETSA tariff announced, without it having reached

finality in terms of the price of the major source of fuel to generate that electricity. The Minister also refuses to answer whether they will agree that price schedule before the reserves are known. Only one conclusion can be reached. The Minister got on to this election business before lunch, suggesting that the Opposition was preoccupied with elections. I suggest that the Minister and his Government are preoccupied with elections. They are making this announcement, without having fixed up, let alone the supply, the price of the major fuel.

The Government was in the public arena less than a month ago suggesting that it might have to convert Torrens Island to burn black coal because the gas negotiations were not fixed up. The Minister knows that if that option is pursued, the cost of electricity will go up dramatically. That idea was being floated three years ago.

I know the sums. I know the cost of conversion. I know the downgrading occurring at the Torrens Island station. However, here is the Government, a month ago, suggesting that that was a real possibility because it could not fix up the supply of gas for the future. I put it to the Minister that we are in an election phase, and we have the Government desperately jumping around in all directions trying to plug what it sees as difficulties. As I pointed out earlier today, in my judgment this is the major problem facing South Australia's energy future. The Minister agreed and even went further than I went: he said that all other problems pale into insignificance.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: They were your words; I was repeating them.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I did not quite put it like that. The Minister took it up with enthusiasm and agreed. I have been telling the Government that for three years. It got off its behind and started to negotiate seriously at the beginning of this year for the first time. It has been a movable feast. The Government has had people in and out of the negotiating committee. I was told it has had five negotiating committees this year. I know some people who have been on it. Dr Messenger was on it and today he is out of it. The Premier is on it. The Minister was sick, he is out of it. We had the chairman of FEAC on it, but it appears he has disappeared today. The problem that the Government has not addressed, which it had two years ago and which I read into the record, is what it will do about the Sydney contracts—which is, precisely nothing. I ask the Minister in a different way: Has he or has he not done any sums on the cost of fuel that will need to be applying to justify this two-year schedule?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The kinds of calculations that I may or may not have done, which would have an effect on this question raised by the Deputy Leader, are such that they would be related to the commercially confidential negotiations that are currently in progress. The question of whether or not I have done that is germane to that process. That is all the information I am going to give to the Deputy Leader.

Mr HAMILTON: At page 6 the yellow book states:

A new scheme requiring Government departments to pay superannuation 'premiums' is to be implemented in 1985-86. This is expected to result in an increased cost to the department of about \$900 000.

Will the Minister provide any information on this innovation and what does the \$800 000 represent?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My understanding is that this is a new approach to the provision of the future cost of superannuation in that departments are being required to pay an ongoing premium, and that has been worked out in conjunction with Treasury. For more detail in the financial area I will ask Mr Whinnen, Director of Administration and Finance, to provide some information.

Mr Whinnen: Until this year costs of superannuation payments by the Government to persons who have retired and are receiving a pension have been included in the accounts of the department at the end of the year by Treasury providing an apportionment of the total cost. This year the system has changed and the Premier, in the financial statement that he made on 29 August, included this paragraph:

Superannuation Costs—as mentioned in recently introducing the Supply Bill, a new system was implemented for charging departments for superannuation costs. Departmental accounts will in future show estimates of superannuation liabilities incurred as a consequence of employing present staff rather than the cost of paying pensions in respect of ex-employees. To tidy up the accounting arrangements associated with the new system, minor amendments to the Superannuation Act and the Police Pensions Act are desirable and these are contained in Bills which I am presenting with the Appropriation Bill.

It is really introducing into department's accounts more of the total cost of running the department rather than that cost which is only seen in the payment of immediate bills.

In a department like ours, where we on occasions recharge for our services, it is important that when we recover the cost we are as equal as the services we are competing with, that is, those provided in the private sector. They include costs of superannuation, so it is appropriate that we should include them. It is an innovation and a move consistent with the introduction of program performance budgeting to introduce into the costs of the department all of those costs, whether they are to be incurred in the future but are accruing at that stage.

Mr HAMILTON: In relation to the Energy Information Centre (pages 14 and 15 of the yellow book), is the centre continuing to attract a large number of visitors? What are the main areas where information is being sought? I understand that the centre has recently been expanded through the acquisition of a large mobile caravan; what is the intended major use of this caravan? Has it been used yet? If so, where has it been used and what has been the extent of interest in this service?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The short answer to the first query is that the number of people visiting the Energy Information Centre is increasing, from personal observation, having visited the centre on more than one occasion and from what I understand from Dr Jill Kerby, who is at the centre. The main area of information sought by people who visit the centre is containing the cost of energy in homes—both houses that are being built and houses that are being renovated by owners. There is a growing awareness in the community that fairly simple and inexpensive measures can be taken which will result in appreciable energy savings and the resulting financial saving. In fact, they can actually contribute to an improvement in the comfort level of the residence involved, whether it be a new or renovated residence.

In respect of the caravan, my memory tells me it has been completed and is already in use. The caravan was initially used for the promotion of the greater vehicular use of LPG and, as a part of that process, it visited some country shows. I do not know whether it got as far as the electorate of Eyre, but I think it was on the Yorke Peninsula at a couple of country shows. Mr Whinnen has just told me it has been to the Paskeville show, which is at the top of the peninsula. I invite Dr Messenger to provide further information.

Dr Messenger: The Energy Information Centre is one of our success stories. I have taken some figures out to give some idea of the types of inquiries and the number of people who have utilised the centre. For the last financial year 24 000 people visited the centre; there were 8 000 telephone inquiries and 2 500 written inquiries; on top of

that, there were a number of school visits, which were very popular. In fact, we have now introduced a teachers guide to the EIC; teachers are invited to get in touch with the EIC first and plan their excursion, in terms of how it fits in with the curriculum and the sort of questions and projects that can be tied in.

Approximately 80 per cent of the inquiries relate to domestic situations. Obviously, they are very seasonal: when it is cold, the inquiries relate to heating the home and, when it starts to get warm, the inquiries relate to cooling the home. The EIC handles inquiries about appliances, house design, insulation, hot water services, and that type of thing. An increasing number of the queries come either by telephone or by personal visit from the rural sector. More importantly, the EIC is making a point of going out to the rural sector, addressing annual agricultural conferences—the Eyre Peninsula conference was one of the most recent, and also the Riverland and the South-East.

The need to visit country shows and regional shopping centres has led to the concept of a large mobile caravan. We were fortunate enough to be able to purchase a caravan, which had been formerly used for displays of a similar nature in the oil industry area. The caravan is 10 metres long and of a walk-through nature (the displays can be on both sides of the caravan) and it has an annexe. We were also able to fit it up with a computer, from which such things as LPG economic evaluation outputs can be obtained.

The caravan has already been used to go to the Paskeville show and Loxton. The main function there was to be a very important part of the LPG promotion program. However, it does not stop there. Our intention is to have it in regional shopping centres—perhaps even the Mall itself—and also on a regular basis at the Building and Home Improvements Centre on Anzac Highway, where people could obtain energy information at the weekend in conjunction with their visit. The intention was to spread the services of the centre; from the comments we have received from Sydney and Melbourne, we are certainly matching, if not surpassing, their efforts in the services the centre provides.

Mr HAMILTON: Having lived at Port Pirie for 11 years, I am somewhat interested in what takes place there. What is the present state of development in relation to the rehabilitation of the Port Pirie uranium tailings dam? Does this State have a disposal site for low activity nuclear waste and, if it does, where is it?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I visited the tailings dam at Port Pirie and the general area earlier this year to see some of the results of the planting program. It was quite interesting and surprising. The plants have been watered and the growth rate has been monitored. There has been a fertilising program and the growth of the trees and shrubs planted as cover has been quite surprising. There has been assistance from Broken Hill Associated Smelters in the form of material so that it has been a cooperative effort. Mr Hill will provide further information.

Mr Hill: The covering of the tailings with slag is essentially complete. Initially, we intended to cover the tailings with only one metre of slag but we have found that the basement of the tailings dam is stronger than we had expected and so we can cover it with 1½ metres of slag without much trouble. BHAS has assisted greatly in this project not only in supplying the slag but also in providing advice on growing plants on the slag. The Department of Mines and Energy carried out experiments with drip irrigation on the environmental mound, and it was found that this system worked fairly well so that BHAS is now following our lead and using drip irrigation in a lot of its rehabilitated areas.

The area around Port Pirie is being built up with about four metres of flood bank. The tailings dam and the slag have been integrated into this series of flood levees and

BHAS is carting slag across the tailings dam on a road that was constructed over the rehabilitated work and out through the fence, building it up on the swamp to the west of the tailings dam.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The yellow book (page 19) under 'Total program expenditure' and 'Roxby Downs development' states that further funding of \$1 060 000 has been provided in regard to both of these areas. That is an error. Mr Whinnen will explain the alteration.

Mr Whinnen: We will distribute copies of new pages 17 and 19. The final expenditure figure for each program is the same, but I have highlighted in pink the variations to the expenditures for each subprogram. The cost of rehabilitation at Port Pirie was inadvertently included under the Roxby Downs expenditure, but it should be shown separately under 'Resource use and environmental protection'. There are also minor alterations to page 17.

After five years of presenting programs under a previously developed format, the department has now revamped its PPB procedures, reducing the number of programs from nine to six. Therefore, the yellow books this year cannot be directly compared with those for last year, because new subprograms have been developed and new program names have been introduced. By introducing the new programs we hope that the need to apportion costs over subprograms or, in some cases, programs, where the cost of a person was notionally distributed around the department, will no longer occur. The accounting system will be able to keep track by program as well as of individuals and cost centres.

The department has 80 cost centres so that 80 people in the organisation are responsible for the various functions that make up the complete department. By adopting a new program format, we can sheet home responsibility to an individual rather than to a group of people who are collectively responsible for one function so that it is very hard to find out who is responsible for over expenditure. The reason for the distribution is that the consolidation of costs is in error, but we are not changing the total cost of the program, so there will be no change to the figures in the Estimates of Payments.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Hill will further expand in answer to the honourable member's question.

Mr Hill: South Australia is probably the only State in the Commonwealth that has a low level activity site that has been in operation for a number of years, and that is at Radium Hill. This site has worked fairly well since it was constructed.

There was an old tailings dam there that was eroding, and tailings were beginning to blow over the surrounding country. The top of the dam was becoming castleated by wind erosion. This was covered four years ago with clay and built into the top of the tailings dam was an area that could be used for disposing low grade radioactive material. Over the past few years about eight convoys of low radioactive waste have gone from the Adelaide area to the Radium Hill site and been successfully buried. At present most of the low activity waste in the Adelaide area has been disposed of. There are few areas around Adelaide where laboratories are still stocking any of this material. When we have a truck load of it we pick it up from Amdel or any other site and take it to Radium Hill.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am pleased to hear that the Government has carried on with the program developed by the Liberal Government. In both of those areas we thought we would be up for a million dollars to fix up the tailings dam at Port Pirie. The Director of Mines, who has just spoken, did a first-class job in developing also a radioactive burial ground at Radium Hill. I am pleased to hear that report and learn that at least the Minister has carried on something although, as I pointed out earlier, he has

managed to kill off a number of important initiatives that we had got under way. Having said that, and having got nowhere with gas—having got no satisfaction at all from the Minister in terms of where we are with the gas contract, and having got no answer from him about what gas is going to cost (we know only that it is going to go down to justify ETSA tariffs) let me turn to the area raised by the member for Eyre and see whether the Minister knows anything at all about what the State is up for in terms of Mr Holding's legislation.

I do not want to argue the merits of the case at this stage, but if we can get some information from the Minister to indicate that he knows what is going on, that would satisfy my objective—that is all I seek to do. Indeed, I refer to several press statements about this matter. The Minister cannot push this one off and say it is someone else's responsibility, because it is vitally concerned with how we are going to go about the business of developing our resources—if we get a chance to find them—and any Minister of Mines and Energy worth his salt would at least be interested in the question and monitor closely what was going on, even if he does not enter the debate as to the rights and wrongs of the land rights question.

Therefore, I draw the Minister's attention to recent press reports. One *Advertiser* report from our local morning daily which doubtless the Minister takes and reads (we know he is a voracious reader; he has told us that on numerous occasions)—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: And I have been overseas now!

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I told him to pack his bags and go overseas to see what was happening in the real world in regard to nuclear industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Tourism is under debate in the Assembly Chamber.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister took my advice. In relation to uranium, I said he should go overseas and see what was happening. I hope he did, but I doubt it. They managed to avoid all the appointments that might be embarrassing, where the truth might hurt the Government. To come back to the question, in the morning daily under the heading 'National land rights law a step closer', the Minister would doubtless have read:

This week the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs brought national Aboriginal land rights closer to legislation than any of his predecessors. Federal Cabinet endorsed the principles of the Government's preferred land rights model—a move which means Mr Holding and his team will now develop national legislation.

It then goes on to note that the back bench of the Federal Labor Party Federal Caucus are sore as a boil about it because they were not consulted. Anyway, it is a *fait accompli*. Mr Holding is written up as having resurrected this almost from the dead—Lazarus like. The report goes on:

Minutes after the news was passed on to Western Australia, the Labor Premier, Mr Burke—

he has been here advising the Premier of South Australia on what to do about spiralling interest rates; he can ring up his mate tonight and say that it has not gone too well—

(a long-time campaigner for individual State land rights legislation), was screaming blue murder, threatening to challenge the Federal Government's decision in the High Court if necessary.

Thus it goes on, but I do not have time to read it all, as follows:

The principles of the preferred model include:

- Claims will be allowed on former Aboriginal reserve land, vacant Crown land and Commonwealth parks (as long as they are kept as parks).
- There will be no veto over exploration or mining on Aboriginal land and final decisions will rest with the Federal Government.
- There will be compensation for actual damage or disturbance to land, not taking into account the value of minerals, et cetera, discovered.

- An independent tribunal will be set up to handle disputes on exploration and land claims.
- Commonwealth and State laws are to be made consistent with preferred model principles.

Further, the report states:

But the Federal Government will have the overall say on land rights, including the power to slap the wrists of any State which loses it way or refuses to pull into line.

The final quote from the report states:

New Sales Wales, Victoria and South Australia will satisfy the Federal principles for the most part, although South Australia will have to develop a land-claims procedure.

I do not want to confuse the Minister, so I will stop there for the moment. Can the Minister say whether it is a fact that under the preferred holding model South Australia will have to develop a lands claim procedure, or is that report false?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I might have been very low down in the hierarchy an hour or two before lunch, yet now I am being promoted to Minister of almost everything by the member who was concerned about my standing in the hierarchy. He asks me to answer matters that are more properly the purview of the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Hon. G.J. Crafter). The member is also asking me to go well out on a limb on a hypothetical basis when there is no need to. The key point in this whole area was communicated to the committee by the Deputy Leader himself, and I quote from his reading to us only a few moments ago. According to the press report he quoted 'Commonwealth and State laws are to be made consistent'. I refer to the words 'are to be made'.

It does not say that it has already happened. It does not say utilising the same source that the Deputy Leader has put before the Committee that it is a one way street, that there is no consultation, or that views cannot be taken into account. It says that they are to be made consistent and that of course implies a process, because the Commonwealth cannot alter State law. It can alter its own. State law is altered by State Parliament. I am certain there will be available the necessary consultative processes in the event that the South Australian model gets into the conflict areas, which was also referred to by the Deputy Leader.

I am certain that at that time the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in South Australia will, after consultation and any necessary Cabinet discussions, represent the position of South Australia in this matter. In that scene I will be able to make any input necessary from the point of view of the State's future with respect to mining issues.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am nothing short of appalled at the Minister's complete lack of interest in what should be matters of vital concern to him, certainly to the Department of Mines and Energy and to the public of South Australia. Here is the Minister of Mines and Energy trying to wash his hands of this matter by suggesting that he is part of a Government that has no interest, he does not know, it is not his baby, or it is the province of another Minister. Does the Minister of Mines and Energy not know that the mining industry, which he is supposed to at least consult with, and the Chamber of Mines are very concerned about what will come out of this package? The Minister will not answer a simple question. My first question was whether or not a land claim mechanism is required. The Minister's will not answer that question, yet his federal colleague, Mr Holding, has got through federal Cabinet an agreed package which is described by the media, yet the Minister here knows nothing about it or washes his hands of it because it is the responsibility of another Minister, he says. That is an appalling sidestepping of the issue. If he cannot remember what his colleagues said in the House earlier this year, then I will refer him to both where the Premier and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Crafter, said South Australia would not be affected.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: What was the date of that?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It was during Question Time in this session. The Minister may have been away sick.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I may have been away sick: I did not hear that remark.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister may not have heard it, but it was made in recent days. Before he was taken ill he knew that this was a matter of vital consequence to a Minister of Mines. No doubt he was briefed on what transpired during his absence. I say that the Government does not know what it is talking about.

The Minister said earlier today that neither he nor the Government (and I suppose he will back off from this now) have made any approach to Mr Holding about this now agreed legislation which is to proceed federally. However, here is their colleague, Mr Burke, screaming his head off. The Government is stepping right away from this issue, and the fact is that the Minister does not even know about it. The Government pussy foots around, as the Minister has done today, trying to push the matter aside. All we are trying to do is establish facts, and under the preferred model that the federal Cabinet has agreed it will be necessary to set up a claims mechanism to hear Aboriginal land rights claims.

