

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 7 October 1986

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Chairperson:

Ms D.L. Gayler

Members:

Mr D.S. Baker
 Mr S.J. Baker
 Mr M.G. Duigan
 Mr R.J. Gregory
 Mr G.A. Ingerson
 The Hon. J.W. Slater

The Committee met at 11 a.m.

The CHAIRPERSON: There are a few preliminary matters. We will adopt a relatively informal procedure. There is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. It is for the Committee to determine the approximate timetable for consideration of the proposed expenditures and that timetable will assist in arranging the changeover of departmental advisers. Changes to the composition of the Committee will be notified to the Committee as they occur. If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form suitable for insertion in *Hansard* and submitted no later than Friday 31 October.

I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make opening statements if they wish, which statements should last approximately 10 minutes but no longer than 15 minutes. I will take a flexible approach to calling for asking of questions based on three questions per member, alternating sides. A member will be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question before switching to the next member.

Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member who is outside the Committee but desires to ask a question will be permitted to do so once a line of questioning on an item has been exhausted by Committee members. Indications in advance to the Chairperson would be appreciated. Questions should be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Payments. However, reference may be made to other documents, including the Program Estimates, the Auditor-General's Report, and so on. Questions are to be directed to the Minister, not to his advisers but, of course, the Minister may refer questions to his advisers for a response. I invite the lead speaker for the Opposition to make his opening statement.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I will defer that, and I think we can start the questioning.

The CHAIRPERSON: Shortly, I propose to open for questioning the Department of Labour expenditure and, later in the day, proceed with the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations. Does the member for Mitcham have an estimated timetable as to when to make that changeover?

Mr S.J. BAKER: At this stage it is very difficult to provide an estimate of time. The division of time probably would be somewhere between 75 per cent and 80 per cent on the Department of Labour and 20 to 25 per cent on the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations. Since we have a prospective time of 4 o'clock (and it remains to be seen as to whether we finish in accordance with the time

schedule), we may complete the Department of Labour somewhere around 3 o'clock.

The CHAIRPERSON: Does the Minister wish to make an opening statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The financial year 1986-87 will see some significant development in the emphasis and direction of the Department of Labour. Last year before this Committee I referred to the creation of the Ministries of Employment and Youth Affairs as a demonstration of the Government's commitment to these important policy areas. Whilst for an interim period the administrative support and arrangement emanated from the Department of Labour, substantial structural changes occurred in March 1986 in recognition of the priority given by the Government to matters pertaining to employment and youth. Accordingly, the Office of Employment and Training was created, and the Youth Bureau transferred to the Department of Local Government.

While the Department of Labour continued to provide financial services for the two transferring agencies, these arrangements ceased on 30 June 1986. Accordingly, the Estimates of Payments for 1986-87 include material on programs previously relating to those activities and responsibilities now vested in other agencies.

The programs pertaining to the newly constituted Department of Labour remain for the most part unchanged in their form and direction. The two major thrusts of the department are now concentrated on industrial health and safety matters and industrial relations. To this end, significant developments are in train which will have an immense impact on industrial regulation in this State. In this regard I point to the following:

- The new Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Bill, which was recently introduced into Parliament, will extend the jurisdiction of the existing Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act and its regulations to several new areas of industry and occupation (such as hospitals and schools). The new Act will also establish an Occupational Health and Safety Commission which will become a leading force in the development of new policies, practices and standards in the field of occupational health and safety. To support the activities of the commission, the Government has allocated funding for an additional four positions for part of the year and a contingency budget to the commission, amounting in total to a sum of \$97 000 for 1986-87. It is anticipated that an amount of \$157 000 to support four staff will be needed in a full year. Some of the costs of staffing the commission will be offset by a reduction in staff of the Occupational Health and Safety Research Branch of the Department of Labour, part of whose role will be transferred to the commission.
- The proposed Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, which is currently before Parliament, will make desirable and revolutionary changes to the system of workers compensation in this State. A sum of \$29 000 has been provided to facilitate the transition stage once the Bill has been passed.
- The development of the justice information system and its implementation and integration into various activities and programs of the Department of Labour.
- The expansion of the protective cover of the Dangerous Substances Act through the finalisation of regulations dealing with the storage of corrosive and poisonous substances.
- The provision of two additional positions and a contingency allocation to support the Coordinating Committee for Government Workers Safety Health,

Compensation and Rehabilitation. This Committee is coordinating the development of safety standards and practices in State Government departments, largely through the efforts of departmental safety committees and safety representatives.

- The creation of a new program entitled Equal Opportunity for Women to reflect the new role of the Women's Adviser. In this regard, a budget of \$114 000 has been provided for the program, which will concentrate on an examination of discriminatory practices and legislative provisions applying to women in the work force in respect of safety, health and welfare and industrial relations.
- Whilst these initiatives are particularly important, the Department of Labour's more traditional areas of responsibility are continuing to be developed. The diverse industrial relations aspects of the department's activities are to a large extent governed by the legislation operating in the area. To this end, 1986-87 will see some considerable changes in direction and operation, particularly when the Government's workers compensation proposals come to fruition.
- Emphasis is also being placed upon the inspectorial area of the department to ensure that the interface with industry and workers is relevant and constructive and gives effective meaning to the purpose and thrust of the legislation under which the department operates. To this end, the strength of the inspectorate is being maintained, and efforts are being made through a review of the role and purpose of the inspectorate to ensure that the exercise of that function is appropriate to the needs and demands of the 1980s and beyond.

In summary, the budget provides for expenditure in major categories as follows:

	\$
Salaries, wages and related payments	7 139 000
Administration and operating expenses	1 173 000
Accommodation and services costs	1 186 000
Reporting services	588 000
Overseas visits	10 000
Purchase of office machines	40 000
Grants and other specific funds	230 000
	10 366 000

This is the amount showing in the details of the Estimates of Payments for the Department of Labour for the year ending 30 June 1987. However, members are reminded that it is difficult to compare these estimates with those set out in the PPB papers, as the latter includes all payments pertaining to the department, including those made under special Acts (that is, relating to the judges and magistrates of the Industrial Court), the long service leave (building industry) fund, the Government insurance fund, the silicosis committee and community employment program project grants.

This appropriation relates to expenditure in 1985-86 of \$42 731 000. The significant reduction over the two years is solely attributable to the change in responsibility of the department, which makes comparison of the two figures impossible. It will not be until the close of the current financial year that a real comparison will be able to be made. However, if members isolate those programs previously and currently relating to the Department of Labour (including the new program called 'Equal Opportunity for Women' and its predecessor) they will see that a budget for 1986-87 of \$8 271 000 excluding support service items can be compared with a 1985-86 expenditure of \$7 939 000.

Labour, \$10 366 000

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Labour, Minister of Correctional Services and Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

Departmental Advisers:

- Mr H. Bachman, Director, Department of Labour.
- Ms S. Filby, Acting Manager, Administration and Finance Branch.
- Mr A. Dangerfield, Assistant Director, Industrial Affairs Division.
- Mr N. Ford, Assistant Director, Industrial Safety and Regional Services Division.
- Mr P. Hanson, Manager, Regional Services.
- Mr D. Gribble, Manager, Industrial Relations and Legislative Branch.
- Mr B. Shillabeer, Industrial Registrar.
- Mr D. Turner, Government Workers Compensation Officer.

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

Mr S.J. BAKER: My first question relates to the rationale behind splitting the Employment and Training Division into youth affairs and so on. Why did that happen? Has it caused some duplication of effort, given that industrial relations fits fairly neatly with employment initiatives and training?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That question is more appropriately directed to the Premier, as he is responsible for the allocation of portfolios. In a spirit of cooperation, however, I shall make a few observations.