The Minister does not know that, or if he does he will not admit it. He said earlier today that he had made no input whatsoever to those discussions. What further land areas of South Australia will be subjected to land claims if Mr Holding's preferred model proceeds, as indeed it will because the federal Cabinet has approved it? I am seeking facts. I am not passing judgment on the rights or wrongs of the Holding preferred model at the moment. I am seeking to find out whether the Minister knows what is going on or if there is a snow job being done by the Government, which I believe there is when it says that South Australia will not be affected when we know darn well that it will be. I know that the Chamber of Mines is concerned about this matter, and the Minister should also be concerned.

If he is worth his salt he should be in contact with them regularly. I know, also, that the mining industry is concerned. The Minister of Mines and Energy says that he has had no input into this matter and that there will be consultations. I say that the time for consultation has passed because the Federal Government has made a decision, and part of that package includes the claims mechanism.

Does the Minister know what percentage of South Australia falls within the categories of Aboriginal reserve land, vacant Crown land, and Commonwealth parks? I will make available to him a map which appeared at the end of August and which indicates those areas of Australia that will be covered by Mr Holding's Australian law. Does the Minister know what further percentage of South Australia it will be possible to claim, or does he believe that that is incorrect, too?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: My understanding is that the land in question might somewhat generally be described as unalotted Crown land. I believe that the figure is about 13 per cent of the State could be involved. The point I make to the Deputy Leader is that, according to that press report, Cabinet has made a decision about what is said to be a legislative package. However, so far as I can recall this legislation has not been introduced into the federal parliament and yet it is already being treated by the Deputy Leader as though it were legislation that has been proclaimed. Clearly there is an opportunity for consultation and for the viewpoints of members of this Chamber and others to be made.

Finally, that legislation proceeds no differently from the way in which legislation proceeds in this State: it must pass two Houses. I cannot understand why the Deputy Leader

says that I am standing aside from an issue and not doing anything about it. He asked whether I had made any approaches, and I said, 'No', and that is the truth. Should I have lied and said, 'Yes'? I do not know how to satisfy the Deputy Leader. At this point I have not made any approaches and have answered that I have not. I did not say that I would never make such an approach because the Leader did not ask that question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: As usual the Government addresses the problem after the horse has bolted. I point out to the Minister that his colleague in Western Australia has had a lot to say for quite a long time about this matter. The fact is that the Government does not want this issue canvassed in the public arena because, like all the other decisions it is making at the moment, it is predicated on the fact that it is trying to save its skin at a forthcoming State election. Misstatements have been made to the Parliament by the Minister to whom the Minister of Mines and Energy has shovelled this matter off and by the Premier. They were misleading statements that we would not be affected, when this agreed package that will be passed into law has a timetable to it. It has not passed into law, but it is agreed.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It has not yet got into the House.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: There is an agreed package which has the approval of the federal Cabinet and which impacts heavily on South Australia. There is not a peep out of this Government at present except to say that we will not be affected: that is plainly false, because we will be affected. The Minister has now said that an extra land area will be affected. He cannot deny the fact that part of the Holding package contains a claims mechanisms similar to those of the Northern Territory where they had problems continuing for years and years locking up land and resulting in no exploration being undertaken since 1973. Here we have a Minister (this voracious reader) who is not even aware of these facts.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Night and day.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Maybe if he stays up all night reading it, that might explain this lassitude. The fact is the Minister has done nothing. Here it is through the Federal Cabinet and not a peep out of the Government except misleading information to the House. Let us just return in my third question to a subject raised by the member for Eyre in whose electorate most of this activity is centred, so he has a very real interest in what is happening in this part of the State. The Government does not have a clue about what is going on, or is misleading the public—and I believe it is misleading the public. The Minister says that all is well with the Pitjantjatjara. Earlier in this Committee, the member for Eyre asked where the Government was at concerning the entry into the Pitjantjatjara land for exploration. The member for Eyre recounted that BHP or Hematite, its exploration arm, had \$30 million to spend on exploration in the Pitjantjatjara land, and the Minister suggested that I had done nothing. However, after adjudicating these interminable discussions, the Liberal Party made quite clear it would amend that Act to bring it into line with the Maralinga land legislation. The member for Eyre presently has a Bill to that effect in the House of Assembly. The Minister said, 'We've got applications before us awaiting approval.'

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Not before me; before the department.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Before the department.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: You know how the system works.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I know how the system works and I know that the department cannot do anything about it if the ground rules are not set. I know that those applications have been there for a very long time, because

the Minister told us precisely the same thing I think it must have been six months ago—not in this session but the earlier session. The Minister gave us precisely the same information. I know the alacrity and the keenness with which the department processes these applications, because the department is a doing department, to its eternal credit, if it is allowed to do.

Of course, the Government has not sorted out the ground rules and has put them in the 'too hard' basket. If what I am saying is not true, let the Minister outline to the Committee what are the ground rules for exploration in that Pitjantjatjara country. This was asked by the member for Eyre but he did not receive an answer: what are the ground rules for entry into that country and why has not the matter been progressed further in the last six months?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The ground rules which apply are those contained in the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act which was legislation brought into the South Australian Parliament and passed during the time that the former Minister was in government. He is now asking me what are the ground rules.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It does not work.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Whether it works or not is surely something to be addressed by the Government which brought the measure in. It is not as simple as that. We are not here just to score political points. That legislation was subsequently endorsed by the whole House as a result of a Select Committee, and more than one member of that Select Committee is now present. That legislation contained provisions for the resort to arbitration where entry was not being agreed. The former Minister is citing BHP Hematite. One might be entitled to ask about BHP Hematite which, for its own reasons, would not agree to certain payments. Instead, it went offshore off China where it had to make certain front-end payments to get access and came up with dryees. So, one might just suggest that maybe its judgment was at fault as to what it may or may not have done in the other circumstances. There is no resiling from the fact that there was an arbitrary process which could have been tested. BHP Hematite chose not to, and that is its prerogative, but that does not necessarily mean, surely, that the legislation was unworkable.

Ms LENEHAN: I would like to relate my questions to page 143 of the Estimates of Payments booklet, program 21, referring to underground water, exploration assessment and protection. On page 12 of the yellow book, one of the issues/trends being addressed by the department is that the salinity of the Murray River water is of increasing concern. The increased salinity of the Murray River has been a problem under several Governments, and is raised from time to time in the community. I note that in the 1985-86 specific targets, one of the targets is the investigation of the saline ground water flow to the Murray River particularly relating to the Woolpunda Interception Scheme. Obviously these investigations are currently being carried out. How far have they progressed and have they led to the implementation of any programs at all which would look at the reduction of the salinity problem that is faced in the Murray River from time to time?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The honourable member quite rightly raises a matter of great importance to South Australia—the question of the salinity of the Murray River. The question itself gives me some small measure of pleasure, not to put too fine a point on it, as the former Minister of Water Resources. That department and officers of my department work in concert in many of these matters. I do not have any up-to-date knowledge of the progress of the actual scheme referred to on page 12, or any effects it may be having. I suggest that Mr Bill Boucaut will probably be able to provide the information sought.

Mr Boucaut: As the Minister said, the investigations into the Woolpunda scheme are in conjunction with the E&WS Department. That department originally carried out the salinity survey in the Murray River in the Woolpunda area, which is just upstream from Waikerie, to delineate the increase in salinity over about a 20-kilometre stretch of the river. The source of the salinity is believed to be groundwater, and that is why this department is involved in the study. The study is still in the investigation stage and it consists of drilling of exploratory bore holes, and the carrying out of pumping tests on the bore holes to determine the aquifer parameters and the amount of groundwater that may be getting access to the river in that stretch.

Investigations to date have shown that there is quite a close relationship between the cliffs and the ingress of water. Groundwater seems to be getting in mostly where the water laps directly against the cliffs and not in the area of alluvium. Investigations will be completed by the end of this year. Then we hope that a program of some form of pumping of the groundwater, to remove the natural gradient into the river, will be implemented some time next year.

Mr GUNN: A number of my constituents employed by ETSA at Leigh Creek were looking forward, at a future stage, to being transferred to a new operation. Has any decision been made in relation to which coal deposit (Lochiel or Sedan) will be developed to supply power for a future power house? The site is, I understand, yet to be determined, although it has been suggested that it could be in the Wallaroo area. Whichever site is chosen, will it be operated entirely by ETSA, private enterprise, or a combination of both?

It has been suggested that the Government may be having discussions with the people who own the Sedan deposit and that there may be a joint arrangement at either or both of those locations. I believe that the public is interested in knowing where our future energy requirements for electricity will come from. A number of people currently employed in the industry are also interested in future employment prospects.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The situation we are presently in is that the evaluation group, who were to look at the four possible sites in South Australia which would comprise our next lignite fuel source for a power generating station, made a recommendation in respect of the two sites referred to by the member for Eyre, which was within its original terms of reference, and decided that not one, but the two sites were the best of the four sites, taking into account economic factors, the difficulties of mining, the ability to supply over a period for which a power station would operate, and so on.

The initial selections were Lochiel and Sedan. There is a further phase during which a great deal more work needs to be carried out to make a further choice between the two sites that have been selected to this point. That involves consideration of the advantages and/or disadvantages of a joint venture approach. At the moment preliminary discussions have taken place between CSR (the holders of the Sedan deposit) and ETSA, as a result of the Premier indicating to both ETSA and CSR that this approach was to be followed. It is not an either/or situation, with ETSA doing Lochiel or CSR doing Sedan, but a joint venture approach on the basis of an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages in terms of cost, etc., to the State.

A timetable I have seen suggests that it could be up to two years before that final decision about which project proceeds is reached. I guess that that would be referred to as the 'study period'—studying the two projects. The honourable member may not have had a chance yet to read some of the information that was released by the Government when the selection of the two projects was made. This

pointed out that further information was needed in respect of the Lochiel deposit, and is the sort of thing that will continue to be looked at in the nominal two-year period I have referred to.

Another matter to be considered is the industrial relationship and the position in respect of members of the work force who would be involved at either project site, irrespective of who the operator was, whether a joint operation or otherwise. The Government's view is that people should not be disadvantaged by the final decision. I guess that statement gives some pleasure to the honourable member. It would be envisaged that the project solution finally arrived at would mean that present ETSA workers would be eligible to be a part of any movement chain between the existing work set-up and the site to be set up. I hope that that is reassuring to the honourable member.

Mr GUNN: Obviously, there will be a considerable lead time from when the final decision is made about the deposit or deposits to be developed, and how. What is the future of the Port Augusta generating capacity and will a further generator be established there? I understand that currently under discussion is whether ETSA would bring into operation another generator at Port Augusta which would require further work and perhaps expansion at Leigh Creek to meet the extra demands for coal from Leigh Creek. Obviously a large amount of money is involved. Has ETSA or the Government addressed this problem?

It would appear from information I have that this decision will have to be made in a relatively short time. The decision to use the coal from either Sedan or Lochiel will look to the longer term requirements for the State's generating capacity. Will the Minister address himself to that matter? I believe that the public, and particularly those people at Leigh Creek, are vitally concerned about the future at Port Augusta.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In case I did not make it clear, I point out that the two-year study period I referred to is not, as it were, dead loss time in respect of whichever is the final project to proceed. The work that takes place during this study period is, in effect, a part of the overall scene that leads to the setting up of a mine at one or the other location, and/or a power station. I make clear that it is not lost time. The honourable member is correct in suggesting that that is a longer term scene. The suggested timetables I have seen look at some years into the next decade, as the time when the local lignite project (as we are starting to refer to it) comes on stream with its first power station.

The situation at Port Augusta is that the FEAC committee was also asked to look at whether a third unit should be proceeded with, and a good deal of that work has been done. Some additional evidence has been provided to FEAC, under the Chairmanship of Mr Doug Stewart, about the capacity to supply the extra coal from Leigh Creek. That is currently being evaluated and I would expect a decision this year.

Mr GUNN: During these discussions some members have been provided with extensive material and information from the people involved in the Wintinna coal deposits. I am not qualified to make a judgment on whether that is a suitable deposit or not. I am happy to have this question taken on notice, if that is necessary, but I believe that it is essential that some answers be given, because this material is very detailed and there has been some stringent criticism of the assessments that have been made, particularly of the two locations in relation to the two preferred options.

I have been advised that the coal at Wintinna appears to be of higher quality, but I am not in a position to say whether it is or not—that is why I raise the matter. What is the actual ratio of overburden to coal at both Sedan and

Lochiel compared to Leigh Creek? What information is there about Wintinna?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Those figures would be readily available in respect of all the deposits that have been mentioned. That was the kind of information that was provided to the evaluating group which has completed the process that led to the selection of Lochiel and Sedan. The member for Eyre said that he is not competent to make a judgment and I would add that I am not competent and I am glad I did not have to make the judgment. Despite the fact that the Deputy Leader claims I have been procrastinating all the time, I think I did a smart thing when I set up the Stewart Committee initially; this has been confirmed by the fact that I have had no complaints about it. An amazing amount of material was delivered to the committee. I remember a media conference when that material was all delivered to the officers of FEAC on Greenhill Road—I think there were 19 volumes in one stack.

I would like to pay tribute to all the proponents in the scheme who had to spend money to prepare those submissions and provide all the information that was put before the evaluating group. The evaluating group, under the chairmanship of Mr Doug Stewart, had access to independent consultants of international renown—Rheinbraun of West Germany, who have an enormous amount of experience in the utilisation and the winning of lower grade coals. On the economic side we had people like Ernst Whinney, who have their own standing in the economic field, and so on. The group had to evaluate all of that material put before it and they have made the choice and made recommendations to the Government, which the Government has accepted.

I mean no disrespect to Meekatharra in respect of their Wintinna deposit, but there was one other loser who has not made any protestation as to why they were not in the winning two selected. It would be reasonable of me to suggest that they were satisfied with the *bona fides* of the evaluating group and their consultants; that is not to say that an error or misunderstanding could not occur. Meekatharra have written to the Premier and also to me setting out certain concerns about not having been selected and their wish to be—I would not say 'reconsidered' but putting forward certain matters. Our feeling is that that can be addressed and that there is nothing to prevent them, if further information comes to hand that advances their original submission, sending that information to the Government, which would be perfectly willing to receive the information and make it available to the committee, under Mr Stewart, for any evaluation that would be needed.

Mr GUNN: Would the Minister be prepared to allow one or two members of the Opposition to be briefed in a general manner in relation to the State throughout and particularly in relation to Meekatharra, because it is in my own electorate, about the stage we have reached, because the whole situation is rather complicated? Until we can have technical people brief us, it is difficult to understand the complexities of the situation.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes. The most suitable person to provide a briefing would be Mr Owens, who is a member of the Energy Division of the Department of Mines and Energy and who has functioned as the Executive Officer of the committees and the evaluating group that I have been referring to throughout these remarks. I would be happy to arrange such a briefing.

Mr HAMILTON: In relation to petroleum exploration activity, both onshore and offshore (page 16 of the yellow book), what petroleum development activity took place during the year and what are the levels of petroleum exploration expected this year compared to last year?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: As a Minister, this is an area where I would tread very warily because there are ranges of respon-

sibility involved where the Minister can move freely and where there might be some fettering. I believe Mr Bob Laws, Director of the Oil, Gas and Coal Division, would be able to provide the information requested by the honourable member.

Mr Laws: During 1984-85 the petroleum development activity in South Australia was confined to the Cooper Basin. Three new gas fields were brought on stream and seven new oil fields. There were 110 wells drilled in total and 30 of these were development. The liquid scheme, which was initiated three years ago at a cost of \$1.4 billion, has now virtually reached its conclusion and so the amount of work done and the amount of expenditure involved has not been as great in 1984-85 as it was in previous years. A lot of work has now been concentrated on matters such as tidying up field development, adding compressors on the gas fields to increase productivity, and in general work-over work on the existing wells. Nineteen development wells were fracture stimulated during the year and a trunk line was built to carry gas from Mudrangie to Tirrawarra.

A number of enhanced oil recovery schemes were commenced. A water flood was initiated at the Dullingari oil field to increase the recovery of oil. There has been an experimental scheme at Tirrawarra to try to improve recoveries at that field. Expenditure for petroleum exploration in 1984-85 within PELS 5 and 6 in the Cooper Basin was \$120 million, and in the same period expenditure for onshore exploration in the remainder of South Australia was \$6.4 million. This mainly involved the shooting of seismic surveys: 2 000 kilometres of seismic was shot onshore outside the Cooper Basin area, mainly in the Officer Basin and the Otway Basin. The only offshore activity in 1984-85 was seismic exploration. A number of seismic surveys were carried out with expenditure of about \$5 million. Total expenditure on exploration in South Australia for 1984-85 was \$131 million. We are anticipating that two offshore wells will be drilled in 1985-86—at least one will be drilled and probably two. The first will be in the area west of Kangaroo Island and the second will be in the Otway Basin, south of Mount Gambier near Port MacDonnell. It is very hard to estimate the cost of offshore exploration because it often tends to exceed budget, but we believe that the cost will probably be more than \$20 million (that is, \$10 million for each well) if the two projects go ahead.

It is anticipated that four wells will be drilled outside the Cooper Basin area. Comalco is currently drilling two wells in the Officer Basin south of the Pitjantjatjara lands, and in the current financial year another well will be drilled in the Murray Basin with a further well in the Otway Basin. We are expecting expenditure of about \$91 million this current financial year for exploration in PELS 5 and 6, the Delhi Santos licensed areas. That expenditure will be down \$30 million on the previous year, but that mainly reflects a decrease in the liquids scheme.

Mr HAMILTON: What is the status of the accelerated gas program? How much gas has been found and at what cost? How does the current level of petroleum royalties compare with past returns? What is the predicted future growth?

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

Mr Laws: The accelerated gas program was referred to previously. It commenced in 1983 as a result of the previous agreement on gas prices. Initially, it was agreed that \$55 million would be spent on gas exploration between the beginning of 1983 and the end of this year. The program has been completed. Nulla No. 1 well, the final well in the program, is currently being drilled, and I am pleased to say that gas has been discovered. There have been a number of gas discoveries and additions to gas reserves proven as a result of this program. It was originally agreed that \$55

million would be spent, but that estimated expenditure was exceeded by about 10 per cent. The final figures are not yet available, but the cost will be more than \$60 million. Forty three wells were drilled and 2 560 kilometres of seismic were shot.

The exact figures for the gas proven in this program are not yet complete, but the provisional figures provided by the producers indicate that 388 billion cubic feet of sales gas plus 172 BCF of possible reserves were delineated as a result of the program. In addition, 1½ million barrels of recoverable oil and 8 million barrels of natural gas liquids were discovered. Between \$700 million and \$800 million worth of petroleum was proven for an expenditure of \$62 million. This involves only discovery costs: development costs must be added. The cost of gas discovery is about 15 cents a gigajoule, and that does not count the benefits from the discovery of liquids at the same time.

The program has been successful and it has shown that, if money is spent on exploration in the Cooper Basin, reserves will be found for a quite acceptable cost. In comparison, \$165 million was spent on the base program outside the accelerated gas program undertaken by Delhi and 122 BCF of sales gas was proven—less than the amount proven under the accelerated gas program. However, considerably more oil was proven—more than 9 million barrels in the base program over that period. The total amount of gas found in the three year period, according to the figures supplied by Delhi Santos, was about 500 BCF, which is more than compensated for by the amount of gas used during that time.

Last year royalties brought in \$24 319 000—a record sum. Almost all the royalties are derived from the Cooper Basin producers, with a small amount coming from the Caroline gasfield in the South-East. It is anticipated that for 1985-86 royalties will be more than double the sum for last year, that is, more than \$51 million in the form of two payments, at the end of January and June. Royalties in future years will decline somewhat on those for discoveries made to date, but we hope that new discoveries will be made to keep royalties at the \$50 million level. However, we believe that royalties will decline and over the next three or four years will vary from \$24 million to \$43 million—provided no new discoveries are made.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to the Cooper Basin gas consultancy and the oil development consultancy. Given that the program format has been changed this year, where are the expenditures for 1985-86 shown? What is the proposed program of expenditure in this regard?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Estimates of Payments (page 144) shows allocations for 'Goods and services—gasfields, oil and liquids': the \$300 000 is the figure for the old gas consultancy and the \$655 000 is the figure for the old oil consultancy. There are some variations in respect of these consultancies that should be outlined in more detail and more clearly than I am able to do from recollection, and I ask Mr Laws to amplify the position in this regard.

Mr Laws: The proposed expenditure in the present financial year on the gasfields consultancy is \$300 000. This consultancy has been funded for some years now and has been used to obtain expertise not available to the department via the use of local and international consultants who are experts.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It has been going for about four years?

Mr Laws: Yes, They are experts in the matter of gas reserves and maximisation of gas reserves. There has been a policy to try to bring back into the department this expertise and it is hoped that the use of consultants will decrease in future. Some of this money is now being allocated to computer software and hardware, and the writing of programs:

\$220 000 will be spent on that item this year and the amount spent on consultants will be \$80 000. The work of the consultants this year involves specifically the development of an independent set of production schedules, which will schedule the reserves of gas to the available contracts.

At present the only production schedules available to the department are those of the producers. We will also concentrate on the problems of field measurements and monitoring. The petroleum regulations are being completely renewed, and we are calling in some advice on matters of field measurement. Also, we are looking at matters relating to drive mechanisms of the gas reservoirs and the recovery factors of gas and oil from these reservoirs. These are matters that will be touched on by the consultants this year.

As to the oil and liquids consultancy, the budget this year is \$455 000, plus another \$200 000 carried over as unspent last year because of the late obtaining of a number of consultants and because of a deferment of computer software acquisition decision to this year. Again, the money will be split between our data base and computing facilities and consultants.

The consultants will be developing a production auditing and royalty monitoring system to ensure that royalties are maximised and that the department is fully aware of and can follow production from wellhead to point of sale completely. We will investigate field measurement procedures and will ensure that production practices are not harmful to the ultimate recovery of oil and liquids. Also, we hope to develop a data base to handle all of our drilling reserves production and licence matters relating to oil and gas. This will be included in the computing budget this year of \$380 000, which is allocated to this line.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That is the most definitive information we have got thus far, and it was very interesting. The Minister has not answered any questions, but at least one of his officers has some facts. We will pursue that line before we get on to one or two other matters of community importance. The Minister has had a fair bit to say in the past, but I would like to pursue this subject. It has just been stated that the accelerated gas program of \$55 million—plus Delhi's bit—has resulted in the discovery of 500BCF of sales gas at a cost of 15c a gigajoule. We have this much vexed question of reserves and we have independent consultants doing their work to verify what the reserves are.

AGL has exercised its right to have those checked, as I understand it. We have got nowhere with the Minister as to the price of gas before we know what the reserves are. The Minister has dodged those questions but the 500 BCF that has been proved up at 15c a gigajoule indicates that the \$55 million requirement has paid off. Even if it is a rule of thumb estimate of reserves, which of course will be checked out in due course in December because of the detailed estimate, I would like to know what the Minister estimates present reserves to be. We have talked about 700BCF. We have pursued this matter of prime importance for the last three years and the Minister agrees that there is no more pressing problem. Reserves have been a moveable feast—like these negotiations.

I was interested in the officer's statement that the \$55 million program has just been concluded, and also that they are packing up and leaving the Cooper Basin, and that there are only three drills operating now. That caused me some concern. True, that is only verbal information that was reported by someone who worked up there and who was leaving the field, but I want to pursue that too. The Minister talked about reserves around the 700BCF mark. That has been floated for some time. We use about 100 BCF, and so does AGL: that is about 200 BCF a year that leaves the Cooper Basin. If the 700 BCF was anywhere near the mark,

we have an increase of at least a couple of years of gas reserves. Even if the Minister cannot be accurate I would like to know his appreciation of the reserves in terms of the Government's thinking. There was a fair discussion about the fracking process, which was the big white hope. I understand that that was pretty disappointing, because the recovery was going to be expensive, well in excess of 15c, which has been quoted for this gas.

I would be interested to hear from the officer in due course, if the Minister has the sense to hand the question to him and not try to answer too much himself. All these matters are important and pertinent to the present assessment of the situation. Therefore, if I am allowed to ask one question only at a time, I ask this: what is the present assessment of reserves, bearing in mind that a definitive answer is not due until at least December? What is the department's thinking and the Minister's knowledge, if any, of the present state of reserves, bearing in mind the 500BCF discovered as a result of the accelerated program?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, I do have to question a little of the statement made by the Deputy Leader. As I recall the figures given to us by Mr Laws he said that 388BCF of proven gas had been discovered as a result of the accelerated gas program and that there was a further quantity, I think 170BCF—

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Delhi effort had nothing to do with the accelerated gas program.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That was all I was waiting to hear. It has been acknowledged that it had nothing to do with the ACP, it was the base program. I am demonstrating to the former Minister that I do listen. I also heard him say that he hoped I had enough sense to hand the matter over to the office concerned, which is what I intend doing. I ask Mr Laws to provide any information that he can in answer to the Deputy Leader's question. However, I say that as the Minister concerned I am entitled to my own opinion as to whether there is any profit in trying to do arithmetical sums as to how many BCFs of gas, in the strict sense, have already been discovered or put to one side in the way inferred by the Deputy Leader. Having said that, I ask Mr Laws to provide the information.

Mr Laws: As mentioned before, the new gas discoveries over the past three years under the accelerated gas program and the base program have approximately compensated for gas usage over that three-year period. Calculations as to the total quantity of gas now available vary, based on the different technical parameters used. Numbers were quoted at Estimates Committees last year that showed that there was a shortfall on the AGL contract which meant that supplies of gas for Adelaide beyond 1 January 1988 were in doubt.

On the basis of the Cooper Basin producers' latest estimates there is sufficient gas to supply Adelaide beyond 1987 and into the 1990s. This is sales gas exclusive of ethane because there are also reserves of ethane that are notionally set aside for a petrochemical plant. Other calculations that have been made by the department, and we understand by other people who have had access to all of the data, indicate that perhaps there is a lesser quantity of gas than that indicated by the Cooper Basin producers. However, it is the independent expert under the AGL agreement who will determine the reserves considered to be final for that agreement and for the quantity of gas that will be available to South Australia beyond 1987.

That expert's report is not expected before the middle of December. Reserve estimates at the moment vary. The Cooper Basin producers' estimate is certainly higher than

the department's estimate. The department has been carrying out an independent review of all reserves that is being finalised at the moment. We do not have our final numbers on that at present. On some of the larger fields we carry lower reserves due to the fact that we use slightly different technical parameters to define what is a productive petroleum reservoir and what is not.

I add a note of warning that the calculations of gas or oil reserves is a very difficult task, and a lot of assumptions must be made. The correct answer is only known when all of the reserves in the field are finally produced. Until that happens uncertainties are quite large, and can be plus or minus 30 per cent or more in the early stages of production of any gas field of the type that we have in the Cooper Basin, many of which are in their early stages of production. The independent expert will arrive at a number that will be definitive for the contract, but still may or may not be the correct number within 20 or 30 per cent as finally proven.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: One of the points made is that the producers' estimate of reserves appears to be more optimistic than that indicated by some of the work done by the department that has not yet been brought to finality. Does the Minister stand by the statement that he made to the House when he took as gospel, for what purpose I am not sure, the reserves delineated by producers on 19 October 1983. The Minister said:

This afternoon I met with Dr John McKee of Santos and Mr George Esserey of Delhi representing the Cooper Basin producers. They delivered letters which attest that a further 1667BCF of gas is available to be added to the present production schedule which contains 2177BCF. This means that schedule A of the AGL agreement has been satisfied entirely; that is, to the year 2006, and that an amount equivalent to at least 5 years of PASA futures is also available.

He continued,

'Today's announcement is a landmark.'

That is what the Minister proclaimed when giving the House and the public these glad tidings. Is the Minister prepared to say that that statement is correct, or does he go along with what his officers have said today.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: We have already been over this ground earlier today. At least this time the former Minister had the good grace to read out what I actually said on that day. What I was actually telling the House was that that had been put to me on the basis of letters brought and even the names of the persons concerned, George Esserey and John McKee from Santos and Delhi respectively, were quoted to the House. I relayed to the House what had been put to me and was careful to show that it was as a result of information given to me by those two persons.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister said 'This is a landmark', 'This is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but' that is what the Minister said in his statement, or he would not have made it. Does the Minister stand by that?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I stand by the statement as given in the circumstances that I have just outlined to this Committee.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister cannot have it all ways. He stands by the statement, and yet he does not. He said quite clearly that we had enough gas to satisfy AGL to the year 2006, and that we had enough gas for at least five years supply of PASA futures. The next item of interest is the petrochemical plant, which has been floating in the Government's thinking I believe since the early 1970s. It was certainly a petrochemical plant that the Dunstan Government was thrashing around and trying to get up and running. It was one of the major reasons for writing those disastrous contracts to New South Wales, to throw off enough gas to obtain a viable flow of ethane to get feed stock for that petrochemical plant.

The Government is still hanging on to the idea that a petrochemical plant will be up and running. It was pointed out this afternoon that enough ethane has been put aside for the plant equivalent to two year's gas supply if that ethane was to go into the gas stream. I well recall the former Minister, a rather more high profile Minister in the Labor Party, the Hon. Hugh Hudson, making a public statement that we had to forget about this petrochemical plant. Even after he trundled it out in 1970, re-ran it as an election advertisement and got a bath for it, he trundled out this petrochemical plant which had been floating around for well over 10 years.

I remember his saying that we had to forget about this petrochemical plant because there was no way in the world that we could afford to give them the ethane, let alone gas to fuel their power plant that was part of the original deal, which was a most generous deal in terms of what the Government was going to do for this plant. The Minister and his colleagues criticised the Roxby Downs indenture because we were going to spend \$50 million of taxpayers' funds to build schools, a fire station and a hospital, and to provide the basic infrastructure that it is a Government's responsibility to provide, anyway. Yet if we look at the deal that was struck by former Minister Hudson to try desperately to get this petrochemical plant up and running, we found that in 1982 dollars, let alone 1985 dollars, we were looking at about \$300 million in terms of taxpayer contributions to that project (Lord knows what it would be if the project got up and running), with an inbuilt subsidy in terms of gas and ethane for the project.

The Minister made these optimistic noises again then and they have been repeated since, but he said "the Government's efforts to pursue gas sharing in the establishment of a petrochemical plant and to deal with the question of the AGL—PASA price differential are continuing". We found out that the Government got virtually nowhere with AGL on gas sharing. They are off to arbitration. We were told 2½ years ago that the Government was pursuing the matter vigorously, but it got nowhere with gas sharing with AGL. It is very cagey. It will not tell us if it will agree the price before the reserves are known. It was just that it has decided to negotiate this year and that is still continuing.

We come to the third part of the optimistic ministerial statement: the establishment of a petrochemical plant is continuing. The Minister said elsewhere that he was actively pursuing this question of the petrochemical plant. I have the references here and I will find them later if the Minister wants them. How far has the Minister got in terms of getting the petrochemical plant up and running? I think the public might start to think that this is a bit of a mirage. As I said earlier today, the Premier described Roxby as a mirage. I will not go so far as to say the petrochemical plant is a mirage, because I am not sitting where the Minister is, and I am not *au fait* with what the negotiations there are.

The Labor Party has announced the project, sold the gas to New South Wales so that it could be a flier, and promised to give an enormous public subsidy for its establishment. We have heard these optimistic noises and various references during the life of this Government that the petrochemical plant would be a goer. What is the situation in relation to establishing this petrochemical plant?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is interesting to conjecture, at least, that the Deputy Leader was the Minister concerned while the question of whether there would be a petrochemical plant was kept alive for the whole three years of his Government. He did not seem to do anything about getting it up, either. I suppose, purely on the basis of my efforts, I still have at least a few weeks to go. I have been at it for something short of three years, whereas the former Minister did his three years and did not get it up, so if we are putting

it into scales, one side against the other, I suppose it looks as if we are going to break about even.

The question of whether or not there will be a petrochemical plant is a question of economics as viewed by the proponents of such a plant—whether they would consider it viable or not. There is no doubt that the question whether there will be a petrochemical plant depends, as I say, on the economics, the situation on the world scene for the purchase of the product, and to some extent obviously on the attitude of the chemical firm concerned, Asahi.

I do not believe that my duty to the people of South Australia was to can such a project and not proceed with it. The possibility is there. It has not advanced a great deal, but has not gone backwards either, any more than it did during the three years of the previous Minister. I do not really see what he is about in this case, other than to try to recycle, as he so often does, in hindsight the postulated theory that he would have been a lot smarter than previous Labor Ministers some years ago. That is easy to argue after the event.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson was probably a lot smarter than quite a few people, and at that time the Hon. Hugh Hudson did his best in respect of any contractual arrangements with which he was concerned. It is pretty poor to sit in this place and subsequently pour scorn on people who are no longer here to defend themselves. If we have a disagreement as serving members, we can have a go at one another, and that is part of the process but, when the people concerned are no longer here, I do not think it is really the way to go.

I notice that the honourable member did not say that he would not have a petrochemical plant in South Australia or that he thought it would not be of some use if it were possible to have one. That is really what has motivated all the Ministers concerned. It motivated the honourable member when he was there. He would have liked to get it up for the State. That is still the situation. If it is a viable proposition which will provide employment and be of benefit to South Australia, obviously it should be a goer, but it depends on the economics of the scene, the availability of the market for the product, and so on. That is where it is: it has not changed. It is still there.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I was not denigrating the Hon. Hugh Hudson. I was just stating a fact when I quoted what he said publicly. I do not know how the Minister construes that as attacking him. All I said was that the Hon. Hugh Hudson said publicly that we should forget about the petrochemical plant because we could not satisfy our own gas contracts, let alone dedicate gas to the petrochemical plant.

Does the Minister still believe that the package of Government support, which was part of the original deal, is still available? The Government is very heavily involved in this petrochemical package. It is not true for the Minister to say, as he has in answer to all my other questions, that it is someone else's baby. He says that the Aborigines are the problem of the Minister of Community Welfare, and that commercial negotiations preclude his saying whether the price of the reserves is known. The Government is well and truly part of this package, and part of the original deal was the subsidy and infrastructure cost which the Labor Government agreed to finance. Is that part of the deal still in place or has it been scrubbed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I do not know where this great package arrangement to which the honourable member refers exists. It is my understanding that the arrangements would be obviously up for review if and when, as the honourable member has been pointing out, such a project were to proceed. I would not think that there would be no possibility of negotiation or renegotiation of arrangements that have been talked about, and I do not think that the honourable

member believes that either. Under the guise of a supplementary question, the honourable member has decided to take up a little time of the Committee.

Ms LENEHAN: My first question relates to an issue that has been resolved by the Minister in my own electorate, namely, the negotiations that have taken place over allowing people who are permanent residents in caravan parks to be charged at the domestic tariff rate rather than the commercial tariff rate. I would like on the public record my sincere appreciation to the Minister for the empathy and compassion he showed during the long negotiations and investigations that were required by ETSA to establish the fact that the meters in the Vines Caravan Park in my electorate were able to be used by ETSA to enable those permanent residents to be charged at the domestic rate rather than at a commercial rate.