While a case could be made out for Employment and Training to remain with the Department of Labour, I think an even stronger case could be made out for Employment to go with the Department of Technical and Further Education. There is no doubt that, as we move towards the end of this century, enormous changes are taking place in the composition of the work force, and there is a very strong link with training, education and employment. To suggest otherwise, of course, would be incorrect. I am sure that the Premier would be pleased to enlarge on the question; however, I think that that basically gives some indication of the rationale behind the split up of the department.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I presume from that that the Minister supports the change and, therefore, I will ask my next question. When will the workers compensation legislation be reintroduced into the Legislative Council, and when has the occupational health and safety legislation been scheduled for debate in Parliament?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The honourable member's presumption is quite correct: I do support the change. As to the occupational health and safety legislation, that will be debated very early following the resumption of Parliament in two weeks time. Specifically, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will be advised by the Deputy Premier. As regards the workers compensation legislation, that will be revived in the Legislative Council when the Government feels that it is appropriate to do so.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can the Minister further elaborate on the situation as far as the workers compensation legislation is concerned? He has just said that when the Government feels like it that legislation will be brought before Parliament. The Minister will have recognised that industry is in a state of flux at the moment, and I think everyone would

appreciate some indication of the Government's intention in this matter. The Government is setting the agenda for workers compensation legislation, and it would be fair to say that everyone in the work force would appreciate a clear direction as to when the workers compensation legislation will be further considered. Will the Minister be more specific?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At this stage, no, I cannot be more specific. The Government wants the matter tidied up and the changes implemented as quickly as possible. We have had some difficulty getting the legislation through the Legislative Council in a manner that is satisfactory to the Government. Any delay in altering the workers compensation system cannot be levelled at the door of the Government; it must be levelled at the door of those who hold the majority in the Legislative Council. Had the Government had a majority in the Legislative Council, the matter would have been cleared up earlier this year in February and industry and the unions would have known where they were going.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise the Committee how many employers have been prosecuted and provide details of the total amount involved in fines, and also provide details of any employees who have been prosecuted for breaches of the Industrial Health, Safety and Welfare Act?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In answer to that question, I have a table of a statistical nature which provides necessary

details. In relation to some of the more significant figures requested by the honourable member: under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, a total of 57 proceedings were taken; 19 convictions were recorded; and there were 37 complaints pending.

Under the Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act there was a total of 65 prosecutions, 48 convictions recorded, and eight matters still pending. Under the Industrial Code in connection with bread baking, there were 11 proceedings entered into and 11 convictions. Under the Workers Compensation Act, for example, there were seven prosecutions, four convictions and three matters withdrawn. That gives some indication, but the table is far more detailed and I am sure that when it is incorporated into *Hansard* the honourable member will glean much more information from it.

Regarding fines, under the Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act there were 48 convictions involving total fines of \$9 790, the average fine being \$204. Under the Arbitration Act there were 19 convictions involving total fines of \$1 285, with an average fine of \$68 per conviction. The largest fines were under the Shop Trading Hours Act; four convictions, total fines \$3 000, and an average fine of \$750. Obviously, the number of prosecutions and the resulting fines require a lot of attention from Government, and that attention is being given. I have a table of the number of convictions, the total amount of fines and average fines. I ask that that table be incorporated in *Hansard* as I have only highlighted some of the more important areas.

DETAILS OF PROSECUTIONS

The following table details the prosecutions undertaken by the department in 1985-86 for each Act within the department's jurisdiction, and also shows the number of convictions recorded and the amount of fines levied.

Prosecution Complaints	Prosecution Complaints—Analysis						
	C/Fwd from June 85	Proceeded 1.7.85	Totals	Convictions Recorded	Complaints Dismissed	Complaints Withdrawn	Complaints Pending 30.6.86
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act	2	57	59	19	1	2	37
Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act—Provisions under the Act	7	58	65	48	2	7	8
Regulations pursuant to the Act Industrial Safety Code Regulations	9	20	29	5	—	20	4
Construction Safety Code	—	20	20	9	5	2	4
Rural Industries (Machine Safety) Regulations	—	1	1	1	—	—	—
Industrial Code (Bread Baking)	—	11	11	11	—	—	—
Long Service Leave Act	—	3	3	1	—	1	1
Shop Trading Hours Act	3	4	7	4	—	3	—
Workers Compensation Act	2	1	3	2	—	1	—
Lifts and Cranes Act	—	3	3	3	—	—	—
Motor Fuel Distribution Act	—	1	1	—	—	1	—
Explosives Regulations	—	1	1	1	—	—	—
Dangerous Substances Act	—	1	1	—	—	—	1
Total	23	181	204	104	8	37	55

Act/Regulations/Code	No. of Convictions	Total Amount of Fines	Average Fine
Industrial Safety, Health and Welfare Act	48	\$ 9 790	\$ 204
Industrial Safety Code Regulations	5	940	188
Construction Safety Code Regulations	9	790	88
Rural Industries (Machine Safety) Regulations	1	200	200
Lifts and Cranes Act	3	230	77
Explosives Regulations	1	100	100
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act	19	1 285	68
Industrial Code (Bread Baking)	11	1 775	161
Workers Compensation Act	2	200	100
Long Service Leave Act	1	50	50
Shop Trading Hours Act	4	3 000	750
Total	104	18 360	

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister tell the Committee what is the time delay in bringing workers compensation and industrial matters before the Industrial Court and the Industrial Commission, and what steps have been taken to reduce those delays?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In respect of workers compensation cases it is estimated that delays in hearings of up to eight months are being experienced at present, an increase of approximately three months on the previous year. This delay is predominantly due to limited judicial resources, but until the future of the workers compensation legislation is known no decisions are to be taken to fill judicial vacancies. In respect of the industrial jurisdiction, the lead time varies according to the matter involved: under section 31, for example, unfair dismissal applications are currently being finalised in six to eight weeks, while award matters are generally being heard within a month of application.

These lead times are considered reasonable, given that

time must be allowed in most instances for conferences to be held. Indeed, in the case of section 31 applications, the practice is for preliminary conferences to be convened by the Industrial Commissioner, and these often take place within days of dismissal. There is presently an 80 per cent success rate of such matters being sorted out during these conciliation procedures. I am sure the honourable member will be pleased to hear that.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister tell the Committee how many industrial inspectors are employed by the Department of Labour and for what reason?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the Department of Labour the inspectors are distributed throughout the various regions and under various headings such as boiler inspectors, construction and safety inspectors, and so on. It would be more fruitful to have the table incorporated in *Hansard* rather than my going through it, so members may peruse it later.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR—DISTRIBUTION OF INSPECTORS POSITIONS 22.9.86

Region	Regional Manager	Factories	Boiler	Construction Safety	Investigation Officer (Including Asst IO's)	Shearer's Accommodation
Central 9	1	2	1	1	4	—
Eastern 9	1	3	1	1	3	—
Western 10	1	2	2	1	3	1
Southern 9	1	3	1	1	3	—
Northern 8	1	2	1	1	3	—
Port Adelaide 8	1	3	1	1	2	—
Berri 2	1	—	—	—	1	—
Mount Gambier 4	1	1	—	1	1	—
Port Pirie 3	1	1	—	—	1	—
Whyalla 3	1	1	—	—	1	—
Totals: 65	10	18	7	7	22	1

Note: Regional managers and inspectors in country offices assume responsibility for a range of inspectorial functions.

Mr INGERSON: It seemed rather amazing that the Minister said there would be no attempt to fill a judicial position when we have an obvious backlog in claims. Irrespective of changes to the law, if we have an existing problem in the system by having a backlog of claims, it seems that the position will not be filled. Can the Minister further explain?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Until we know where we are up to with the workers compensation legislation (and are talking about weeks rather than months) it would be pointless to fill those positions on any kind of permanent basis. We have acting judges in the area and that can be adjusted quickly from time to time. I do not believe that the delays are unreasonable—compared with some jurisdictions, they are very reasonable indeed. I am sure the Attorney-General would agree. The problem is not sufficient to warrant immediate action, but it is something that we are watching closely. When we know where the Parliament is going with the workers compensation legislation we can make adjustments in the jurisdiction accordingly.

Mr INGERSON: My next question relates to the outworking situation. Will the Minister advise whether there have been any findings at this stage and at what stage is the investigation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The investigation is still proceeding. There has not been any final position reached. It is an area that gives the Government particular concern for two reasons: first, the apparent exploitation of the people concerned who, from the information gleaned by the department so far, show that many women, particularly migrant women, are working long hours under very bad conditions for virtually slave labour rates. That is very bad for the people concerned, but it is also very bad for the legitimate industries in the State that do not use the outwork system.

I am talking particularly of the clothing industry. Legitimate industries pay award rates, abide by all the appropriate safety, health and welfare legislation and are finding themselves at a cost disadvantage in comparison with those firms that use outworkers and abuse those outworkers.