I have a lot to do with the people who are permanent residents at the Vines Caravan Park and I assure the Committee that they deserve to be allowed to be charged at that lower rate. Can the Minister tell me—and, if not, will he find out—when in fact the final negotiations will be concluded with the Vines Caravan Park and when the residents will have their first account at the new domestic rate.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not able to say when that will take place. I know that there was a hold up, as the honourable member suggested, in respect of the meters. At that time ETSA was concerned whether meters might meet the standard normally required. It is interesting to note that that could be a protection for the person who will eventually pay the bill associated with that meter. After discussion, ETSA was very good and came to the party in deciding that testing of the meters would resolve that problem, as has been done. I do not have the answer that the honourable member seeks, but will obtain it for her and advise her as soon as possible.

Ms LENEHAN: I thank the Minister and certainly agree that it was much better to do it in a thorough and professional manner to have it resolved to the satisfaction of ETSA, the management and the residents of the caravan park. My second question relates to one I asked earlier regarding underground water. What is the current status of water supplies for Olympic dam, and what monitoring is being carried out on a special water licence in the Great Artesian Basin?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In answering the latter part of the question first, monitoring is being carried out and water is being supplied to the Olympic dam project, as we are all aware. I would suspect that we would get more detailed information from Mr Boucaut.

Mr Boucaut: The water supply for Olympic dam is being obtained from the south-western margin of the Great Artesian Basin, some 100 kilometres north of the Olympic dam site. A special water licence has been issued over the area under the Roxby Downs Indenture and the area has also been proclaimed under the Water Resources Act. An extensive program of investigations has been carried out to prove that the water required is available from that source. This has been carried out by consultants to the joint venturers and our department has been involved closely with the work being carried out. The work has proven the ability of the aquifer in that area to supply the volume of water required which it is estimated, should the project proceed, will be of the order of 15 megalitres per day. The total requirement for Roxby Downs will be about 33 megalitres a day, but the remaining water will be obtained from a water field to the north, further into the Great Artesian Basin.

One production well in the wellfield A is producing at the moment and that is allowed to flow at a rate of about 1.26 megalitres a day as a long-term test of the ability of the aquifer to supply the water. Some .26 megalitres a day

of that water is carted by road to Olympic dam for use in the plant and for domestic purposes. The quality of the water is of the order of 2 000 milligrams a litre, which is not suitable for domestic use and has to be desalinated at the plant. The production at the moment of 1.26 megalitres is nowhere near the possible final production figure of 15 megalitres a day, but monitoring bores have been established in the area of the production bore and they are all recording draw downs which would be expected from our knowledge of the aquifer system.

Further monitoring bores will be established as production increases. The joint venturers are required to report annually to the Minister detailing production figures for that past year and their conception of the behaviour of the aquifer based on the monitoring bore. The first report has just been received and we are evaluating that at the moment. Initial indications are that the aquifer is behaving quite well.

Ms LENEHAN: Have there been any noticeable effects on the mound springs due to withdrawal of the water for Olympic dam?

Mr Boucaut: The simple answer is that there have been no measurable effects on the mound springs in the area, but the extraction is small at the moment. In fact, Fred spring, the main one in the area, has recorded an increase in flow over the last 12 months—a 50 per cent increase due to the normal variations in the Great Artesian Basin system. There seems to be no effect from the extraction.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister said earlier that he had had a powwow with the Japanese Ambassador in regard to markets in Roxby. I also had a discussion with the Japanese Ambassador in relation to markets. He explained to me the hesitancy of the Japanese in buying uranium from this country. I obtained a perspective on that, too. The Minister quoted the former principal of South Australian Uranium and suggested that the Minister was thanked, and that it had saved them a lot of trouble. Over the past three years I also had many discussions with the principal, whom I will not name, although the Minister mentioned him.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I was not going to talk about the people I had discussions with. As the Minister has raised it I will recount to the Committee that I have had many discussions with this man. Earlier this year, in an article entitled ‘“Frustrated” uranium firm closes its Adelaide office’, he publicly said:

A South Australian company blocked by the State Government from opening a uranium mine at Beverley, in the north-east of South Australia, will close its office in Adelaide at the end of the month.

This was 13 July this year—quite recently. They stayed around for a long time until they left. That suddenly it became clear to them that they had to thank the Minister because they had not proceeded, I find incredible. What was said publicly was:

It was to have been the operator of the Beverley mine on behalf of joint venturers, Western Nuclear, a United States company, Oilmin NL, Transoil NL, and Petromin NL, now controlled by the Moonie Oil Company Ltd . . . The company's project manager, Mr O.H. Gilbert, said yesterday they had been dismayed when in March 1983 the Government had said it would block plans to open uranium mines at Beverley and Honeymoon . . . Asked whether the company would reopen its office again, Mr Gilbert said the market for yellowcake in the short to medium term was not good and there were also financial difficulties . . . Mr Gilbert described Labor's policy on uranium as ‘eccentric’. ‘If you have a policy on uranium you should stick by it. You can't be selective,’ he said.

That puts a different gloss on the Minister's alleged conversation with Mr Gilbert, which did not—

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Sorry, I did name the man; it was a slip of the tongue. Anyway, one does not have to be a genius to work out whom I am talking about. I had numerous conversations with the principal of that company. What he was prepared to say publicly lines up with what I have heard him talk about on numerous occasions. In relation to mineral exploration, the former Chairman of the Chamber of Mines (Mr Bernie Leverington) predicted that, when the decision was made by the Government to close these two mines, one of the consequences of this unfortunate decision would be a downturn in mineral exploration in South Australia. The Minister had Mr Leverington scalped for his trouble in that he sacked him from the Board of ETSA at the first opportunity. He has Mr Leverington's scalp on his belt.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Unfortunately, the Minister acts when he should not and does not act when he should.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Lenehan): Order! Is the Minister answering the question? We had better stick to Standing Orders. Will the Deputy Leader finish asking his question?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister now has Mr Leverington's scalp on his belt.

Mr HAMILTON: Get on with the question.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am just filling honourable members in. The honourable member has not contributed a lot to the discussion today.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! All interjections are out of order. Will the Deputy Leader continue with his question?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Because Mr Leverington, who was then Chairman of the Chamber of Mines, predicted that there would be a downturn in exploration and did not agree with the Government's selective policy, as the head of South Australian Uranium said, he lost his job. He was one of the competent economic brains on the Board of ETSA and paid the political price. If the Minister suggests that he does act sometimes, let me suggest he acts in the wrong way on those few occasions when he does act, and this is a case in point. Instead of Mr Leverington on the board, we got comrade Virgo and, more latterly, comrade Lesses on the Board of ETSA.

Mr Hamilton interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am glad that Hollywood over there is enjoying himself.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! All personal interjections must cease. Will the honourable member continue with his question?

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: We come to the question of mineral exploration. The Minister proclaims in his budget papers that one of the corporate management activities is:

To encourage private sector exploration for mineral energy resources in the State.

I could not agree more with that. If we do not have an exploration effort we will have no discoveries or development. It is as simple as that. That gives added point, I observe, to the meanderings of the Government about the Aboriginal land rights question.

I sought to obtain the most up-to-date information I could on mineral exploration. The latest information I could lay my hands on relates to Canada in 1984 and was contained in the *Mineral Industry Quarterly* of March 1985. In Canada the number of exploration licences is down from 466 in 1981 to 262 in 1984. This concerns only minerals; I am not talking about oil, gas or the accelerated gas program. It appears that what Mr Leverington said has come to pass. The article states:

Exploration effort has been concentrated in the Stuart Shelf Province and accounted for 71 per cent of the total expenditure.

Of course, we are there referring to the Roxby Downs drilling program. Therefore, \$33 million out of a total of \$46.6 million has been spent on the Stuart Shelf (Roxby Downs). If the Labor Party had managed to stop Roxby, as it tried to do in 1982, exploration would be down to \$13.5 million, which would be the lowest since 1979. Is there further information, other than that which I gleaned from this publication in relation to mineral exploration (other than exploration on the Stuart Shelf) which indicates the enormous downturn in exploration activity in South Australia?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I refer to the *March Mineral Industry Quarterly*, which provides figures for the full calendar year 1984. I suppose that it is useful to conjecture in that context, as we know the Deputy Leader so well, that he did not read everything out of the page he was quoting because it presented a slightly different picture from the picture we get if we just look at the number of Exploration Licences granted. If the honourable member had read it, he would have been able to say that the levels of activity measured in terms of expenditure, drilling operations, and in the number of exploration licences held were generally much higher than those recorded in 1983. Therefore, that showed that for at least 1984 there was an improvement. One would assume that that was after the time that we had carried out those heinous crimes I am always being accused of, yet there was an increase in activity.

The second point the honourable member sought to make was in some way to denigrate the Stuart Shelf area for being mineralised. That is really what is being postulated. The argument was that, if we did not have that high area of mineralisation, if we subtract that area from the State's effort, then there would not be very much going on. What a nonsensical way to approach these matters. We do have that highly mineralised area and that level of activity is taking place in some cases. This is really getting to a far out area to put this forward as a reasonable argument. As I pointed out, the facts are there.

I would much rather accept that overall there have been some downturns at times and there have also been upturns. We have been through these matters in the House of Assembly on previous occasions, Madam Chairman, and you have been there and have heard how the Deputy Leader tries to present the scene in mineral exploration in isolation (for example, in South Australia) over a three or four year period, when, if we refer to the Australian scene also, there has been this cyclic movement in these areas over the whole history of mining in Australia and, for that matter, in the world.

Activity is dependent on many factors—mainly, how you can marshal enough dollars to carry out the exploration, and that is dependent on the economic scene, and so on. The Dep Leader does not really do his cause much credit in using this selective quoting. I take it that he will accept that I am using the same page from the same journal that he was also referring to.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister cannot read. I refer him to page 9, where he said that there has been an increase in the number of exploration licences from last year to this year.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: For 1983 or 1984—I read what was in the book, not what you are putting forward.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I draw the Minister's attention to the table on page 9, from 1983-1984. He says he is talking about the same publication, and I have the number of exploration licences held. The table goes from 1978 to 1984 and I will read them for the Minister just in case there is a misprint in his copy. In 1978 there were 180

exploration licences in South Australia; in 1979, the first year of the Liberal Government, that had increased to 231; in 1980, the first full year of the Liberal Government, there were 369 exploration licences.

The Hon. R.G. Payne interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister cannot read or else he has a misprint there. In the first full year of the Liberal Government it had gone up quite dramatically to 369; in the second full year it had gone up to 466; in 1982, which was the year of the election, it was 440; in 1983, the first full year of the Labor Government it had gone down to 326, which is the figure I have here; and for 1984 it declined even further to 262. How on earth does the Minister claim that there has been an improvement from 1983 to 1984 when here it is, as plain as the nose on his face?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I apologise that I have been put in the position of also having to read from my copy of the same publication just so that the Deputy Leader will not believe that there is a misprint in his copy. My copy reads:

The levels of activity measured in terms of expenditure, drilling operation, and in the number of exploration licences held under tenure during last year were generally much higher than those recorded in 1983; they are listed below with comparable statistics for the previous five years.

We are looking at the same document under 'Mineral Exploration Activity' on page 9. It would seem that there is something else we can agree on: we both have an identical page but I do not have as selective a reading capacity as the Deputy Leader displayed when he was reading from the same page.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has been found out: the table is there. The Minister said that there were more exploration licences in 1984 than there were in 1983, and it is not true; there were 326 exploration licences in 1983 and 262 in 1984. Am I misreading that? Nothing the Minister has read out contradicts that statement. Is it right or is it not right?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Right.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister did mislead the Committee earlier when he said there had been an increase in the number of exploration licences.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I did not mislead the Committee. I will leave it to those who wish to examine the journal which has been quoted and which is prepared by people who have nothing to do with the stupid game of politics, as the two members concerned have, and who put down factual information from which I was reading.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Ms Lenehan): The honourable Deputy Leader has asked four questions and I have been extremely tolerant.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to mineral resources (pages 18 and 19). Some of the building stone for the new Parliament House in Canberra is being supplied from this State. What is the outlook for further use of South Australian building stone from this deposit, and others? Is there any change in the level of mineral exploration activity? What types of minerals are currently being sought?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I understand that the stone which has been supplied comprises slate and granites; however, in order to provide a detailed answer to the question, I will ask Mr Boucaut to assist.

Mr Boucaut: Monier Limited have been successful in winning a contract to the value of \$2 million for the supply of building materials to Parliament House in Canberra and they have been successful in winning three packages. Package four involves the use of norite or black granite from two quarries at Black Hill in South Australia. Products to be supplied include 7 500 square metres of honed paving, 1 500 square metres of black cobblestones and several hundred

linear metres of kerbing. The second package involves red granite from Calca, and products to be supplied include 4 500 square metres of paving, 2 000 square metres of cobblestones and several hundred linear metres of kerbing. The third package is for black and red granite in honed and polished finish made up of 2 500 square metres of honed black paving, 600 square metres of polished black walling and polished red granite for the grand entry.

Most of the processing of this material will be carried out at the Gepps Cross factory of Monier Granite, and 200 truckloads of the product will be transported to Canberra to fulfil the contracts. There will be a deal of South Australian stone in the new federal Parliament House. In addition, South Australia will supply stone for a pedestal for the Parliament House fountain. It will also be of norite Black Hill granite and will be four metres by four metres—quite an attractive feature.

The outlook for South Australian stone is promising. Two or three contracts are pending and several quarries are working virtually full time to meet their orders. Calca red granite is proving especially popular. In fact, the boardroom table for the new New South Wales State Bank building will be made of Calca red granite, 2.7 metres in diameter with six granite legs. A special crane will be required to get that table into the building; it will be lowered in during construction and it will be virtually impossible to get it out again because it will be so large. It will be a feature in that boardroom.

There is also a strong chance that Calca red granite will be used for the paving of the Pitt Street mall in Sydney. Another building stone of note is Mount Gambier limestone, for which there is a big demand from Victoria for building purposes. The quarries are working flat out to meet their orders, and at times the orders cannot be met. There is good demand for local slate throughout Australia. Overall demand for building stone is very promising.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Johns will expand further.

Mr Johns: I wish to clarify one point raised in the question, and I will have to take responsibility for what is stated in the documents. I stand by those statements. Generally, the figures are much higher than those quoted for the previous year except in relation to the number of exploration licences. I wanted to clarify that point. The year 1984 was a much better year than the previous year in terms of money expended, drilling recorded and the number of companies operating in the area. As has been pointed out, most of the effort was concentrated on the Stuart Shelf, where 71 per cent of the expenditure was recorded: about 9 per cent was expended on coal evaluation; the search for copper in areas outside the Stuart Shelf accounted for 2.5 per cent; and 6.5 per cent of expenditure was attributed to base metals exploration, 5 per cent to diamonds and 5.4 per cent to a variety of other commodities, including gold, evaporites, graphite and talc. The figures for those commodities were all slightly up on the levels for the previous year.

Mr HAMILTON: I note from the yellow book that among the targets is the complete mapping of the Cowell jade province, the continued investigation into gold deposits and treatment of gold tailings, the complete study of the Burra copper mine and the documentation of gypsum deposits on Eyre Peninsula. I am well aware that Cowell jade is prized in other parts of the world. Will the Minister elaborate in relation to these commodities?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: For some time departmental officers and I, as well as officers from the Department of Environment and Planning, have been concerned that there are tailings dumps containing traces of gold which are essentially the property of the Crown and which are distributed throughout South Australia where battery installations still exist. There is only one battery that we really consider to

be a Government battery and that is at Peterborough. The department in conjunction with Amdel has tried to ascertain whether these dumps can be treated to recover the gold and in some cases to clear up the dumps, which are often sizeable. I believe that there is 30 000 tonnes in one watershed area and there are possible harmful effects from cyanide leaching and so on.

Unfortunately, even given the present price of gold, we have not been able to establish a method to carry out this work economically, but I have not yet given up. In our next term of office that will succeed this term I will continue to pursue this matter, because I believe there have been recent advances. We should be able to design a mobile plant that can treat tailings at the location or in some cases the tailings might have to be moved from, say, a watershed so that the gold is recovered for the Crown (the people of this State) by an economical process. Mr Boucaut will elaborate in regard to Cowell jade.

Mr Boucaut: The department has an ongoing interest in the Cowell jade deposits. As required, we provide the geological services for the operators of the small quarries that extract Cowell jade. The production of jade is proceeding well, with a factory having been established at Cowell and a shop on Unley Road. Both these outlets are selling high quality jade in the form of jewellery and ornaments, and quite successfully. Some jade has been exported overseas in rough form for production elsewhere. We are continuing investigations into gold deposits throughout the State and, as the Minister said, we have done work on gold tailings deposits at Waukaringa in the north-east towards Broken Hill and at Tarcoola.

We carried out a study of geological mapping in the Burra gold copper mine. It is not producing at the moment but we felt it was useful to record the geology as exposed in relation to the mineralisation, as this could be of assistance in developing other copper deposits throughout the State by both ourselves and appropriate companies. We have looked at various gypsum deposits on Eyre Peninsula. They are significant. There are several large deposits there and elsewhere in the State and several companies have followed up with this interest and there are now three exploration licences held over gypsum deposits by companies on Eyre Peninsula.

Mr HAMILTON: I refer to page 141 of the Estimates of Payments 'Salaries etc. charged to other accounts'. My question relates to employees not funded from the salaries wages budget. The cost of their wages is deducted from the total budget on page 141. In 1983 the department offered early retirement to its wage employees as part of its depot reorganisation. What effect has this had? What changes in numbers employed have occurred in the past year? The costs involved are \$1 088 800 and \$1 010 086, which suggests a reduction. Can the Minister advise where the \$1 010 086 comes from to meet the cost of these employees?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: At page 141 I refer to the line 'Less—Charged to other accounts' which appears there because that relates to the fact that we have some work done in the department on a recharge basis. This relates to work at the Thebarton section of the department. Bearing in mind the advice I received from the Deputy Leader that I ought to be clever enough to hand over sometimes in answering these questions—even though the Deputy Leader is not here now—I remember what he said, and I suggest that Mr Whinnen is uniquely placed to provide a veritable mine of information.

Mr Whinnen: As to the offer of early retirement to waged employees in late 1983, 16 employees took up the offer of early retirement. That had a marked effect on the level of staffing at our Thebarton works depot. It enabled the department to restructure and reduce the unproductive time previously incurred at Thebarton to acceptable limits.

The change in the number of waged employees of the department in the years 1983 to 1985 shows that we had 135 employees waged in 1983. We offered the early retirement and that number decreased to 116 at the end of June 1984, and at the end of June 1985 it remained at 116. The money paid to waged employees of about \$1 million comes to the department from clients who use our services. Sometimes that is the department itself. At page 142 of the Estimates is the heading 'Goods and services—\$1.1 million' provided for drilling and mechanical services. That money is used to pay for the services that we obtain from our own depot. Therefore, to prevent double accounting the cost of the wages of the employees is deducted from the department's wages bill.

In addition, about half the employees would be said to work for the department and about half work for external sources. The external sources are predominantly other Government departments. As some of the questions today have addressed, we work for the E & WS, in which case it pays us for the work undertaken. We work for local government, mainly in the area of drilling water bores, and about 10 per cent of our drilling effort is for the private sector, where we are helping institutions or farmers in the search and exploration for underground water.

The fact that the amount included in the Estimates is actually more than the payment accounts for the fact that in 1984-85 the department, in addition to those employees who accepted the early retirement offer, transferred 14 employees whose salaries were not rechargeable out of the working account into the State budget. This was done because the employees were there to provide a cleaning, administrative or back-up service to the depot when it was a larger organisation. Their wages were charged into the overhead of the working account. As the organisation has got smaller the practice of charging non-productive time made the costs of the charge-out rate so high that we were uncompetitive.

Our proposal to Treasury was that we fund these employees out of the State budget rather than the working account. The figures I have provided—the numbers—show that we did not go down in numbers but the funds did, because the wages of the 14 are now funded from the State budget.

The CHAIRMAN: At this stage I intend to enable the member for Flinders to ask a series of questions.

Mr BLACKER: I seek further information about the Kingston coal deposit. Was its abandonment as a priority due to the method of mining, whether it would be open cut or wet dredging? Is wet dredging still a feasible option if costs are overcome? To explain that further, I mean a feasible option as opposed to a viable option. I am talking about the practicalities as much as the financial aspect. As a hypothetical question, if the costs of operation could be reduced by 10 or 15 per cent would Kingston still be a contender as a likely proposal?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I suppose that it would be best to attempt to correct the record, and I do not mean that with any disrespect to the honourable member who asked the question. However, he used the word 'abandoned'. In fairness to the evaluating group, and to Mr Stewart, I should say that what actually transpired was that Kingston was one of four projects assessed on economic and technical grounds. It was found to be less suitable than the two selected deposits at Lochiel and Sedan.

It is my understanding that the question of dredging of the coal was given a great deal of consideration by the evaluating group. I had one briefing session where it was pointed out that it was a relatively new idea to try dredging coal in this way. It was said to me that a project proceeding in Yugoslavia involves the winning of coal by this method from a field that I understand is located close to a river, hence its being a waterlogged coal deposit, as I suppose one

would describe it. That project is not greatly advanced, although it is a Government project.

I was briefed a fair while ago in an attempt to give my people and me an understanding of the proposed dredging method, I think by two ETSA officers. It concluded with their saying that the method is feasible, as distinct from 'viable'. The evaluating group concluded that a number of imponderables still needed to be met. This resulted in Kingston getting a lower score, and it was not chosen.

I think that the original method for mining the coal had other possible drawbacks as perceived by landholders in the area. I have to be careful how I say these things because the Deputy Leader sometimes plucks a word out and uses it in a way not intended. The possible harmful effects on the water table in the area will only be finally known if coal is ever mined in that area in the way originally proposed. It now has a lower priority and is unlikely to be used before one or both of the other projects which finished higher up the scoring list.

Mr BLACKER: Has the Government ever considered the possible export of coal and, if so, would it consider the Lock deposit? I appreciate that Lock is a long way away from local usage. If that were feasible, and bearing in mind the answer given to a question about gypsum a while ago, is there a possibility of a deep sea port being built at Sceale Bay, bearing in mind that it is almost sitting on one of the major deposits referred to earlier.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: All my attention over the past 12 months when, according to the Deputy Leader, I have procrastinated so much, has been devoted to considering four projects and everything associated with them. I have read voraciously (to quote him again) because I am interested in projects, anyway, but I am not very clued up on the Lock deposit at all. I will seek advice from the Director-General who has information of greater accuracy and sense than I have on this matter.

Mr Johns: In response to the question about the export of coal, the fact is that South Australian coals do not compare favourably with the coals of the eastern States. The coals located to date are generally lignite—they are brown coals. The coal to which the member refers at Lock is extremely high in ash and moisture. It is comparable to Leigh Creek coal in terms of heat value, and there is no way known that that coal would find a market or be competitive with the high grade coals of the eastern States.

While it could be used, say, at Port Augusta, on the same basis as Leigh Creek coal is burnt, nevertheless, it does not rank as an export quality coal. We are familiar with the proposals that have been put forward with regard to development of a deep sea port at Sceale Bay. I wonder whether gypsum is a commodity that could sustain or justify that development on its own. I think that it would certainly need something else to justify and support the construction and development of infrastructure. It could not proceed on the basis of gypsum alone.

Mr GUNN: My first question relates to subsidies for drilling for opal at Andamooka and Coober Pedy. The Minister would know that some years ago a program was carried out in an attempt to find new fields which might assist these towns to increase their mining output. Are funds available in this budget for Andamooka and Coober Pedy on a similar basis, or has an improved arrangement been considered?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: During visits to the area proposals have been put to me for a further program to be instituted. My understanding is that local effort has gone into rounding up funds for a proposed subsidised drilling program. There is additional detail available, I think. I am sympathetic to the idea.

Mr Gunn interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Yes. I think that some of the difficulties that have been put to me could be resolved. One that comes quickly to mind is ownership of anything found on a subsidised drilling program. However, I do not think that these problems are insuperable. I will certainly have a look at the matter.

Mr GUNN: With regard to the Government's policy and the policy of the department in relation to tourist mines, can the Minister say whether any final conclusions in relation to a general policy have been reached?

As I understand it, an instruction has been given to set up a committee consisting of representatives of the Minister of Lands, the Minister of Mines and Energy, the Minister of Tourism and others. At this stage, the committee has apparently not met to make a determination. The Minister would be aware that there has been some controversy and general discussion in relation to this matter.

In view of these concerns that have been expressed, and in view of the fact that one operation is already under way, I believe that before anyone else takes similar action, the Government and the departments should state a general policy so that there can be no further confusion or misunderstandings in relation to this matter. I understand that the Minister has visited the site and therefore it is important that the committee gets on with its deliberations and that there be some long-term policy made in relation to this matter.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I agree. The honourable member is correct in saying that on a visit to Coober Pedy, I met with a deputation when concerns were put forward about this new trend in tourist attraction in relation to opal mines. There is a need for the matter to be thoroughly examined. I could not agree more that the committee needs to get on with it. It has really caught up with us before it has been tackled. If there was only going to be one site, there would not be a problem, but it is a trend. I remember Mr Coro putting a very strong point to me about the relative costs involved in having a development which might bring a return and where, in his case, land that he might have had to buy in the town itself in order to set up an enterprise and get a return from that cost \$X, whereas somebody on a mining field gets into the act with a possible enterprise returning considerable sums of money for a much lower investment. That is just one point that needs to be looked at.

Mr GUNN: The matter of gold batteries and also the processing of gold tailing dumps have briefly been mentioned. Does the Government intend to spend any money upgrading the Peterborough gold battery which, as I understand it, is the only operating gold battery in South Australia. It is unique; it has tourist potential. In view of the fact that people have to cart their ore a long way to this operation, has the Government considered upgrading and improving the gold battery at Peterborough?

The Minister will probably recall that I wrote to him in relation to a request that I had for the Government once again to pay people for the tailings which are retained at the gold batteries after the ore is put through the battery. This would assist people who are currently involved in gold mining operations; their expenses are considerable. Has the Minister or the department looked at the old gold battery at Glenloth, which is standing abandoned. It would be a pity if it was to deteriorate, as it may be able to be put to some use somewhere else in the State.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, it needs to be pointed out that we have spent about \$100 000 at the Peterborough battery over the past couple of years. I think that is money well spent. South Australia could be argued to be a gold province, if you look over its history. We propose a further expenditure at Peterborough of some \$30 000, probably more,

and that is in the capital program for this year. My view is that we need a battery or two if we hope to keep people interested in finding gold. I do not think it has all been found yet. However, there are a lot of other things that the Government needs to spend money on, as we canvass quite often in the House of Assembly. We try to maintain a kind of balance in this area.

The question of what we are going to do about payment for the gold that remains in the tailings has been canvassed over a long time. I have met with one or two of the honourable member's constituents who have put this matter to me. I think that the situation that now prevails is reasonably fair. It has prevailed for long enough that those people in the game know that that is the scene. I do not think that I could give an undertaking at this time to make any change there.

The CHAIRMAN: I am advised that a non-member of the Committee wishes to ask a question.

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: My question relates to a sand mining certificate currently held by H.G. (Gilbert) Oke of 38 Mead Street, Sandwell. For many years prior to the establishment of an ETSA plant on Torrens Island, Mr Oke had a mineral licence over the greater part if not all of that particular area, some 100 acres or more. He was approached by the Government on or about 6 December 1961 when I understand that he relinquished the mineral rights over the total area previously held and withdrew to a much smaller site. On exhaustion of the sand extraction from that site, he reapplied to the Government during 1979-82 when the then Minister of Mines and Energy extended a mining right to Mr Oke which has been subsequently extended by the present Minister, as I understand it, and the 10-acre site which has been subject to extraction for a number of years is almost exhausted.

The Mayor of Port Adelaide, the Corporation of the City of Woodville, the South Australian Jockey Club, other blood horse owners and trainers representatives, the local member, Mr Norm Peterson MP, and others have cited their support for Mr Oke's continuation in business. I ask the Minister to have regard for the earlier factors of occupation that I have mentioned and recognise that, whilst more recently it has been fashionable to consider as a primary factor the environmental matters, it is alleged at the local level, and certainly by Mr Oke, that there are large quantities of sand for beach reinstatement and other like purposes in other areas closer to Brighton and adjacent beaches. He seeks entry to a 10 acre site at or about the same region as he is mining at the moment. I realise that the Minister may not have the material available, but all that I have been provided with will be made available to the Minister and his department for consideration of that question.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I thank the honourable member for raising the matter and for saying that he would make any information that he has available. I met at Torrens Island with the Minister for Environment and Planning and certain other people at the time of the last renewal, and we looked at the site and considered it. It is my recollection that we put Mr Oke on a sort of last renewal basis, but I have been asked to have a further look at the matter, so I undertake to do that.

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

Membership:

Mr J.P. Trainer substituted for Ms S.M. Lenehan.

Mr HAMILTON: I received an invitation but regrettably was unable to attend the recent opening of the Energy Ideas Village at Woodville. What is the purpose of the village? What concepts have been demonstrated in the houses? Why

is the village featuring a number of quite old established houses? What has been the extent of interest in this project to date? In line with energy efficiency in housing, I note that a five star design rating system has been established. Is the South Australian Government participating in this system and, if so, how? What is the purpose and aim of the system? What has been the extent of interest in the system by South Australian house builders?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Energy Ideas Village consists of three older style homes adjoining one another at Woodville. The idea for what I would term retrofitting renovations, taking into account energy saving ideas that are possible and not too costly, to be incorporated during that renovating period, was originally the brainchild of, I think, Mr John Held, an architect. The Woodville council became involved in the project and showed a great deal of zeal and interest in promoting it. The department was also involved through the Energy Division. I had the privilege of seeing those three homes before the work started when they represented various stages of semi derelict housing. I also had the pleasure and honour of opening the village on the occasion to which the honourable member referred and at which you, Mr Chairman, together with other members of Parliament, were present.

The idea behind these houses was really to illustrate the kinds of ideas that people engaged in renovating older homes could use. By the year 2000 a very high percentage of people will be living in homes that are of a considerable age throughout South Australia. That point was made as part of the project, and it was pointed out that there was no reason for people not being able to effect energy saving measures in their homes when renovating, or putting in energy saving measures as a project. I saw many interesting ideas and great credit is due to all the people I have mentioned, together with all those other private firms who came to the party one way or the other by making goods or services available as part of the project.

The whole arrangement has been under the supervision, I understand, of Mr Noble and Dr Kirby, whom I mentioned earlier in the Energy Information Centre, and has been set up in the form of displays so that visitors will be able to visit the various homes and see the different ways in which energy saving ideas have been incorporated. These ideas range from the simple sealing of windows and doors to more sophisticated ideas such as reflective introduction of solar heating through skylight arrangements that are adjustable. Quite a good range of exterior pergola effects are included, which range from the fairly costly to the fairly simple.

It is not the sort of thing that lends itself to verbal description; it is the kind of thing that would well warrant a visit by any member who wishes to see it. I am sure that you, Mr Chairman, would agree. Friendly and comfortable living styles have been incorporated, particularly at the rear of the homes, with courtyard constructions utilising bricks, containing attractive areas where it would be quite nice to have a table set up with a couple of cold ones during the warmer parts of the year. I was very impressed with the workmanship; it appears to be of a high order. The commendations I mentioned are well justified for all concerned, including the Mayor of Woodville (Mr John Dyer) who was present and shared the opening with me. There are probably a number of more technical details that could be given to the Committee if that is in accordance with your wishes, Mr Chairman. I ask Dr Messenger to add to my comments.

Dr Messenger: We could provide a booklet to honourable members if they so desire, which outlines all the features of the homes. Inherent in the question is why we are doing so much about homes through the GMI program, older homes in particular. Perhaps the easiest way to sum that up would be to indicate that the residential sector accounts

for 40 per cent of our annual usage of electricity, and 60 per cent of peak winter and 40 per cent of peak summer demand of electricity is used in the residential sector. In other words, a large proportion of our electricity demand rests with the residential sector.

Another way of looking at it is that 15 per cent of our natural gas, let alone the gas used for the generation of electricity, is also used in the domestic sector; or the average annual consumption of energy in a house is about \$650. This makes it worthwhile to put some effort into energy conservation in homes. As the Minister said and if one takes 1979 as the time when energy conservation started to take off because of the second energy crisis, our forecasts show that by about the year 2000, over half the houses in the Adelaide area would have been built prior to 1979, that is, before energy conservation features were built into houses.

For these reasons there has been a double barrelled approach; first, to identify features which could, in many cases at low cost and, in some cases, at higher cost, be built into older houses. That was the whole aim of the Energy Ideas Village. There were three approaches there with the three houses: a low budget approach; a more experimental approach; and the semi-full rebuild approach. The Minister has outlined pretty well the types of things that went into it.

The other side of the coin is to get to new houses and have them designed, for instance, with almost costless things like having them face the sun, with proper shading and design. Although that may sound fairly easy, it is something that has not previously been really coordinated, and has been done on a one off basis. It is for this reason that Glass Mass Insulation (GMI) program was put together on a national basis funded by South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and the Federal Government; the State Energy Research Advisory Committee put in about \$45 000.

Six homes have been built which have received the seal of approval: the Hickinbotham home; Bickford Constructions; Low Energy Homes of South Australia; K. Trotscher; Reid Homes; and Graham May Homes; with about another 11 in the pipeline. The department acts as the appraisal agent for these homes through the Energy Information Centre, which is our shopfront. The idea then is to encourage the sort of features I am talking about: thermal mass, well insulated, weather stripped and with correct orientation and the right amount of glass (because one can make a mistake of having too much or too little glass). All this activity is because of the large amount of energy used in homes. Rather than trying to outline a large number of the features it would be easier to send a copy of the brochure, which lists the details, to members of the Committee.

Mr HAMILTON: How have the resources of the department been utilised in discussing problems of dewatering associated with the coalmine proposals considered by the FEAC? What works have been undertaken in the Great Artesian Basin and how much remains to be completed? Is the use of ground water in the Adelaide area increasing and, if so, what is the department doing to ensure the resource is not over utilised?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In reply to an earlier question from the member for Flinders I said that occasionally officers of the department, and other departments, were working with the evaluating group—the coal selecting group—and in respect of the activity that has been mentioned by the honourable member, Mr Boucaut was working in that capacity with the group, so he would be the person to provide the detail that is being sought.

Mr Boucaut: The four proponents for the coalfields under consideration each submitted data related to their proposed mine. Included in that were results of their studies carried out in relation to dewatering the mine, both to be able to excavate to get down to the coal and also for the stability

of the open cut. Of course, that applied to only three of the mines: Kingston, with a proposal of dredging, did not have the stability problem, but there was still a small dewatering problem.