It is a different area and, even when the committee has reported, I cannot give any guarantee of what action we will take or how effective it will be. It is certainly an area in which investigation was well warranted and, if we can tidy up that area to stop the exploitation of the individual as well as the very adverse effects on our decent industries, it will be a very worthwhile exercise.

Mr INGERSON: The yellow pages mention that there is a staff development package, which is an ongoing program. Can the Minister explain to the Committee what is happening in that area?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Staff development is and always has been throughout the Public Service—not just the Department of Labour—going on since the departments were established. I see staff development not as some major new initiative but as ongoing and highly desirable. Every now and again we take stock of where we are with staff development and whether our policies and practices are as relevant in 1986 as they were in the past.

One of the prime areas in which we are interested at the moment is, for example, setting the objective of the department. That may seem an obvious thing, but every now and again I believe it is very desirable to stop and have a look at ourselves and see if our objective, first of all, is relevant to today. If it is found to be somewhat dated, we will update it and set it out very clearly so that everyone in the organisation, from the Minister down, knows precisely where the department is heading.

We go through the process in a number of different ways: we have divisional planning days where each division sits down and works out precisely where it, as a particular section of the Department of Labour, is going, and how it ought to get there. Some timetables are introduced and monitoring is built in, so that people are not just aimlessly drifting through their careers and the department is not aimlessly drifting through its life.

That includes such things as general training and development programs and, in particular, senior management development programs, which are very important. To imagine that managers, once they get into a certain position, no longer need any training is quite fallacious. Some would argue that it is even more important for senior managers to be constantly monitoring their performance and having their skills upgraded and their general managerial abilities developed. This applies to middle managers, and so on.

I suppose one of the most important aspects of this type of staff development activity is a performance evaluation and development scheme so that the work that is being done and the programs individuals are striving for can have the results monitored to see if they are achieving the objectives of the program and, if they are not, analysing why not. If it is a fault in staff development we will correct that, so that officers are even more valuable to the Department of Labour.

It is quite an extensive, ongoing program and, to me, very important. There always has to be some caution with these programs to ensure that we do not develop into a department which spends all its time contemplating its navel and assessing how good or bad it is, and either wringing its hands or patting itself on the back. We should never lose sight of the objectives of the department and ensure that the overwhelming majority of our work is carried out in achieving those objectives and delivering the services to our clients. Having made that slight qualification, I am particularly proud of the way the staff of the Department of Labour goes about its staff development activities and initiatives.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: How many judges, industrial magistrates and commissioners are currently working in the Industrial Court and Industrial Commission? Are the numbers sufficient to adequately deal with industrial matters which come before the tribunals?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Industrial Court and Commission are presently comprised of a president, six deputy presidents, two industrial magistrates and four commissioners. It is my view that the balance and numbers at present are sufficient for what is required. However, as I stated earlier, if the workers compensation area changes, there will have to be a reassessment of the numbers, because it may well be that fewer judges will be required.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I now refer to page 599 of the yellow book or 172 of the Estimates Committee booklet. I seek some information in regard to consultancy grants. A sum of \$15 000 is voted, with actual payments the same. What was this money spent on and what are the Government's plans for 1986-87 in relation to consultancies for the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: For 1985-86, in conjunction with branches now comprising the Office of Employment and Training, two projects were commissioned: one tracing the destination of persons made redundant and the other a survey of part-time employed persons. I think the desirability of finding out what exactly happens, inasmuch as one is able to generalise, to people who are made redundant will be obvious to the Committee. It is alleged from time to time that people made redundant pick up a golden hand-

shake and get work the next day. This may occur in one or two cases, but I do not believe that it is the general rule. It depends on one's skills.

It may well be that people made redundant stay out of work for a long time, and when we are assessing redundancy pay workers are often counselled, particularly if it is a voluntary redundancy. Whilst \$10 000 or \$20 000 may seem like a lot of money (and to most workers it is the most money they will ever see in their lives), if one is going to be unemployed for any significant period of time, certainly for longer than 12 months, then the money will very quickly dissipate. I think that the information from that program will be very important.

As to the survey relating to part-time workers, that is now more in the hands of the Office of Employment rather than in our hands, but it is very useful to find out where the part-time work is and who is taking part in it. From time to time we see the Australian Bureau of Statistics data detailing the number of full-time and part-time jobs. Because of the way that the work force is changing, I think that it hinders us not to know precisely where the work is and where the opportunities for part-time work are developing. It would be very useful to obtain some reliable information. We have several possible projects under consideration in 1986-87, but we have not yet made any hard and fast decisions. When we do so, I am sure that they will be announced as the decisions are made and the projects are entered into.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I refer again to industrial conciliation and arbitration in 1985-86. What are the reasons for the over-expenditure in operating expenses relating to program 4?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The over-expenditure in the Industrial Court and Commission related principally to the production and distribution costs of the *Industrial Gazette*. Owing to our abnormally high proportion of variations made in the period November 1985 to February 1986 relating to indexation of allowances, the 38 hour week, adoption leave and the program of consolidating awards on variations for the justice information system, expenditure for the *Gazette* rose to \$169 000 against an allocation of \$130 000.

As we are mindful of the need to curtail any over-expenditure, a number of measures to contain costs in the Industrial Court and Commission are under review and they include an examination of the *Gazette* and its purpose. Again, it ought to be an ongoing program in every department or sector of Government that people review what they are doing. I can assure the Committee that in 1986 nothing focuses the mind more than an over-expenditure. I suggest that the instigators of this review see whether the *Gazette* and its purpose are still as relevant to 1986 as they were when it was established goodness knows when. Also, they should look at whether we need it at all, and I think that question can be answered very simply by saying that yes, we probably do need it. Do we need the format and the amount of detail that we put into it and can it be done better, which in this day and age generally means more cheaply?

Mr S.J. BAKER: Previously, the Minister gave a long dissertation on staff development. How much money has been provided for staff development?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is part of the normal ongoing program of the Department of Labour and there is not a specific allocation for it. My information is that it probably costs us about \$7 000, so in dollars and cents it is not really an expensive item. It can end up being quite an expensive item in the amount of time and resources that are allocated to it. As I said earlier (and I do not think that it was a long

dissertation; I thought that it was information that the Committee would have welcomed), we have to be careful that resources are not unnecessarily tied up in this area. Whilst in dollars and cents we can show it is not expensive, it is time consuming. However, provided it is done properly, it is time well spent.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Page 585 of the yellow book refers to resource allocations for the inter-agency support services. If we look at the Minister's responsibility in terms of dollars and cents and in terms of resources, we notice that there was a reduction of 30 per cent in the recurrent expenditure item, but the change in ministerial staff was 0.2 of a person: it decreased from 9.5 to 9.3. The Minister would be well aware that a number of statements have been made about tightening belts and making the Public Service work more efficiently. Can the Minister explain why that has not occurred within his own ranks?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It appears that it has occurred.

Mr S.J. BAKER: It was 0.2 of a person and you have lost 30 per cent of your portfolio.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The actual expenditure for 1985-86 was \$470 000 and the proposed expenditure for 1986-87 is \$405 000. When ministerial portfolios change, the appropriate level of staffing of an office is reviewed. In my case I requested the Public Service Board to review the situation and some changes were made. Apparently, there is still some time-lag in the Treasury forwarding some of the money, so we will get on to that very quickly.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I am concerned when statements are made by the Government about reducing costs and that that does not occur when it should. Page 588 of the yellow book refers to the ad hoc committee on trading hours for service stations. I asked a question of the Minister in Parliament about whether the recommendations of that ad hoc committee would be implemented, but he was somewhat evasive as to the intention of the Government in that regard. A number of other recommendations, besides the one that suggested we should deregulate petrol trading hours, were made, but that specific recommendation was implemented very swiftly. The report also drew attention to the problems facing retailers who necessarily would be affected by that change and the associated marketing. Can the Minister now say what his intentions are in regard to the other recommendations of the report?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In relation to the comment about Governments not reducing costs when they are expected to, the budget that was brought down by this Government was very responsible. I think that it took a number of people who ought to have known better by surprise with its lack of tax increases and the significant reductions that were made in the various sectors of the Public Service. This Government does not just talk about cost cutting—it does something about it. That is properly acknowledged throughout the community.

As for petrol trading hours, I have written to the oil companies pointing out the recommendations, which have not yet been implemented, of the *ad hoc* committee. Some of the recommendations arrived out of agreements between the two parties before the committee. In a letter, I advised the oil companies that I expect the agreements to be honoured. I have no reason to believe that they will not be. I hope that it will not be necessary to legislate to ensure that they are honoured. I see no virtue in legislation for legislation's sake. If the various parties can come to an agreement and stick to it, I shall be happy.

It would have been easy to draw up and introduce legislation, but I believe that most people in the industry are reasonable. If they turn out not to be, however, we can do

something about that quickly. One of the recommendations was that there should be some protection, if necessary through the Motor Fuel Licensing Board, for service station proprietors when a service station is being closed and withdrawn from the industry. My advice from both sides of the industry is that that has always happened and that there has never been a problem with compensation or financial arrangements between oil companies and lessees of service stations. It would be foolish to legislate for something that has never been a problem. If there is a problem, we will consider the matter, however. I see no point in doing anything until and unless a problem arises.

Mr DUIGAN: In the program description for program 6 under the heading 'Broad Objectives', the need to reduce the incidence and severity of industrially caused diseases and injuries is mentioned. The section on 'Issues and Trends' of the program papers indicates that there is a continuing increase in the number and type of industrial injuries. Can the Minister provide information or statistics on the number of fatal accidents at work sites in South Australia during the past 12 months?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the financial year 1985-86, there were 10 fatal industrial accidents which were investigated by inspectors of the Industrial Safety and Regional Services division. Perhaps the honourable member would like me to give a brief outline of some of the circumstances of those regrettable deaths. A tanker driver was burnt to death at a fuel depot, a construction worker was killed when a platform collapsed, a police officer died following an explosion in a police workshop, a worker died from inhalation of harmful substances, a maintenance worker died following inhalation of ammonia, a worker was crushed when a load fell from a truck, a worker was killed when working on an overhead power line, a worker was killed when he fell from an overhead walkway, a construction worker died as a result of injuries received on a construction site and an investigation was begun when a person died from burns to 100 per cent of his body after a can of petrol that he was carrying burst into flames. The person was smoking at the time. The incident was determined not to be an industrial accident. I am sure that members agree that such accidents are regrettable, but I assure everyone that accidents are followed up to ensure that any unsafe work practices or conditions are clearly identified and, as far as is practicable, the hazards are ordered to be removed.

Mr DUIGAN: I understand that there was recently a survey on the number of Government buildings which contain asbestos. What did it reveal and how many buildings remain to be freed of asbestos?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The survey has been completed for all Government owned and occupied buildings in the metropolitan and near country areas within a radius of 300 kilometres. The survey showed that a number of buildings contained sprayed asbestos and that a large number of buildings contain pipes coated with asbestos. The Government departments involved have been advised of that fact and the asbestos is being removed as funds become available. No buildings were found to have asbestos fibre above the level considered acceptable by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Mr DUIGAN: Does that mean that Government departments which need to take remedial action have been notified?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Every department has been told what asbestos is in its buildings. The survey covers Government owned and occupied buildings. We are removing asbestos as funds become available, but the process must take its chance with other Government programs.

Mr DUIGAN: My third question relates to what would have been program 14 if there had been one. It was headed 'Labour Market Research' but I notice that it has been transferred to the Office of Employment and Training under the Minister of Employment and Further Education. To what extent is there continuing liaison between the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Employment and Further Education to identify areas where employment is increasing and where unemployment is increasing, or are such matters now entirely the responsibility of that department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is entirely the responsibility of that department, but obviously the contact between the Department of Labour and the Office of Employment is very strong. When a body is split up (and especially if it remains physically located in the same place and people are sitting at the same desks), it is very hard not to have contact and exchange of information and ideas, as occurs. So, there is certainly an ongoing information exchange, but the program is now entirely within the province of the Minister of Employment and Further Education.

Mr DUIGAN: Therefore, I should obtain information about growth areas in employment and unemployment from that Minister?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr INGERSON: I refer to the matter of youth wages and to page 587 of the Program Estimates. There is no doubt that the expression of concern by the Government is legitimate and that many studies in the youth area have shown that youth are disadvantaged not only by inexperience but also in relation to the cost of their labour. Does the Government intend to introduce youth wage rates in State awards, after discussing this with unions and industry and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That program is no longer ours. It belongs to the Minister of Youth Affairs, and it would be more appropriate to direct that question to her.

Mr INGERSON: My next question concerns shopping hours, and I refer to page 588 of the Program Estimates where the statement is made by the Government that it has observed that conditions of fair trading and competition must be ensured. Is it true that, in line with the Minister's free marketing principles, the Government will move quickly to repeal the existing legislation and to allow extension of trading for all shops?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am a bit bemused by that: I am not quite sure from where the member for Bragg acquired his view that I am a free marketer. I find that a quite remarkable observation, and I have absolutely no idea what evidence the honourable member has for making it. However, it is fair to say that I have a very strong view that regulation ought not to be for the sake of regulation. In the area of marketing boards or any other area of industry, it is important that from time to time we consider whether certain regulations are appropriate. I think the member for Mitcham interjected earlier about the Potato Board or something, and referred to my having something to do with dismantling it. When the Potato Board was established, I think in 1945, it may have been very relevant and it may have been a perfectly proper thing to do. However, obviously the 1986 Parliament thought otherwise and disposed of it. I believe the same thing is happening with the Egg Marketing Board. So, I am very pleased that other Ministers have the same philosophy that I have, in that they do not believe in regulation for the sake of regulation.

In relation to shopping hours, I think there is an argument for the regulations that exist. First, I point out that I would prefer not to be involved in the area, full stop: as a Minister, it gives me a considerable number of headaches. However, leaving that to one side, in an ideal society, in a perfect world, we would have no regulation and people would be able to trade freely as they wished. The problem with that is that, when an industry is structured in a certain way, to change dramatically overnight the structure of that industry could have some very serious consequences. In some areas it does not matter—the consequences are not serious. I believe, for example, that in relation to petrol retailing the consequences were not serious at all, if there were any and, certainly, on balance, the benefits far outweighed any adverse consequences.

However, in the general retail area one must strike a balance between the competing forces, mainly of big business and small business. There is no doubt that, if shopping hours were totally deregulated at the moment, quite horrendous financial and employment effects in the area of small business would result. I believe very firmly that an awful lot of them would not survive—and I certainly do not believe that this is the time to be knocking out a lot of small businesses. The Government does talk about the problem—probably more than it likes to do—with the retail industry and the unions in the area. We talk about it constantly. The unions, as a matter of policy, object to any extension of shopping hours and the Retail Traders Association, for example, has a policy of complete deregulation, but despite their respective policies it is understood that from time to time consumers require the relaxation of shopping hours in certain areas and at certain times.

The Minister inevitably finishes up having to make the decision on his own, because the two sides do not agree, and it may not be universally popular, but the decision is accepted by both sides. I refer, for example, to the Grand Prix. Last year significant deregulation of the retail industry took place and applied from Wednesday through to Saturday. This year extended shopping hours will apply on Thursday to Saturday evening. It was generally accepted that it was not really worth while for people to open on the Wednesday night of the Grand Prix last year. So, if the Minister makes a decision that all shops will close, then the competing retailers are happy—because someone down the road is not stealing a march, and obviously the unions are happy because union members do not have to work extra hours.

It is now accepted that extra shopping hours will be provided on the Saturday afternoon of the Grand Prix and at least one extra late shopping night will be provided. I will be very surprised if that is not the case. A request has been made from the stores for deregulation of shopping hours on the day of the John Martin's Christmas pageant. Last year, because the pageant coincided with the Saturday of the Grand Prix there was no problem. However, this year, of course, it is a week later and a different situation pertains. Whilst the unions did not agree to the request, I discussed the matter with the retailers and it is now accepted that some relaxation in shopping hours can occur, and certainly no complaints have been made by the unions. At the moment the Government prefers that model, where relaxation can take place on appropriate occasions, while not allowing a wholesale deregulation of the industry which, in my view and that of the Government, would have quite dramatic effects on small business.