The department was involved in assessing the reports submitted by the proponents, and this was done in consultation with the proponent or his consultants, and we had cooperation with the various groups. The results of our work, both in terms of dewatering and the stability of the cut, was provided to FEAC and was used in the assessment of each of the proposed mines.

The work in the Great Artesian Basin has been carried on in terms of rehabilitation of flowing bores in the Great Artesian Basin. The department has appreciated for several years that this is an important water resource to the State, perhaps neglected in the past because of its isolation, but it is obviously now becoming more important in terms of the development of the State. This is borne out by the usage by Roxby Downs of this water resource. Therefore, the Government felt concerned enough to allocate money to start rehabilitation of bores which at that time were flowing uncontrolled due to deterioration of the casing. This relates to the quality of the water and temperature and the various pressures on the artesian water.

The program has been going on since 1977, being carried out by the drilling branch of this department; to date we have rehabilitated 100 bores at a total cost of about \$1 million. Some 50 bores still remain to be completed and we estimate this will take about five years to complete, at a present day cost of about \$1.5 million. These bores are more expensive because they are the deeper bores towards the centre of the basin and because of that they intersect water at a higher temperature and a higher pressure than those on the margins of the Great Artesian Basin and are thus more difficult to rehabilitate. A crew from the drilling branch is at present in the area carrying out a program of rehabilitation of five bores at this time.

Use of ground water in the Adelaide metropolitan area is certainly increasing and it is becoming a very important resource. Beneath the Adelaide metropolitan area there are a series of aquifers at various depths: the deepest being towards the coast where they can be intersected at depths of three or four hundred metres. These aquifers vary markedly in terms of productivity—the ability to get water out of them—and also in the quality of the water that is obtained from them. This can also vary laterally from the hills towards the coast.

The increased interest in ground water usage relates to the increased cost of reticulated water and the large users are turning more and more to ground water to lower their costs and meet their requirements. This particularly relates to large industrial users such as the South Australian Brewing Co., Coca Cola and Woodroffe Limited. Local councils are turning more and more to ground water for watering ovals and parks and gardens. Burnside and Woodville councils have a policy of putting a bore down for each of their ovals and each of their parks and gardens for irrigation purposes. Many of the golf courses have several bores, which they use to irrigate their fairways and so forth. There is also a program of putting down bores at schools (both private and public) in the Adelaide metropolitan area for irrigation of ovals and garden systems.

The department has been assessing the ground water resource available beneath the Adelaide city area for three or four years and this is now drawing to a conclusion. Our figures indicate that the water usage is very close to what might be available: in other words, the water system is not stressed at present but without some control in the future it may become a stress situation. The biggest usage at the

moment is in the West Beach, Port Adelaide and Grange areas, where there are golf clubs and many industries.

Each year we have observed that a cone of depression forms in the water table. This indicates that the normal flushing of the ground water system is stopped and if the cone persists, such as happens on the northern Adelaide plains irrigation area, this could lead to deterioration of the water and difficulty in getting water out. At the moment this cone seems to disappear with winter, but with any further usage, it may become a permanent cone.

These are the areas we are looking at in particular and we will be reporting on the system and producing a computer model to highlight what we believe are the activities of the system, which is complicated, because of the different aquifers beneath the metropolitan area. This will be done in conjunction with the E&WS Department, which will be responsible for the management of the system in the long-term.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Mr Boucaut mentioned an expenditure of \$1 million-odd in a period since about 1977. I would like to point out that I had serious concerns about the Great Artesian Basin and I was able effectively to ensure that a much greater funding level has been made available to this program during the past three years—each of \$300 000 per annum. In relation to the future of the Great Artesian Basin, that would indicate that some of the people who have criticised me, as the Minister concerned with Roxby Downs, ought to think a bit before they go off half-cocked. None of those people is present—let me make that clear—they are elsewhere. That would indicate my *bona fides* and those of the Government in regard to the Great Artesian Basin.

Mr HAMILTON: Will the Minister elaborate on the extent of the expertise in the mining division in relation to mine ventilation and the associated health protection measures required at the Olympic Dam mine? How will such hazards as radon gas be dealt with? I note that diesel powered equipment is used underground at Olympic Dam: do the exhaust gases from the internal combustion engines represent a health hazard to underground mine workers and, if so, to what extent?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The hazards suggested by the honourable member certainly could exist and there are measures that can and should be taken to eliminate or reduce to a suitable level those hazards. Mr Hill will expand in relation to the number of ventilation shafts that are part of the protective activity already in place at Roxby Downs and he may be able to provide additional information.

Mr Hill: There are two people on the staff in the mining division who have worked as ventilation engineers for some time during their career, one at Mount Isa and one with the Western Mining Corporation in the west. We intend to obtain more expertise: we are planning to obtain additional information from overseas and an officer will possibly be sent overseas on a fact finding mission to ascertain how other underground uranium mines and mines inspectorates cope with the various regulatory problems.

The greatest hazard at the Olympic Dam mine is the heat of the rock. It is a hematite rock and the natural temperature at the depths to which the company is operating is 42 degrees to 45 degrees centigrade. The thermal gradient is quite high: in fact, it is very high for an underground mine, being 2.7 degrees centigrade per 100 metres of depth. This means that in the lower area of the mine the natural rock temperature is over 50 degrees. The cooling of the rock will become the main ventilation problem rather than dealing with the exhaust gases, the nitrous oxides, carbon monoxide from the diesel equipment or the radon from the radioactive part of the ore. The major problem is heat and that is the major design consideration. A large number of ventilation

shafts will be required so that large volumes of air can go underground. The air will be underground from seven to 11 minutes so there will be a constant flushing of all the work areas with fresh air.

The company is using large quarry type underground diesel equipment, such as CAT loaders and 50-tonne trucks. Therefore, the openings must be very large so that that equipment can operate. There are advantages and disadvantages in that regard. It means that the company can take a longer cut (and at present it is taking 12 foot cuts, but it can take longer cuts every time it fires). Because this large equipment is underground, the workers can get in and muck out in a fairly short period (that is, just over an hour) so that the hot rock is taken out of the mine and into the skip area fairly quickly.

Total mine air ventilation involves flushing of 225 cubic metres of air per second, and that is a fair amount of air. One can imagine the flushing of one metre of air. When the mine is operating in the production sense there will be an enormous amount of air for each tonne of mineral mined. A series of downcast airways will be installed in which the workers will work, and the stope areas will be under negative pressure so that any dust produced during operations will tend to go into the stope area and then out through an exhaust shaft.

We are undertaking a fairly accurate check on ventilation and radon gas balance every three months and there are spot checks every month. In addition, the company employs three people full time to take radon measurements. A large number of measurements are taken each day, working to a plan that has been agreed between the Health Commission, the Department of Mines and Energy and the mine management. A monthly report is produced and a special meeting is held between the three parties every month to ascertain whether there are any problems.

The company has a number of planning criteria. If the radon gas is rising in a section of the mine, another raised bored shaft is sunk. There are certain limits on dead ends: the company is not advancing dead ends more than 500 metres and, once they have gone 500 metres, they try to establish a ventilation circuit in the main drives by connecting two drives to form a ring main.

Mr ASHENDEN: I refer to a problem that has been experienced by my constituents at the top of Anstey's Hill. The Minister may be aware that clay mining is carried out at the top of Anstey's Hill adjacent to the Lower North East Road. I have been approached by residents who are concerned because they have heard that the owners of the clay mine anticipate expanding the area that they presently work. There is a so-called buffer zone between the mine and the residents' properties, but people have heard that the so-called buffer zone will shortly be utilised for clay mining purposes.

They have approached the company owning the land with little success and asked whether this is correct, but the company has not given them a definitive answer. One resident advises that the company has indicated that plans for mining the area have been submitted to the Department of Mines. The constituent approached officers of the department to see whether they could be advised of, and shown, the plans, but they were advised that that could not be done because the plans were confidential. Can the Minister advise whether that clay mining area is to be expanded into the buffer zone?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The proposal, if that is what it is, has not yet reached my attention. I cannot give a more sensible answer other than to say that I will address it when we get away from here. I will make inquiries to see what is proposed and get back to the member.

Mr ASHENDEN: I am happy with that. Residents are concerned that this so-called buffer zone could be lost.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have had similar problems to resolve in the district of the Acting Leader of the Opposition, the member for Kavel, where residences were near a proposed or existing clay operation confronted with the possibility of expansion. It is not an easy matter to contemplate because of the many factors involved, including employment, the supply of clay for a nearby brick works with a fair level of activity, and several competing interests that all had to be considered.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister made a good decision.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Again, I did not procrastinate—I did something else that was good. I handled that problem in the electorate of the member for Kavel, and it seems that I did something pleasing. I had better examine my actions, judging on past history. The member for Todd, who raised the matter, is aware of the many points that must be considered in such matters. My officers have a good record over the years of putting these facts together and bringing them to my attention so sensible decisions can be made. I undertake that this will happen in this case.

Mr ASHENDEN: I appreciate the Minister's response and I look forward to his obtaining that information. Both the residents and I appreciate that the quarry provides some of the highest quality white clay available in South Australia. We appreciate that under existing land use the quarry can continue but, as the so-called buffer zone has never had any quarrying on it, residents do not believe that in this instance the pre-existing land use—extractive industry—is a valid argument. I look forward to the Minister's reply.

My second question relates to electricity tariffs. The question of a number of homes set up specifically to cater for retired persons who are no longer capable of looking after themselves has been raised in my district, and I refer to nursing homes and so on. It has been put to me by the children of parents in these homes that costs are increasing markedly for them in their attempt to keep their parents in such homes. One reason for this increase in cost has been the freezing by the Federal Government of the subsidy level payable to homes. Constituents have raised with me the point that when their parents were living at home or in units but not in the nursing home they were eligible for the subsidy paid on electricity tariffs. However, as soon as these people go to nursing homes the homes are required to pay tariffs at a much higher rate.

I have been advised that this is a commercial rate and people have asked why the Government cannot provide a subsidy on the tariff for electricity used in nursing homes because the electricity is being used for persons who, if they had been living in their homes, would be eligible for the subsidy. Will the Minister comment on the point raised by my constituents?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I have approached the matter somewhat differently from the way suggested by the member in regard to subsidy. Some of the points that I have put together in my mind include, first, considering whether the homes concerned are conducted on a non-profit basis. The member would see the reasoning behind that.

Mr ASHENDEN: Some are and some are not.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There is a difference there. Secondly, I have referred the question, together with a number of representations on this matter that I have received from members from both sides of the House, to the Energy Tariff Review Committee which I established and which is chaired by Dr Messenger. It is fair to say, and I do not wish to say any more at this stage, that this matter has been considered and a suggestion has been made that is now being addressed

by ETSA itself. Rather than the Government's providing the subsidy, the problem might be addressed by ETSA's changing the tariff in a way that achieves the same result as if a subsidy had been paid. I expect to be considering that matter shortly.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I would like to pursue further the information given by the Director of Mines about radon levels at the Olympic Dam joint venture. The Director was invited by the Minister to comment, and he stated there was no hazard, or a negligible hazard (I do not want to put words into his mouth), and the fact is that there is much air moving through the mine and the major problem is one of controlling temperature. The temperature gradient was steep and the environmental problem was one of controlling temperature. I would like to refresh the Committee's memory as to what codes the company is working under in terms of the control of radiological hazards in the operations of the mine. Does the Minister believe that those codes are satisfactory?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Reference is made in the indenture to codes. It would be fair to say that those codes would apply as amended. The director may be able to provide the exact detail because I do not recall the exact wording of the specific codes. I would not like to hazard a guess at those and perhaps the Director could give that information and also give his opinion, which it would be, as to whether they are adequate in that area.

Mr Hill: At the time that the Roxby Downs indenture was negotiated (clause 10 was the relevant clause in that indenture), I believe that only one Commonwealth code was in place—the Uranium Mining Code. In 1982 two further codes were added to the first, one covering waste or tailings and the other transport. Since then guidelines have been prepared by a committee set up under the Commonwealth Nuclear Codes Act not only to produce the codes and guidelines but also produce various manuals on the subject.

More recently it has relooked at the uranium code to ascertain what can be done to update it. Under the terms of clause 10 of the indenture, the joint venturers have to abide by whatever codes are in force in Australia at any one time. If those codes are superseded or updated they must abide by that updated or superseded code.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Do the fears that the Minister expressed when he wrote the dissenting report on the Roxby Downs indenture, in conjunction with the Hon. D.J. Hopgood, have any validity now? Under the heading 'Safety of the Workforce—Radiation' that dissenting report states:

The present health and future well-being of persons to be employed under the terms of the Indenture is proposed to be provided for in clause 10 of the Indenture 'Compliance with Codes.' This clause lists three codes and requires compliance to them now and as amended. These codes are:

- (i) 'Code of Practice on Radiation Protection in the mining and milling of Radioactive Ores 1980.'
- (ii) 'Regulation for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials, 1973,' Revised Edition (As Amended).
- (iii) Part I. 'Code of Practice,' contained in pages 1 to 11 of 'Management of Wastes from the mining and milling of Uranium and Thorium Ores.'

The committee is aware of a report—

that is, these two members, this Minister and the now Minister for Environment and Planning—

from the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health which is a United States Government Sub-Agency. It is part of the centre for disease control of the Department of Health and Human Services. NIOSH administers a national programme for the control and eradication of occupational disease and the establishment of *adequate safety standards*. This report recommends a reduction of 50 per cent in the radiation exposure working levels agreed to in the indenture.

That is what the Minister said when he was against the project and when he recommended that we should not proceed with the indenture in that form. Does the Minister now believe that that statement was correct?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am quite certain that the perspicacity that I displayed in that dissenting report at the time we were considering the indenture will be vindicated by present and future happenings in the area of uranium mining, milling and transport. There is worldwide (and I will not go so far as to say concern) consideration of currently allowable levels of exposure. The principle that seems to be slowly coming forward is that it is better to err on the side of being too strict than not to be strict enough, particularly in relation to possible cell and tissue damage that is thought to result from low levels of exposure.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: If the honourable member will be patient, I think that it is correct to say that clause 10 refers to the 'lara' principle, that is levels as low as reasonably achievable notwithstanding any codes that may apply. I think that that explains the situation, if indeed anything were needed to vindicate my caution (which is what it was, caution) in saying that we need to be careful in this area and that periods of time can elapse before it is finally discovered that people have suffered severe damage to their health. I make no apology for the caution expressed in that report. I refer the honourable member to speeches I made at that time—and stand by them 100 per cent—and in which I said that I believed that the activity of mining uranium could be safe if properly regulated.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister said that clause 10 was not sufficient.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That is really what I was suggesting. Since 'levels as low as reasonably achievable' is not a specific level the Deputy Leader, on reflection, might see what I was at.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister wanted to can the project: we knew what he was at.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I now have a copy of the indenture in my hands and I am not speaking from recollection. Clause 10 (2) 'Compliance with the codes' states:

Notwithstanding provisions of subclause (1) of this clause—

that is, the references to the specific requirements—
the relevant joint venturers shall at all times use their best endeavours to ensure that the radiation exposure of employees and the public shall be kept to levels that are in accordance with principles of dose limitation as recommended by the International Commission on Radiological Protection.

That was publication 26 of 1977 as varied or substituted from time to time. I think that anyone who introduces a healthy note of caution in relation to protection measures from possible radiation damage is a person who need not be criticised unduly. I am not overly sensitive or unused to criticism in the Parliament. However, I believe that I was motivated correctly and stand by everything I expressed in the report just quoted to the Committee.

Mr GREGORY: The Minister said that up to now 100 artesian bores have been rehabilitated. Can he explain what that rehabilitation means and what is its effect.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I call on Mr Boucaut to answer that question.

Mr Boucaut: The method of rehabilitation of the Great Artesian Basin bores in simple terms, is first, find the bore. Often the existing casing and headworks have disappeared and the bore is flowing uncontrolled into a pond of water. Sometimes it is possible to identify the point of discharge because of the welling up of the water. Other times it is more difficult. Generally, you first establish where the bore is and, if necessary, build a causeway out to the borehead

by using a bulldozer and then establish a drill rig over the existing hole.

The existing hole is then plumbed. By this, I mean that a weight is dropped down the hole on a cable to test the depth of the hole, to see whether it is open to its full previous depth or whether it has collapsed during its life. If it has collapsed, it is necessary to flush it out. This is done by running drilling rods down, pumping water down and removing the material in the hole. The flow is then killed, to use the drilling expression, by means of pumping in heavy drilling mud. This mud is of such a weight or specific gravity that it has the ability to kill the flow just by the weight of the mud. When enough mud is pumped in and the flow is killed, it is obviously much easier to work on the bore.

The next step is to run casing inside the existing old casing. This is generally PVC casing which is not affected by the corrosive waters of the Great Artesian Basin. The casing is then cemented outside. Cement is pumped down inside the PVC until it returns up the outside of the PVC at the surface, and this enables a cement annulus to be formed between the PVC casing and the existing old casing. This protects it from further inflows of water.

The PVC at the surface is then connected to a headworks, and in the more corrosive areas this can be a stainless steel headworks which consists of usually one or two valves to allow future flows of water. When the headworks is completed, the mud is removed from the hole and the flow allowed to resume. Of course, now the flow can be controlled by the headworks at the valve head using the valves installed. The headworks can then be connected to whatever system the landowner requires. This can be a straight connection to a nearby trough for watering his stock, or in many cases he uses the pressure of the water to flow that water through many kilometres of pipes to other tanks and troughs around his property.

In some cases, it is not possible to rehabilitate a bore in this way, and in such cases the bore is blocked off completely. The cement is just pumped down and the hole blocked off completely so that no flow occurs at the surface. In some cases the pastoralists accept this and use another watering point but, if it is essential that a watering point be established for stock at that point, we will drill another bore nearby using modern techniques and he can use that for his services. It is important then that the headworks of that bore be maintained in a 100 per cent effective way. Often flanges or valves may leak, and even drips of water can cause corrosion of the casing and ruin the headworks of the bore, so it is important that the headworks be maintained in a satisfactory condition with no leakages.

It is proposed under the Water Resources Act that each bore that has been rehabilitated will be issued with a well order. A requirement of that well order will be that the owner of the property is responsible for the maintenance of that headworks in good condition. These will be inspected at reasonably regular intervals by officers from either our department or the E & WS Department to ensure that that is happening. They will also not be allowed to flow water in open drains as is done at the moment because this is a waste of the resource as most of the water is lost from evaporation or leakage back into the ground. If they want to reticulate water over long distances, they will be required to put it in pipes and use that as the method of transporting the water.

Mr GREGORY: Could you tell the Committee the estimated saving of water per annum by rehabilitating the bores?

Mr Boucaut: If I may quote some figures, the Great Artesian Basin is not only confined to South Australia; it occurs under a large portion of Queensland, under northern

New South Wales and to some extent the Northern Territory. About 4 700 bores have been drilled in the basin, and today 3 100 flowing bores discharge 1 500 megalitres a day. Of this discharge from flowing bores, only 10 per cent is estimated to be used beneficially. The balance is lost by evaporation from unlined earthen drains, from evapotranspiration from the plants or by infiltration. Within South Australia, similar figures are—150 flowing bores discharging about 210 megalitres a day. It is estimated that 190 megalitres a day of the flowing bores discharge is wasted through uncontrolled bores and poor stock watering practices. Thus, only 20 megalitres a day is used beneficially.

Mr GREGORY: When the Minister was responding to a question with regard to ground water in the metropolitan area, in the answer a reference was made to a cone of depression. Is the apex of that cone at the surface or at the bottom? How is the size of the cone of depression determined?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: As this is a technical question, I ask Mr Boucaut to respond.

Mr Boucaut: The cone of depression can be likened to an icecream cone with the point downwards. The shape of the cone is established by measuring water levels in bores in that area. This is possible because, in the area where the cone develops, there is obviously a deal of usage and many bores are available which can be used for monitoring water levels in that cone.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister tell the Committee if any prosecutions have been launched under the Mines and Works Inspection Act and, if so, how many were successful?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I believe there have, but I will refer the question in order to get accurate information.

Mr Hill: I do not have the exact figures with me but I know that there have been at least two in the last year. They were successful prosecutions and referred to an accident that happened at the Price salt works at the northern end of the gulf.

Mr GREGORY: What was the extent of the fines?

Mr Hill: I do not have the figures available.

Mr GREGORY: Could they be supplied?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That question could be taken on notice and the information supplied.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Before we get off the Minister's dissenting statement that I was pursuing as a result of information given to the member for Albert Park about radon levels, the Minister has now I think agreed that in clause 10 of the indenture, the elara position well covered the situation, whereas in his report he said that it did not. I remind him that the first sentence of his conclusion, when he was trying to can the project, was as follows:

The original indenture falls far short of what the South Australian people were led to expect. It ties the State to an industry whose safety is unproven and whose future is uncertain.

It would appear from information that the Committee has received tonight that the Minister is well satisfied with clause 10 and, if he is not satisfied with it he has not sought to alter it in the terms of his dissenting report. Is the Minister still of the view that some of the production from Roxby Downs will find its way into bombs, because he stated:

If Roxby Downs is to proceed it will produce up to 400 million pounds of yellowcake during its life. In the present world scene some of that must find its way into bombs, because existing international safeguard arrangements are ineffective and unenforceable. Moreover, Australia's safeguard requirements are being progressively watered down as sales become more difficult.

Nothing has changed. Did the Minister have a change of heart come election time in 1982? I would be interested to know what happened from June, when this indenture was under discussion and when the Minister wrote this dissenting report. I inform the Committee that apparently that was

out of order because I sought to write a dissenting report on another Select Committee and was told that it was not in accordance with Standing Orders. The Minister and his colleague, the now Minister for Environment and Planning, managed to get away with it, and I guess he is sorry that he did. It must be highly embarrassing to him, because he wrote it in June and changed his mind before November as a result of the change in the Labor Party's uranium policy. Does the Minister still believe that some of that uranium will find its way into bombs and what happened between June and November 1982 that enabled him to change his mind?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There is far less likelihood of that awesome happening occurring than when it was part of that report because at the time the report was written there was a Federal Liberal Government and my understanding is that we now have a Federal Labor Government responsible for overseas requirements. It will be issuing any export licences and ensuring suitable safeguards as to the end use of yellowcake which may be sold in the circumstances relating to our present discussion.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I had not envisaged pursuing this matter further, but in view of that answer I have no option. I understand that the present Federal Government closed down Koongarra and Jabiluka in the Northern Territory on the spurious grounds that that Government was a better judge of markets than were the companies that were prepared to invest their money. Likewise, the Minister closed down Honeymoon and Beverley in this State on one of the spurious grounds that he knew better than the companies that were prepared to invest their money with no public or Government intervention at all. I know further that the Commonwealth—the present Labor Government—refused to supply France because of testing in the Pacific. What changes have been made to the safeguards regime or have been made subsequent to the Minister's change of heart? What changes have been made by the present Federal Government? We know only too well, to our sorrow, that we have a Federal Labor Government and we do not need to be reminded of that by the Minister—we try to forget it. What changes were there to the safeguards regime and what happened between June and November 1982 when the Labor Party changed its stance in relation to Roxby? If no changes occurred then, what changes have occurred since in terms of how the safeguards regime has changed?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Public pronouncements on these matters have been made by the present Federal Government and the present Prime Minister clearly outlining to whom export licences will be granted and in respect of who can be a customer and who cannot in terms of who satisfies Federal Government requirements. I do not think that the Deputy Leader needs me to amplify that further for him as he is aware of it. He has had his fun and has sat there quoting, out of context in some cases, chapter and verse of a report that I made. I stand by that report 100 per cent. I had concerns, I still have those concerns, and I will ensure, whilst a member of this Government, that those codes are properly regulated in this activity. I do not need to say any more than that. That is the position I had then and the position I still have.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Again, the Minister cannot answer. That has been the history of this morning's and this afternoon's Committee. The Minister cannot answer these vital questions: he does not know if there have been changes. The Minister knows darn well that there were no changes in the codes from June 1982 and November 1982 when he changed his mind about the project. However, I will not seek to embarrass him further on this matter.

I was glad to hear the Director of Mines reassure us, particularly the member for Albert Park, about radon levels

at Roxby. The Director of Mines was intimately involved in an enormous amount of work in putting this indenture together and we share all of the concerns about which the Minister has been talking in relation to the protection of those workers. We sought the strictest action, including the elara principle in clause 10 to accommodate the concerns we had. However, I will not embarrass the Minister further by pursuing his change of heart. Nothing has changed in the indenture.

I wish to get on to other topics in the time available to us. I now refer to energy planning which accompanied the Minister's presentation of the Bill. He simply wanted to put ETSA under Ministerial control through the Pipelines Authority and one or two other minor clauses. Accompanying the Bill was a splurge about energy planning.

The Minister acknowledged today that the major problem bar none—everything else pales into insignificance—is the question of fixing up gas contracts. The budget papers tend to indicate that a fair bit is going on in relation to the energy supply. I am particularly interested in the coal gasification project that the Premier announced on the run when he was on his submarine trek to Europe.

I hope that we can have a progress report on where we are. Will the Minister tell the Committee—and I know there were some public statements—what the taxpayers are up for in relation to this study? What does he hope to get out of it? From what I have heard—and I put it no higher than conversation with people somewhere near the scene—the first reports are quite disappointing. However, that may be in error. If it is I would be interested to hear otherwise. The only experience I can fall back on is our experience with the Japanese, who were looking at Port Wakefield coal with a view to gasification, which was to be the method of supplying gas for burning. I understand that further tests indicate that this gas is far less valuable than natural gas in terms of calorific value and the like when talking about generating electricity.

I remember the presentation in the Cabinet room when I was Minister when this Japanese company (Sumitomo) was looking at the cost of energy if we went down that track. There was a degree of enthusiasm around the place in one or two quarters that this was to be the bonanza. However, I quickly flipped over to the economic analysis page that was tucked well back in the report and—if my memory serves me (I can get the ballpark figure anyway)—we were looking at energy at about \$6 a gigajoule.

I have always detected when companies are putting up an economic analysis that they tend to be optimistic rather than pessimistic. One did not have to be a genius to realise that one could rule that out, without going into any more hoo-ha about the possibility of gasifying that Port Wakefield coal, and reckon we were going to get competitive power out of that. I was interested when the Premier excitedly announced from Germany that we were off on coal gasification again. If there is some other detail that has escaped me, I would be interested to hear it. What are we putting up for this study? Will the Minister give us a progress report on the present situation?

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on the Minister to reply, I remind the Committee of the time. As I believe the question requires a considered reply, we will adjourn until 9 o'clock.

[Sitting suspended from 8.45 to 9 p.m.]

The CHAIRMAN: The honourable Minister is to give his considered reply.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The question raised by the honourable member in a semi sneering way was how much is this going to cost the taxpayer. The funding associated with the project is \$3.6 million, of which \$1.1 million is a con-

tribution from the West German Government and \$2.5 million is a contribution from the South Australian Government. In fairness, I would mention that our contribution is related to the Deutschmark, so there could be a fluctuation there. Half of the \$2.5 million is being funded by the Pipelines Authority and the remaining half is divided into quarters of the total sum and is being funded by SAGASCO and ETSA.

There was also a note of derision and general non-enthusiasm in the Deputy Leader's voice in respect of a suggestion that he did not think much of the project because he saw a demonstration which Sumitomo were involved in and he was not phased by all that technical brilliance. He immediately dived to the economic page and found out that they were trying to 'snow' him—that is what he told us. That is a nice commentary on a reputable firm like Sumitomo. I do not choose to have that view. Sumitomo are entitled to be enthusiastic about their projects, when they present them. Certainly Uhde displayed considerable enthusiasm in the presentations that I have seen. I can say that I know that SAGASCO is an enthusiastic contributor to the project and is interested in its continuance and in its possible future. My understanding is that ETSA is similarly committed. Certainly the Pipelines Authority is dealing in a related commodity—that is, gas.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: Are they enthusiastic too?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Pipelines Authority is certainly enthusiastic; I think putting up \$1.25 million is one way of indicating enthusiasm.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: You never know, the ETSA Board was not too enthusiastic.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Here we are, another board that the former Minister has had access to. He knows everybody in Adelaide. He is not allowed to name anybody except when it slips out as it did with the South Australian Uranium Corporation.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The CHAIRMAN: I have advised the Committee many times today that interjections are out of order.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: Some people actually read *Hansard* and I know they will make their own sense of this. There are people who are name-droppers and who seek to imply they know everybody. They say, 'I know what that board was thinking—I was not actually there but my mate on the board told me so.'

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: None of the people are of any substance or integrity—they do not take their jobs as members of the board seriously—they do not even read the Companies Act to see what their responsibilities as directors are and whether they are required to keep confidences and so on. All these people ring up the Deputy Leader to let him know what went on at the board meetings this week. That is what he would have us believe and we know that is not true. He takes a few stabs and occasionally comes near the mark. He has a few leaks from the creeps who will ring up and forget that they have confidences they should keep and so they give him the odd bit of drivel. In this case he has been given a load of drivel.

The Deputy Leader has asked for more detail on the project. Those were simply prefacing remarks that I have made and I would suggest that Dr Messenger would be able to give more detail and shed a different light on the project from that which we have been given by one of the chief knockers in South Australia, the Deputy Leader, who has given a superb exhibition of his knocking ability tonight.

Dr Messenger: It is probably helpful to try to cover both of these projects—the Uhde project and the Sumitomo Kluckener project, because they derive from the same basic

approach and they are the two prime projects we are following in gasification combined with power generation.

Firstly, the approach that is being followed and the time scale is something in the order of—it could be a short term—six to eight years, or it could be 10 to 15 years time; only time will tell. The approach is to look primarily to the processing of coal to produce a low BTU gas and for it to be immediately used in a power generation facility. There are two important adjuncts to this—first, the prospect of this process also producing the feed stock for a liquid fuel production facility. This is where the 10 to 15 years aspect comes in, because it is a reality of life that 10 to 15 years from now we will only be about 30 per cent self-sufficient in liquid fuels in Australia. The second adjunct is the prospect of upgrading this low BTU gas and producing from it a high BTU pipeline gas.

It is in those circumstances that perhaps an upgraded cost of \$5 or \$6 a gigajoule might be important. However, the key thrust we are following at present is to produce a low BTU gas to immediately put it in a closely combined power station and the final test of economics really is the cost of the power which is generated.

As I will try to show later, the cost of power coming out of such a complex is quite similar to what we estimate would be the cost of power coming out of a 500 or 1 000 megawatt station based on Lochiel coal. With that preamble, let me go back and say that where we are at derives from a series of studies that the Department of Mines and Energy has undertaken since 1979. We had Amdel do a whole lot of studies and we did a lot of studies and tests ourselves. We gradually eliminated the prospects which were not favourable to the development of South Australian coal with a long series of work which, whilst each individually did not amount to a great deal of money, collectively with the free work which was thrown in by the companies, amounted to about \$300 000 worth of work over about five or six years.

What we were aiming to do was find the best approach to using South Australia's lignites and when the Bowmans deposit was seen not to be satisfactory for combustion—but we knew at the time that it was a very favourable coal from the viewpoint of mining costs and especially from the reactivity point of view, for gasification—our main aim then was to try to find ways in which the Bowmans deposit—the 3 000 million tonne deposit—could be used.

Various tests were done overseas and locally and our main aim was to find the proven processes which had favourable economics, which were most suited to the Bowmans coal but, most importantly, were near or at commercialisation. All those criteria lead to the Uhde process (the High Temperature Winkler process) and the Sumitomo molten iron bath process.

The coal was tested in the Sumitomo process facility at Kashima in Japan a couple of years ago. Also, over the past couple of years we have been building a case initially for funding by the National Energy Research Demonstration Council and then latterly by alternative means of funding via the Pipelines Authority so that the High Temperature Winkler work with Uhde could proceed, in the small unit initially (that is, the so-called process development unit at Aachen, West Germany) and then in the pilot plant unit in West Germany, the intent being to relate this work to the fullscale commercial unit that is being started up in Germany over the coming months. The intention was to go through these three stages.

The small unit was the basic design unit on which the commercial gasification unit, producing gas for methanol production in Germany, was initially designed. The key to getting the economics right in regard to gasification at this stage, and considering the economics of competing fuels

and the fact that we do not need liquid fuels now, is to consider the idea of a so-called combined cycle power plant, a plant which effectively uses all the energy in the gas by first burning it to drive turbines and then using the heat to drive further turbines. This has the further advantage of better economics, availability and better overall efficiency, so by the time we take account of such a combined cycle plant which has all those factors (that is, availability, efficiency integration and operability) the end result will be quite favourable economics.

We have produced figures using the Stewart committee report leading to a cost of power of 4 cents per kilowatt-hour. We have undertaken a similar inquiry into the Bowmans gasification combined cycle cost and we came up with a figure of slightly below four. It is true that that is based on preliminary work, but the whole idea is that this project is so potentially promising and open ended in terms of prospects for power generation (provided the trials in Germany work out and the design work goes well) as well as with the potential for liquid fuels and other things downstream based on these coal deposits that it has led to our enthusiasm to enter into a program the results of which are expected to be available at the end of 1987 when the other studies on conventional combustion will be available.

Conceivably, especially if something untoward happens in regard to the combustion aspects for the conventional power station design, a gasification based power station could be on line for the mid-1990s, but certainly for the late 1990s, unless something grievously wrong occurs in the trials in Germany. I suggest that the high temperature Winkler gasification project has quite significant prospects. The work being done consists of a number of stages, the first stage involving 10 tonnes of coal that is being tested through the process development unit in Aachen. That work is still not completed because the longer duration test will not be completed until late in October or early November. That requires some modification of the process development unit before the series of trials can be completed. Some of the early work indicated that there were problems with ash removal and temperature effects because of the nature and design of the lower part of the process development unit, and the unit is currently being modified to allow this work to be continued later this month.

In conjunction with those tests there is a series of corrosion tests that will be carried on until about February next year to show that the gas and salt content and ash nature will not cause undue corrosion problems or problems that cannot be dealt with by relatively conventional materials and construction. On the basis that both those results are positive, we will proceed to stage two—the testing of 1 000 tonnes of coal on the bigger unit. As I said, the bigger unit is the pilot plant unit on which the commercial unit was based. If there are problems before that stage, we could terminate or go on to the end of stage 2 and, if there are no problems, we could go on to stage 3. It is a sensibly defined stagewise process with go, no-go decisions between the stages.

The final culmination is a fullscale engineering economic study and evaluation over one year, involving intensive interaction between Shedden Pacific, the Australian partner of Uhde, ETSA, SAGASCO (if it wishes to be involved) and PASA, with the Department of Mines and Energy being involved on an overview basis.