Mr INGERSON: Can I assume from that reply that the Government will not deregulate shopping hours during this term of its office?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is up to the honourable member; I cannot stop what assumptions he makes. Circumstances change, and any Government has to respond to circumstance at a given time. However, it is certainly not in the Government's forward thinking to have a wholesale deregulation of shopping hours.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise the Committee how many inspectors have been appointed under the Long Service Leave Building Industry Act, how many inspections were made by those inspectors during 1985-86, and whether those inspections resulted in any prosecutions for non-compliance with the Act?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There are only two inspectors in this area. There were 303 inspections made in 1985-86 by those two inspectors appointed under the Act. I am considering an increase in the number of inspectors. They are very cost efficient. The fund pays for the inspectors, so it is not a charge on the Public Service. It has been put to me by the board that there are still a number of areas where there is a significant underpayment being made, and that, if there were more inspectors, receipts would increase and more than pay for the inspectors employed; so it seems to me to be an area where we could quite responsibly move to allow the area to expand, particularly as it is not a charge on the public purse, and particularly as the people who are not meeting their obligations under the Act are breaking the law.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise the Committee what effect the Justice Information System will have on the Department of Labour?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Through the Industrial Court and the Industrial Commission the Department of Labour has been part of the Justice Information System for some time. Systems have been developed for the court and commission in respect of case administration, on-line inquiries and updating of awards. However, in the wider application of the department, the Justice Information System will enable the computerisation of registration and licensing of activities under industrial safety and associated legislation; recording and analysis of work related reports; recording of inspection records to enable a composite picture to be developed of the department's involvement with a particular employer or occupier; and the collection of a wide data base to assist in the better management of limited resources.

The Justice Information System is principally the responsibility of the Attorney-General. Certainly, as regards myself as Minister of Labour, I am delighted that the decision has been taken and funds allocated to bring the Justice Information System into force, because it will be a very useful tool for the Department of Labour and for another portfolio I have. We desperately need it: there is a tremendous amount of manual handling of information which would not be tolerated in any private sector organisation of the same size; it is inefficient and wasteful and we will be quite happy when the Justice Information System is in full flight and the information that it is necessary for us to store and retrieve is handled in a way more relevant to the 1980s than to the 1930s.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister tell the Committee how many inspections were made by officers of the Department of Labour during 1985-86?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The inspections under the various regulations numbered thousands, so I think that it is appropriate that I insert a table into the *Hansard* record without my going through it and just highlight some of the more important areas.

Inspections Made in 1985-86 to Ensure Compliance with Legislation Administered by the Department of Labour

Safety Inspections	
<i>Construction Safety Regulations</i>	
Work injury	87
Complaints	313
Routine	4 666
Asbestos	1 369
	<hr/>
	6 435
<i>Industrial Safety Code Regulations</i>	
Work injury	952
Complaints	351
Routine	3 962
Registration of Industrial Premises	1 243
Asbestos	385
	<hr/>
	6 893
<i>Commercial Safety Code Regulations</i>	
Work injury	85
Complaints	118
Routine	1 174
Registration of Industrial Premises	1 221
	<hr/>
	2 598
<i>Rural Industries Regulations</i>	
Work injury	3
Complaints	2
Routine	227
	<hr/>
	232
<i>Logging Industry Regulations</i>	
Work injury	7
Complaints	18
Routine	200
	<hr/>
	225
<i>Pesticide Regulations</i>	
Work injury	1
Complaints	9
Routine	18
	<hr/>
	28
<i>Total All Safety Regulations</i>	
Work injury	1 135
Complaints	811
Routine	10 247
Registration of Industrial Premises	2 464
Asbestos	1 754
	<hr/>
	16 411
Industrial Inspections	
<i>Awards</i>	
Number of complaints (substantiated in writing) investigated	1 259
Number of calls/visits	8 137
Arrears of wages collected	\$724 736
<i>Long Service Leave</i>	
Number of complaints (substantiated in writing) investigated	99
Number of calls/visits	417
Value of long service leave collected	\$134 438
<i>Shop Trading Hours</i>	
Number of inspections	705
Industrial Code re weekend baking of bread	
Number of inspections	54
<i>Workers Compensation</i>	
Number of complaints (substantiated in writing) investigated	55
Number of calls/visits	346
Arrears of wages collected	\$30 378

For example, under our construction safety regulations, always an area of concern, there were 313 complaints and 4 666 routine inspections: that gives some idea of the scope of that particular area. Inspections for asbestos numbered 1 369, a total in that particular area of 6 435. Under the Industrial Safety Code regulations there were 351 complaints and 3 962 routine inspections. Registration of industrial premises involved 1 243 inspections, and for asbestos in that particular area 385, again close to 7 000 in all.

In other areas which may be of interest to the Committee total inspections under various safety regulations numbered

16 411 of which 10 000 were routine inspections. This is a very large area of the department's activity. For the interest of the Committee, under the shop trading hours legislation the number of inspections was 705. I make the point again that in an ideal world I would much rather have public servants doing something more productive than going through 705 inspections under the Shop Trading Hours Act. However, I think that it is well justified and, for the protection of small business in particular, it is absolutely essential right now.

Another figure that may be of interest to the Committee relates to the Industrial Code and the weekend baking of bread, which involved 54 inspections. In summary, this is a large area of activity in the Department of Labour, one of which we are particularly proud because our inspectors get through so much work which is almost entirely of a very important nature.

Mr S.J. BAKER: How far advanced is the FATEXT system, and to what extent will you be able to use that to automate awards so that people can pick them up as consolidated entities?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have the Industrial Registrar, Mr Bryan Shillabeer, with the Committee and I am sure he will be happy to tell us what he knows. His answer will be supplemented by the Chief Executive Officer of the Department of Labour, Mr Bachman.

Mr Bachman: The system is being developed by heads of tribunals around Australia. They have had several discussions and meetings on the most appropriate system to be adopted by each tribunal, so that full text retrieval of the relevant decisions of each tribunal will readily be available to the others. One of the problems caused is that different computer installations and equipment are held by each tribunal or are being installed. That makes it difficult to have a unified approach. But, notwithstanding that, discussions are still continuing between the various tribunals in the hope and expectation that, with the assistance of the various Governments and their respective departments, a fully coordinated retrieval system can be developed in the near future. It has not developed to a great extent at this stage other than the wish of heads of tribunals to have a much more computerised system of retrieval of text of awards and decisions.

Mr Shillabeer: For the information of the Committee, the FATEXT system is being developed by the Commonwealth Department of Industrial Relations mainly for use in the Industrial Court or Commission for computerisation of awards. There is extensive cooperation at officer level to try to evolve the system as suggested so that decisions handed down in various jurisdictions become readily available to other tribunals throughout Australia, so there is an interchange of decisions.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister would obviously have been concerned when industrial dispute figures came out for 1985-86 which showed that the level of 54 working days lost per 1 000 employees in 1984-85 had increased to 88 working days lost per 1 000 employees in 1985-86, or an increase of some 63 per cent in the level of industrial disputation in South Australia. Whilst we are still doing very well compared to the Australian situation, which was 242 working days lost per 1 000 employees, the increase in the national level was only 7.4 per cent—an increase to 260 working days lost. One of the contributors—and perhaps the Minister could tell us the number of working days lost in the building industry—was the activity of particular unions on building sites. Could the Minister provide the number of working days lost in the building industry, as I would like to compare them with days lost for 1984-85?

Further, can the Minister explain why in early March of this year he admitted that there were a few problems on the ASER site and made a press announcement at that time that he was going to take immediate action in an attempt to resolve some of the problems by the appointment of what is euphemistically known as a trouble shooter. That was going to take place within two months and, of course, it is only recently that indeed a trouble shooter has been appointed—within the past two weeks. Can the Minister explain, in connection with the ASER site, which has gone through an extraordinary amount of trauma over the past year or so with ongoing difficulties, what was the difficulty experienced in meeting his commitment made in March?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards my being alarmed—
Mr S.J. BAKER: Concerned.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: —or concerned at the figures that came out on industrial disputes in South Australia, I am always concerned at any industrial dispute that occurs, particularly in South Australia. What has to be constantly emphasised, if the person making the comment has any regard for industry and the continuation of industry in this State as well as the attraction of industry to the State, is the very low level of industrial disputes that we have. The level in South Australia is remarkably low in itself: compared with what occurs in other States, it is extraordinarily low. Indeed, it is lower than in many other countries in the world that have a similar political and industrial system to ours.

Mr D.S. BAKER interjecting:

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! The member for Victoria will have the opportunity to ask questions later.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The extraordinarily low level of industrial disputes we have *per se* and in comparison to our competitors interstate, and in many cases overseas, must be remembered. If any members are discussing industrial disputes, I would like to think that they have the interests of industry in this State in mind and emphasise the very excellent record that we have. Of course, that record just does not happen—it takes a great deal of work by the Minister and the Government in general and—

Mr S.J. BAKER interjecting:

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! The member for Mitcham will come to order.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: —by the employment bodies in this State and by the unions. We, of course, have far less differences in this State between employers and employees.

Mr GREGORY interjecting:

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! The member for Florey will also have an opportunity to ask questions later.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Whilst we have far less differences, the way we handle them is important. We handle them in a South Australian way—in a civilised and calm way. On occasions when we hear a strident voice it jars; we do hear such from time to time and it is regrettable. Again, I urge everyone to tell people interstate and overseas what an excellent record we have.

As regards the building and construction industry, of course this is and has been for a number of years an area that has a higher level of industrial disputation than many other sectors of our economy. However (and I will get the figures for the honourable member), compared with the Eastern States, building sites in this State are kindergartens by comparison. I would be delighted to get the figures for the honourable member so that, if he is discussing industrial disputes publicly, he can praise the building industry in this State for its record compared with Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT in particular, whose record is quite horrendous.

The ASER site has been a difficult site for a number of reasons. It is a very complex building operation. There are a number of employers and, of course, the various unions dealing with those employers. The site itself, in my opinion, lacks an industrial coherence and has done for some time but, again, I would not overstate the problems. The various operators within that site have stated from time to time that it is quite wrong to suggest that the ASER site is a hotbed of industrial trouble. That is not the case. When one looks at the figures, very little time has virtually been lost on the ASER site, apart from one quite significant dispute which occurred at the end of last year and beginning of this year. That is not to say that there have not been a number of problems there.

One of the things that struck me about the site was that in some areas—not overall—there was a certain lack of goodwill between the employees and the employer. The reasons for this are difficult to work out and there is no real point in allocating blame but, until we have that goodwill in a working environment, we will have problems. There are problems in any working environment, but they must be worked out in a sensible and civilised way that causes the least amount of lost time to the project and the least amount of lost wages to the employees. That has been significantly lacking up until a few weeks ago on the ASER site.

That leads me to the question of a troubleshooter. The Government decided very early that, if there was an advantage in progressing that project and having someone there full time to look after industrial relations on that site, we would do so—and we were quite happy to do so. However, the difficulty we had was in finding someone acceptable to all parties. When there is a variety of unions and a variety of employers, with the unions quite properly needing to represent their individual members—and there are often completing claims for membership—and when there are employers who want to maintain their rights to manage the site without interference from a ministerial troubleshooter—when there are those conflicting views, the troubleshooter will not work. It is as simple as that.

My personal staff have played a sterling role in trying to keep the ASER site moving along at an acceptable level. However, there has now been agreement as to an individual who has the respect of all parties, regardless of whether it be an individual union or individual employer or subcontractor, and I am delighted that that person is now concentrating his time and industrial relations experience on the ASER site.

The delay has certainly not been a question of cost or anything like that; it is first of all the desire of the two parties to have somebody to play this role. We cannot force him on them. Then there has been the problem of finding the right person. We have been fortunate in doing that, in the person of a gentleman by the name of John Keeley, from the Department of Housing and Construction, who is very experienced in industrial relations in the building industry and has an enormous amount of respect from the unions and from the employers.

He did not take a magic wand down there with him. However, he brings skill to the job, and goodwill is already evident from the fact that it was people on the site who nominated him and not a case of the Minister's trying to force somebody onto the site. This augurs very well for the future. I am delighted that the project is going very well indeed in the few weeks since he has taken on this job.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I have a series of questions in relation to the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Fund. I note on page 591 that a return of 14 per cent on moneys

invested in that fund was maintained in 1985-86. What was the balance of the long service leave fund as at 30 June and just how is it invested?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As at 30 June 1986 a total of \$14 438 000 was held in the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Fund. This is a trust fund administered by the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Board and is entirely separate from general Treasury funds, so it is administered mainly by the industry itself. The fund was invested as follows: cash at State Treasury, \$1 248 000; bank guaranteed bills, \$2 599 000; inscribed stock, \$4 400 000; debenture loans \$3 891 000; a certificate of deposit, \$500 000; and a fixed deposit of \$1 800 000.

It is certainly a very financial fund and the idea behind it—to have long service leave in the building industry, where there is some inherent difficulty in continuity of employment—was an excellent idea and a credit to the Government which brought it in.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I take it that the decision where to invest is made by a board. What is the current composition of that board and are members paid any fees for their services?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As from 16 September 1986, the board comprised Brian Cole, the Chairman, who is a chartered accountant; Tony Busch and Ron Owens, the two representatives from the United Trades and Labor Council; and Les McEntee and Steven Kirkwood, the employer representatives. The fees paid are as follows: the Chairman gets \$5 346 per annum and ordinary members get \$1 355 per annum. So, the job they do in administering a fund of that size they do for very little remuneration at all—almost as a community service.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I note on page 591 of the papers that the number of workers registered at 30 June was approximate 15 000. How many workers received long service leave payments from the fund in 1985-86, and what was the total amount paid out of the fund?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In the 1985-86 period, 406 workers received long service leave payments. The total of those payments was \$1 619 552.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: What is the contribution rate that is paid into the fund by the employers?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The contribution rate paid is 2 per cent of workers' current award rates. That was the rate for part of the period, but I am delighted to report that the fund is so well managed and so financial that the rate was able to be reduced as from 1 May 1986 to 1.5 per cent. That is another example of how this Government is lifting the burden from the shoulders of industry in South Australia.

Mr D.S. BAKER: In the agency overview it is stated that one of the management objectives is to develop and to promote industrial relations policies, practices and administration consistent with the minimisation of industrial dispute. Will this area allow the Minister to look at some of the restrictive work practices which plague our productivity in this State, especially in areas of export of our agricultural products which have to compete on the world market?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not quite sure to which work practices the honourable member refers. That question surely is one primarily for unions and employers. I have been pleased with the way in which responsible unions and employers have liaised over recent months and have negotiated a very significant alteration in work practices. In fact, one of the best examples is in my own electorate of Whyalla. I do not want to appear to be parochial, but it is a very good example of what can be done when unions and

employers confer and have a look at the way in which they have been operating that industry for a number of years and see whether any improvements can be made.

The steel industry is a very good example. Over three years ago the unions and the employers sat down and hammered out an almost totally new way of operating the steel industry in Australia. As a result thousands, if not tens of thousands (it may be 20 000), of jobs have been lost in the steel industry, but the shedding of those jobs has been as amicable as one can get when shedding jobs. The consequent increased productivity in the industry has been quite dramatic and, coupled with the macro economic policies that are being applied by the Federal Government, it has meant that the steel industry in Australia is now extremely competitive with the rest of the world, to the extent that I understand that BHP is considering expansion, where there is room for expansion, in some of its plants to take up the new and increasing opportunities in the export field. That is a very good example of how employers and employees can get together and improve an industry. In the case of the steel industry, it is a pity that it had to wait until there was a very real problem. In industry today, all employees and employers ought to look at their work practices and make appropriate adjustments in line with what is required in industry in 1986.

Mr D.S. BAKER: I gather that the Minister will totally support moves by employers and employees to negotiate changing some of these practices and will support the agreements that they come to under this type of Act.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr D.S. BAKER: With the proposed dramatic increase in fines on employers in the occupational, health and safety legislation, does the Minister agree that contributory negligence should be considered when assessing liability?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is already.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Will the Minister support compulsory drug and alcohol screening of employees (and employers) as an adjunct to the occupational health and safety legislation to ensure that we curb some of this contributory negligence, which I think we all agree takes place in industry generally?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not the Minister of Health and I am not sure of the implications of that question. The question involves not only medical areas, but also civil libertarian issues. It is a nice philosophical question but I am not sure that the Estimates Committees are the appropriate place to debate that philosophy or whether I am the appropriate Minister.