There are a number of advantages in this sort of development. For one thing, it is a modular sort of development: it can be implemented in small steps and is more flexible. Because it has a number of modules, there is a greater degree of turndown, all of which is important when there is indefinite growth of the electricity market, something with which we are faced at present. The gasification project leads quite easily to desulphurisation of the gas. In fact, 60 000 to 80 000 tonnes of sulphur will be removed, and that will provide a very neat cash flow for the project, because that

will be the amount of sulphur required for the South Australian market.

Because of the ease of desulphurisation, the German Government and the German partners are interested in the project because sulphur and acid rain problems are of concern in Germany and Europe. They see this sort of development as quite important. In our case, sulphur is not so much of a difficulty but, if we could remove it and achieve a helpful cashflow at the same time, it would provide another benefit for the project. In terms of the magnitude of the project and the equipment, it is a smaller operation, less subject to overall problems and, as I said, the plant will be much more available in terms of maintenance and the need for cleaning.

For all those reasons, we are fairly enthused about the prospect. I do not doubt that there are problems to be overcome. We have already encountered some of those problems in the initial trials, but certainly Uhde is enthused as is its partner Rheinbraun. The Department of Mines and Energy is enthusiastic. We certainly think that the process development unit work will be completed successfully by about February and we would be quite surprised if it did not progress to the pilot plant trials next year.

Mr HAMILTON: The Estimates of Payments (page 140) shows that \$60 000 was voted for terminal leave payments in 1984-85 but \$105 418 was actually spent, an increase of almost 100 per cent. Why was there an increase of \$45 000?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: First, the excess of payment is not large in money terms in regard to terminal leave payments. What effectively happens, as the honourable member would appreciate, is that an attempt is made to estimate or calculate the amount to cover known or expected resignations or retirements in the year ahead. Sometimes the estimates or calculations do not work out because there are additional retirements, and so there is a need for additional funds. That explains what has happened in this case. An increase has been provided this year and, in keeping with what I have been saying, it will turn out that we have estimated too much.

Mr HAMILTON: I spoke to the Minister earlier about lightning strikes and power surges. Will the Minister obtain information on the manner in which people can seek redress in such circumstances? Should they go to insurance companies first, or will ETSA compensate people for damage occasioned to their electrical appliances? It is important to know exactly what is the score.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I will try to obtain that information. My recollection is that ETSA has been approachable on occasion in matters where an apparent power surge has occurred that has caused damages to consumers' home appliances. I cannot make it firmer than that. I wonder what is the position in regard to household insurance policies, covering contents, with fire cover, etc.

There may be some redress in that area. I have a sneaking worry that there are things known as acts of God that might be called out by insurance companies just when one thinks one is covered. It is a grey area. I appreciate the notice and latitude given by the honourable member and I will see whether I can obtain a more considered reply and let him have it in due course.

Mr HAMILTON: I thank the Minister for his response and I look forward to any further information that he can supply to me. At page 10, the yellow book refers to the fact that a review of the petroleum regulations is progressing. It also states that oil spills are investigated to ensure action is taken to minimise the possibility of recurrence. What is the Government's thinking in terms of the review of petroleum regulations? What specific problems, if any, does it see, and how is it trying to address those problems, if any? In terms of oil spills, can the Minister elaborate on the difficulties that Governments have had in the past concerning that problem and what procedures have been or are to be implemented?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The prevention of oil spills and remedial action necessary in the event of an oil spill are two different subjects. Prevention of oil spills requires action on the part of people involved in the loading of vessels, the cleaning of tanks, and so on. The remedial work necessary in the case of a spill requires plans to be made, and technology is involved. Technology in this area has been improving recently, judging by the programs I have seen on television. Indeed, I saw what appeared, to a lay person like me, an amazing demonstration of an absorption capacity of what I would call feather pillows used in cleaning up oil spills on water. They picked up about 20 times their weight of oil in just a short time. It remains with the feather pillows (for want of a better description) that can then be collected because they float and can then be disposed of.

That is a brief description of what I have described as improving technology in the area. It was considered in respect of the Stony Point installation and possible action in the event of an oil spill. Sensible precautions have been taken, including the provision of small vessels to assist with cleaning up if an unfortunate spill occurs. As to any review of the area in terms of the regulations, Mr Watts might be able to give some additional information in his capacity as Deputy Director-General.

Mr Watts: We have two sets of petroleum regulations: one set applies onshore, under the onshore petroleum legislation, and another set applies offshore under the submerged lands legislation. South Australia gets limited offshore activity and our main thrust deals with onshore regulations. The last version is dated 1969 and I am sorry to report that the regulations have not been updated since. They have not even been metricated and are still in imperial units. There has been a major effort to upgrade the regulations, but it is a slow process in the context of the greatly expanded Cooper Basin operations.

With the advent of the liquids scheme we have gone from five dry gas fields in production to 33 liquids fields. That is a very complex matter involving regulations in relation to conservation and prevention of waste. We have two resident engineers involved in this task, but had to use consultants in the fields of production and reservoir engineering to help us in the production monitoring and regulations side. We hope that these will be issued by the end of the year.

One important feature of the new regulations will be the release of data. Historically in Australia, and in South Australia, data obtained by oil companies has been held as confidential for the life of the permit, which could be 20 or 30 years. This is contrary to practice in other parts of the world. Queensland recently moved towards a regime of more liberal release of data.

Data availability is the lubricant for encouraging oil exploration. When these new regulations come out we will be moving towards a concept of releasing data from exploration works every two years. This is being done after consultation and with the full agreement of the producers and operators in South Australia.

So far as onshore oil spills are concerned, I cannot comment in detail. There are a lot of small oil fields in the Cooper Basin, so there is quite a bit of trucking of crude oil taking place. I do not think that we have had too many problems in this regard, but I will have to confirm that with our inspectors. Offshore there is a comprehensive set of procedures for oil spills. There is the national oil spill contingency plan, and facilities are available for the cleaning up of oil spills out of Port Stanvac and Port Bonython. The Minister has covered the various equipment.

Mr GUNN: Can the Minister give an assurance that people will not be displaced from their permanent employment in local towns because of arrangements that the Elec-

tricity Trust is making to abolish the 10 per cent surcharge that has unfortunately been applied to certain parts of Eyre Peninsula? One or two councils are concerned that they may miss out on having a depot in their area. There is currently an Electricity Trust depot where locals are employed to maintain and service lines. If the Electricity Trust takes over wholly there will be a rationalisation and some permanent employees may be required to shift their place of employment. Will the Minister give an assurance about this matter?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I can give the assurance sought by the honourable member. I point out another fact that is not perhaps readily apparent in relation to the announcement made by the Premier when the offer was made. It was given prominence then, but has not been quoted since. It is that the actual physical displacement of people, the change of depots and so on, will not happen in one week. The physical machinery part of this proposal could occur over a number of years. I give that assurance on behalf of ETSA.

Mr GUNN: The Minister is probably aware that some of his officers have been searching for water in the Glendambo area. He is probably also aware that there is a shortage of water for the new township. Some of us were concerned some years ago when a decision was made to relocate Kingoonya. The longer the time since the decision the more unfortunate we can see that it was. Some \$6 million was saved in road costs, but other problems have been created the first being a lack of water.

Can the Minister advise whether there will be a continuing program of drilling in the vicinity in the hope of finding a suitable underground water supply? I have been advised that a number of suggestions were recently put forward, one of them being that water would have to be pumped from Kingoonya. I do not know who would pay for that because the cost would be great.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I think that the honourable member is suggesting that his constituents should not pay. Fortunately, Mr Boucaut was in the Glendambo area recently. I am certain that he will be able to give the Committee up to date information on the honourable member's question.

Mr Boucaut: At the request of the Outback Areas Community Development Trust the department has been carrying out an investment program over the past three months involving drilling to locate other water supplies near Glendambo. The present water bore is located near an original bore put down by the Highways Department and used for the construction of the road itself. That bore deteriorated and went out of service last year and the present production bore was put down alongside. The recent program to locate an additional water supply has been unsuccessful and it appears that in the immediate vicinity of Glendambo, the only reliable water supply of any sort is the existing bore. The problem with the water coming from the bore is quality. It has water salinity of about 2 500 or maybe even up to 3 000 milligrams per litre, and this has rather severe effects on hot water services, electric jugs and so forth.

Under the Water Resources Act, there is a Water Resources Council established in South Australia and advising that council are various advisory committees. One of the committees is called the Arid Areas Water Resource Advisory Committee and it is responsible for providing advice to the council on the arid areas, the areas virtually out of hundreds. This committee carried out an inspection of the area of Glendambo amongst others last week and met the local residents and heard their complaints. As a result of that visit, they undertook to supply within the next two months a complete review of the water that maybe made available to Glendambo. This will be carried out by the E&WS Department using not only our figures of ground water

available but also other potential supplies. This will be a comprehensive review and will be costed and, based on that, some recommendation will be made as to the future of the water supply for Glendambo.

Mr GUNN: Can the Minister advise whether the Electricity Trust has made final arrangements with the Commonwealth in relation to the electric power lines running from Port Augusta to Woomera? I hope that in any negotiations or arrangements, the South Australian taxpayers will be fully compensated and the Commonwealth will put the lines in before they are handed over, and that they are in first class condition so that the State taxpayers will not be required to pick up any tabs that should rightly be the Commonwealth's.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The conditions of the nature that have been outlined by the honourable member are part of the arrangement for the transfer of the line. Before I was ill, I was up to date on the state of play, but I think there has been a further development. Mr Hill may be able to comment because there is a relationship to the Roxby project and he might be able to give us something later than I can give you at the moment.

Mr Hill: The arrangements with the Commonwealth have been finalised. There are a number of other matters that require endorsement by ETSA, by the Mount Gunson partners EMAC, and by Roxby Management Services. Those three organisations have not as yet ratified the agreement. I do not want to go into any details at this stage, but it is, as the Minister described, fairly advantageous to the State.

Mr GREGORY: How does a person in South Australia acquire the necessary skills to use explosives safely? What is the role of blasting inspectors?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There may be more than one way, but there is certainly the way that involves my department where a person can become skilled in this area. Mr Hill may be able to assist in providing information on this.

Mr Hill: Anyone using explosives in the mining or construction area is required to obtain a permit. Before obtaining a permit he has to do a test at the Department of Mines. The department has two engineers and three blasting supervisors who constitute the State experts on blasting. If another department wants something blown up it normally approaches the Department of Mines. For example, the Department of Marine and Harbours wanted, back in April 1984, to make two artificial reefs, one off Ardrossan and one off Glenelg. That department approached the Department of Mines to see whether it would sink a couple of old disused dredging barges. Tests were carried out in a quarry in relation to how to blow the correct size holes in the hull. In April 1984 they managed to sink both barges in two minutes.

Mr GREGORY: In relation to the question from the member for Albert Park about power surges, it is possible, if one owns a computer, to be able to buy a transformer especially designed to protect equipment from those surges. Will the Minister advise the Committee whether it is possible to buy bigger appliances that can be connected to the source of power to the house that protects the whole circuit from power surges and lightning strikes?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I suppose that I can only lament that I am now 15 years or more away from my original vocation, which was electronic engineering. If I was to give an answer off the top of my head now, I would not only be rash and foolish but I would be completely out of date. I will obtain that information for the honourable member so that he will get a sensible answer.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I was interested in the enthusiastic response on behalf of the Government about the gasification of coal at Port Wakefield, and was grateful for that information. Will the Minister or the officer con-

cerned give a progress report in relation to the review of the principles, bases and guidelines for energy pricing, with particular reference to ETSA? The Minister set up this committee some time ago (referring to page 5 in the yellow book, and pages further on that we will not be able to explore). Will the Minister give a progress report on what track his department is going down in relation to the guidelines for electricity tariff structures, in particular?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It is not possible to take in isolation, in the way that the honourable member has sought to do, the task that has been given to the committee that the Government set up under the chairmanship of Dr Messenger. The committee was purposely allotted the task of reviewing the principles, bases and guidelines of energy pricing, as distinct from just the single issue of electricity or gas tariffs in isolation.

It is the Government's view that all citizens in South Australia have certain basic energy needs, and it ought to be an entitlement that this is affordable, in the basic sense, to all citizens. The present tariff structures which apply in relation to gas, electricity, and so on, may have served well up to recent times before there had been considerable increases in the cost of the fuels, for example, which are used in providing these energy needs. Therefore, the Government thought that this whole area should be reviewed. It is possible that no change will result, although that is very unlikely. Of course, there was a need to take into account that the income from any proposed changes in tariffs as a result of this review must be such as to maintain the utilities concerned as viable operations without their becoming a loss loading on the community. In announcing the review, the Government suggested that this was a long-term project—'long-term' meaning in the order of 12 months or so—before definitive recommendations could be made.

The Hon. E.R. Goldsworthy interjecting:

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It was set up prior to my illness; I have lost the day to day sequence. From recollection, it was about May or June. Some initial work has been done. The interim report has been given, and the first recommendation which came from the committee was that to which the member for Eyre referred earlier, in that the 'anomaly', as he has so often termed it over the years, that applied to those electricity consumers in the West Coast area—that is, the Eyre Peninsula—should be remedied. That recommendation was accepted by the Government, and the offer has been made by the Premier to those electricity undertakings that are operated by local government and, in one case, by a private operation on the West Coast to enable those consumers to benefit from a reduction, in this case, of the tariff that they currently pay.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: That did not tell us much. It would have been a matter of Government policy as to whether or not the people on the West Coast were to be relieved of that 10 per cent loading.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: That is something that you did not do for over three years when you were in Government.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am suggesting that if it was a matter of Government policy—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: It was a matter of Government policy not to do it when you were in government.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: It did not need to be referred to a committee to make that decision. That was a Government decision. The former Labor Government decided not to do it and the previous Liberal Government decided not to do it. That was a Government decision, and I make no bones about it. If that is the only progress report the Minister can give me about the operation of that committee, that is pretty thin. I was glad to hear the Minister's intention to keep ETSA as a viable concern. He did not appear to be quite so intent last year when, as a result of

the Government's increased taxes, ETSA was pushed into deficit. The Minister is going through some obscure exercises. He has assured the Committee that he wants to keep ETSA viable, and he also wants to get it under ministerial control to assure that.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The Deputy Leader need not worry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister is getting a bit testy as the day draws on.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am getting a bit tired, not testy.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am glad that the Minister is not suffering from low blood pressure as he was previously when he badly needed a shot of adrenalin. I am pleased to see that he has woken up.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I am not pleased that the honourable member is pleased.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will refer to the line.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am glad that the Minister assures us that he wants to keep ETSA viable. He cannot tell us what ETSA will pay for gas.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: I can say what tariff it will charge: there will be a 2 per cent reduction and the following year it will not go beyond the CPI. That is what the public wants to know, and they know it.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: There are some people who—

The Hon. R.G. Payne: The board keeps people informed daily, almost hourly.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The Minister has become so testy that I cannot get my question out.

Mr Gregory interjecting:

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: The member for Florey has woken up after a day of a fair bit of trauma. If the Minister cannot give a better progress report than that, I will move to the final topic, which has interested me. The yellow book states that one of the matters of concern to the Government is salinity in the Murray River.

The Hon. R.G. Payne: There was a question on that subject during the absence of the Deputy Leader. Perhaps we should see how it develops.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: I am quite happy to read *Hansard*: I will proceed to the next question. Will the Government complete stage 2 of exploration for lead zinc in the Flinders Ranges national park? What is involved in stage 2 of the lead zinc project in the Flinders Ranges national park?

The Hon. R.G. Payne: In view of my unhappy feelings at the moment, the Director-General will answer that question.

Mr Johns: The department has been engaged in a study of lead zinc occurrence in the Flinders Ranges for several years. A long-term objective is to secure supplies to Port Pirie smelters in the future, recognising that the days of Broken Hill are limited. The work in which the department has been engaged is concerned with exploration in the Orparrina national park. Several companies are engaged in

exploration for lead zinc outside the parks, and the department is seeking to facilitate and provide data on the areas that are otherwise not accessible to the mining companies.

The first stage of the departmental investigation related to geochemical sampling to establish whether there were anomalous concentrations of base metals along the western flanks of the Flinders Ranges. Phase 2, to which reference has been made, is concerned with mapping and identifying the centres of anomalous concentration of base metals.

That work is advanced almost to the stage of completion. A number of anomalous areas have been disclosed and an attempt has been made to relate them to favourable stratigraphy and to impose possible structural control on them. That is what is referred to in notes on stage 2 of that investigation.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote completed.

Works and Services—Department of Mines and Energy,
\$2 950 000—Examination declared completed.

The Hon. E.R. GOLDSWORTHY: On behalf of the Opposition I wish to thank the officers for the information that they have provided to the Committee today. Despite the displeasure I may have shown at some of the answers from the Minister, we are grateful for the information given by the officers and, on behalf of the Opposition, I would like to thank them. Also, I would like to thank you, Mr Chairman, for your chairmanship in a most competent and tolerant manner in regard to today's proceedings. This will be the last year that you will preside over a Committee such as this because you are to retire from Parliament. Therefore, on behalf of the Opposition I want to say that we have appreciated the even handed and good natured way in which you have always chaired meetings of this Parliament. Along with other members who have served only in this Committee under your chairmanship, I want to pay a tribute to you for the fairness and, as I said, good natured way in which you have conducted these hearings.

The CHAIRMAN: I, too, want to thank the officers for their assistance today. I also thank all members of the Committee, particularly the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It might be just as well that I am retiring at the next election because, after drawing praise from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I might not even gain preselection next time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 2 October at 11 a.m.