Membership:

The Hon. T.M. McRae substituted for Mr Duigan.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister say what progress has been made in a review of the public sector superannuation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Inquiry into the South Australian Public Sector Superannuation reported to the Government in April 1986. Members of that inquiry comprised both union and Government representatives. Its terms of reference included: first, consideration of the appropriateness of benefits provided by the South Australian public sector superannuation schemes; secondly, consideration of current and future costs to the Government of the schemes; thirdly, to review the management structure of the schemes; and, fourthly, to consider the investment policies of the South Australian Superannuation Fund.

The recommendations of the majority report of the inquiry included: first, that the South Australian Superannuation Fund be closed to new entrants due to increasing cost

liabilities; and, secondly, that a new lump sum scheme be established with a standard employee contribution rate of 6 per cent of salary and an employer contribution rate of 12 per cent of salary instead of the current 6 per cent employee contribution and approximately 17 per cent employer contribution. As a consequence, the Government announced that the State superannuation scheme would be closed from midnight 30 May 1986. New applicants after that date would be allowed to join the closed scheme but would be required either to transfer to the new scheme once that was established, with an appropriate credit for their period of membership, or to simply receive a refund of contributions. The Government has also given notice that the ETSA and police schemes may be closed. If so, the closure would operate from 30 June 1986.

The Government has also announced that existing contributors to the current superannuation scheme will retain entitlement to all of their existing benefits, but the question of whether contribution rates will have to be raised is still being considered. I have established a task force to report to the Government on the recommendations of that report known as the Agars report. It has received a detailed submission from the UTLC and commenced discussions with its representatives. It is also conducting a detailed analysis of the cost impact of various proposals.

Following advice from the task force, the Cabinet has recently adopted basic principles as guidance for one structure of any proposed new schemes. They include the fact that any proposed scheme shall not discriminate against particular employees on grounds of occupation, income level or sex, that any scheme should be designed to attract greater participation by lower income employees than the current scheme and that any new State superannuation scheme should continue to be voluntary.

I cannot say when the issue will be finalised, but we are attempting to be as quick as possible. It is a complex area. People's entitlements are under scrutiny. I can see that people in the Chamber are listening with intense interest to learn what will happen. I believe that the present scheme is unsatisfactory, as does the Government, especially in regard to the way in which it discriminates against lower paid workers and, therefore, women. One could be forgiven for thinking that the present scheme was designed by highly paid males for highly paid males. That will certainly change.

Mr GREGORY: The Member is right. The scheme was designed by highly paid males for highly paid males. How many licences and permits have been issued under the Motor Fuel Distribution Act?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At 31 December 1985, there were 758 licences and 641 permits issued under the Act. Those figures represent a decrease of 188 licences and 108 permits since the Act's first year of operation in 1975.

Members will be aware that the rationale behind the Act was that reducing the number of service station outlets would make the remainder more viable. There had been a proliferation of service stations throughout South Australia. I have decided, 11 years on, that it is worth having a look at the Act to see whether it is relevant, whether what was regarded as desirable in 1975 is still desirable, whether the problem which the Act was designed to solve has been solved and whether there is a need for further regulation. I expect to have the report soon.

The Act will have to have a strong justification to continue. I am working from the basis that no regulation is needed. Those who take a contrary view will have to convince the Government that the Act should continue. I am not saying that the area will be totally deregulated, but it is

under close scrutiny and the case for continued regulation has to be made out.

Mr GREGORY: What is the position regarding the establishment of an occupational health and safety commission?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Bill was introduced to Parliament on 17 September 1986. It seeks to extend the scope of the existing Industrial Safety Health and Welfare Act to cover, for example, hospitals and schools and to establish an occupational health and safety commission to, *inter alia*, form and promote policies, strategies and codes of practice for the improvement of occupational health, safety and welfare.

It is anticipated that Parliament will pass the Bill this year and that the commission will be established early next year. On that understanding, the Government has provided \$77 000 for the appointment of two staff for the commission in 1986-87. That is four full-time equivalent positions in a full year. It has also provided \$20 000 for contingency expenditure by the commission. The salaries cost will to some extent be offset by the transfer of some staff from the occupational health and safety research branch, part of the role of which will be encompassed by the commission.

The Government regards this piece of legislation as one of the most significant concerning industrial safety, health and welfare in this State since the 1970s. We are endeavouring to hand responsibility for occupational health, safety and welfare to employers and employees. At the moment, rules are strictly laid down and, provided that an employer abides by them, he has done his duty and the Department of Labour's inspectors must come in if they are being breached. We are trying to ensure that everybody in a work place works safely from the word go and that the department acts very much as a back-up. I hope that we shall see decreasing Government activity in this area.

[Sitting suspended from 1 to 2 p.m.]

Mr D.S. BAKER: Does the Minister agree that section 45 of the Federal Industrial Act has led to a dramatic downturn in strike action in the area of secondary boycotts?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As that is Federal legislation, it is not appropriate that it be debated in this Committee.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In reply to a question, the Minister referred to industrial disputes. In the building construction area the latest figures show that South Australia's record is 50 per cent higher than the national average, and that is a cause for extreme concern. A comparison of our record with that of other countries that are doing far better than we are, also gives cause for concern. What is the capital cost of establishing the new workers compensation commission and how many staff members will be involved?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have with me the figures relating to industrial disputes in the building industry, but I shall be happy to get whatever figures are available and let members of the Committee have them if they so wish. Anyone who does not know that the level of industrial disputes in the building industry in New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory is far above the level of such disputes in this State cannot be reading the newspapers. I made an observation to a member of the Master Builders Association recently about industrial disputes, and he said that in the Eastern States the ASER site record would appear to be on the fast track system, and he should know.

Regarding the level of disputes in other countries, we do not build and construct there, so I cannot see the relevance of the honourable member's comment in that regard. No doubt, given the macro-economic policies of the Federal Government, we are now increasingly competitive on the

international scene, as indeed we must be, and I congratulate the Federal Government on the policies that it is adopting in dealing with a difficult world situation, especially as regards commodity prices.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Are you referring to the devaluation of the Australian dollar?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, in relation to the floating of the dollar. There is no question in my mind that had the dollar not been floated the constituents of the member for Victoria, for example, would be in a much worse position than they are today, so again I can only congratulate Federal Treasurer Keating and the rest of the Federal Government on making the hard decisions that are enabling Australia to cope so well with the difficult world situation. I do not know details of the cost of setting up the proposed workers compensation commission, and I have no details regarding staffing.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I asked that question because the Minister introduced the Bill in February, presumably expecting that it would be passed, perhaps in a modified form, but it has not been passed. By not making provision in the estimates, is the Minister saying that there was never any intention to set up such a commission? These estimates do not contain a line for \$500 000 or thereabouts which would represent an initial small contribution to set in train the mechanism to get the commission under way, given that the capital cost of computers and other items must be provided before the commission can be established. Is the Minister now saying that he had no intention to set up a commission in the first place?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No. A workers compensation commission will be established in proper accommodation with proper staffing, and the costs of that will be scrutinised closely. Whatever is appropriate for the commission by way of accommodation and staffing will be provided. It may well be that the commission will have to get a loan to establish itself. That has not been decided, but it is an option. If the commission is to be self-supporting, which is the intention, that may be the way to go. After we get the legislation passed and establish the commission, we shall be able to answer those questions.

Mr S.J. BAKER: There is no provision in these estimates for such a line, which is surprising given that the Minister was committed to introducing a new set of rules on workers compensation. The fact that the Minister has no perception of the required staffing level must be cause for concern, because in the Victorian work care situation, where the Government gave an undertaking to Parliament that the staffing level would be 30, the number has now risen to 200. The Minister seems to have no answer on the future of workers compensation, even though he introduced a Bill in February and has spent much time talking about its merits. He has no idea where he is going with the Bill or what will be the establishment cost should the commission be set up during this financial year. I cannot understand why the Minister has no details to give the Committee and no plans for implementing the legislation should it be passed. Regarding the Occupational Health and Safety Commission, I refer members to page 592 of the yellow book and the relevant line in these Estimates of Expenditure. Has the Minister details of establishment costs and the secretariat staffing, as well as related matters, in respect of the commission?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot understand the observation made by the member for Mitcham, or his difficulty or personal concern on the issue of the Workers Compensation Corporation. Really, the problem is not very difficult. At the moment, we do not have the legislation. There is a

possibility, I hope remote but nevertheless a possibility, that we will not have a corporation. If the Parliament decides to do that, then that is a decision with which I can only comply: I cannot do anything about it.

Under those conditions, I have no intention of appropriating funds for something that may not come about. That is very complex, unlike the Occupational Health and Safety Commission, which is nowhere near as complex, and about which one can make reasonable predictions and make some provision, because the chances are that it will be needed in this financial year.

In response to a question asked earlier in the Committee, I gave those figures. I am not sure whether the member for Mitcham was in the Committee at the time, but I am happy to go through them again. The Government has provided, as the member for Mitcham can see from the yellow book, \$77 000 for appointment of two staff to the commission in 1986-87; that is for full-time equivalent positions for a full year. There is \$20 000 for contingency expenditure by the commission. As I stated earlier, the salaries cost will to some extent be offset by transfer of staff from the Occupational Health and Safety Research Branch, part of whose role will be encompassed by the commission.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I refer the Minister to page 169 of the Estimates of Payments. Under program 6, an amount of \$11 000 was voted last year under the line 'Various organisations' and an actual amount of \$8 150 was expended. The proposed amount for this year is \$11 000. Can the Minister tell me the various organisations referred to in that line?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Grants totalling \$8 150 were paid out to various organisations in 1985-86. The breakdown of that figure is as follows: \$800 to the Amalgamated Metalworkers and Shipwrights Union to assist in the organisation of a workers education conference in July; \$3 500 to the United Trades and Labor Council to enable delegates from the country to attend occupational health and safety training; and \$3 850 to the United Trades and Labor Council to facilitate delegates attending the international safety conference in August 1986. Each grant was made after requests from the organisations concerned. There were no requests from employer or other bodies.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: On the line immediately above, an amount of \$25 000 was voted for the University of Adelaide but no amounts were expended and there is nothing shown for this year. What is the story there? Why was that \$25 000 allocated and not spent?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1982 the then Minister of Labour advised the University of Adelaide that the Government was of the view that it was not unreasonable to expect financial support from industry to be provided for research projects into noise control in industry and that in future the Government would contribute to the work of the acoustics laboratory at the rate of \$1 for each \$1 contributed by industry. The Government has in the past supported the work undertaken at the acoustics laboratory and the University of Adelaide on noise reduction and expects a contribution from industry. As in 1984-85 no claim for any grant was received during 1985-86 and consequently no payment was made.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I take it that the original proposal was that the Government would provide a certain amount of money and industry generally would contribute the same amount. I assume that that did not occur and as a consequence the amount voted was not paid.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. The university was advised that if this grant was continued it would only be on the

basis of a matching dollar for dollar that industry would contribute.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: What was it proposed for exactly?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Research into noise control, and noise reduction, particularly in relation to heavy machinery such as power presses, chain saws, etc.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I return to the subject of the Occupational Health and Safety Commission. The Minister provided figures earlier. I do not want to know what was provided, because I can read the notes contained in the yellow book, but I am asking the Minister what the total establishment costs would be and what would be the ultimate staffing. There are provisions for 1985-86, but what are we talking about so far as support staff within the commission is concerned?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The commission will be the same as any other Government financed operation: it will take its chances during budget deliberations, and we will, as we do in all Government operations, finance the commission in an appropriate way and to the best of our financial ability.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Perhaps we will get on to something more specific, because obviously the Minister does not have any answer, or does not intend to answer.

The CHAIRPERSON: Order!

Mr S.J. BAKER: That is a simple observation, Madam Chairperson.

The CHAIRPERSON: The opportunity exists to ask questions, not to make observations of that kind.

Mr S.J. BAKER: During the research into occupational safety, and further down the track, there have been a number of comments about strengthening the inspectorial staff of the Department of Labour. It has been said to me twice that the Minister has said that the inspectorial staff will be lifted by at least another 20 persons. I do not know anything about that statement, but it has been said to me by two independent persons.

If one looks at the line that refers to safety on construction and demolition sites, one sees 1.6 persons above the proposal for 1985-86, and in connection with commercial and industrial premises one sees 0.6 below that proposed in 1985-86. In connection with boiler and pressure vessels there are 0.3 persons below 1985-86, whereas in connection with liquids and gases there is one person above what was proposed. The general thrust is that, if one takes out policy development support because that is not in the inspectorial area, it seems that there is no increase in inspectorial staff in the Department of Labour.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: First, as regards the observation made by the member for Mitcham—that I did not know—the answer I gave was a factual one, that the new Occupational Health and Safety Commission will have a high priority.

However, there are a lot of other areas of Government that also have high priority. What I stated about future staffing of support services to the commission will have to be decided in the context of the budget at that time. That is the factual position and it applies to the Department of Labour, the Education Department or anywhere else. As regards the 20 additional inspectors, I do not know anything about that either. What the member reads is quite correct. There is no provision for any increase in the inspectorate. The variations in the figures are delays in filling vacancies. It is as insignificant as that.

Mr S.J. BAKER: One of the problems that has been pointed out to everyone involved in the field of occupational safety, and has been brought to my attention on a

number of occasions, is the need for highly qualified inspectorial staff. Many people in the industry have said there are some difficulties because we cannot get the number of inspectors needed to assist industry to do its work properly. Because of the complexity of the workplace today the training of inspectors needs to be upgraded. The Minister has already said that he will not provide more staff. Can he now tell us what provision in the form of dollars and cents has been made for upgrading the skills of inspectorial staff?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards the complexity of the workplace, it is true that there are more workplaces. The number of workplaces registered with the Department of Labour is increasing all the time. The nature of a lot of workplaces is changing. They are becoming more complex and arguably, in some instances, more dangerous. That is why the whole thrust of the new Bill is to encourage—and if that does not work too well, to compel—people at a specific workplace to accept responsibility for the occupational health and safety in that area. I want the inspectorate, when the new Bill comes into force, to eventually play a much lesser role than it does at the moment. Time will tell how long that will take. Certainly that is the intention.

The reality is that with 6 000 or more workplaces, unless we have a Department of Labour inspector in every workplace for every moment that the workplace is producing or carrying out its function, we cannot enforce the present legislation—it is just impossible. So, we turn the whole thing around and put the responsibility back into the workplace where it rightfully belongs and give them outlines of what is expected of them. I am sure that with time the workplaces will respond with encouragement and training. I see eventually the inspectorate playing a lesser role than it does currently. As regards any upgrading of their skills as required, of course we will do that. If it is demonstrated that an upgrading of their skills is necessary and that they are falling below the appropriate level of expertise, of course we will upgrade them—we do that all the time.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I refer the Minister's attention to page 579 of the yellow book, which states:

Abuse of award provisions in certain areas due to the high level of unemployment.

Will the Minister explain what those certain areas might be? I take it that it may be shop assistants.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We receive complaints from time to time. We may have figures on the numbers of complaints we have received on the underpayment of wages. It is a serious and hidden problem in the community. There is the temptation for some unscrupulous employers to try to get around award provisions and blatantly underpay the award in a number of areas. For example, the number of complaints in the financial year was 1 259, including complaints on underpayment. The arrears of wages collected in that year was \$724 736. I would reasonably suggest that that is only the tip of the iceberg.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Is the information available (and, if not, could it be obtained) in relation to the retail shopping industry? Did any complaints come from that sector, particularly in relation to junior workers?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I did not want to get into a particular area or group. If the breakdown of the areas of industry is available, I will incorporate that information in *Hansard*.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: A question was asked in regard to the exploitation of workers, particularly women in the clothing industry. We call them outworkers. I can understand the problem. The clothing industry is akin to the industry with which I was involved, namely, the footwear industry. I believe that the clothing industry works under a

Federal award. Mention is made of inadequate legislative and award coverage to protect the rights of workers. Does the Minister have something in mind in regard to the inadequacies of legislation? Indeed, the award coverage is a matter for the union.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: One of the problems is that it is an extraordinarily difficult area for us to deal with as I understand the exploitation is mainly in regard to migrant women who are outrageously encouraged to go into this outwork and to be paid very little for it. One of the problems is the legal problem: are they contractors or are they employees? The member for Playford would be far more qualified than I—or, possibly, anyone else in the State—to outline the difficulties we are having in that area. I think that some attempt has been made in New South Wales to try to get award coverage in this area. Certainly, the review we are doing now as to, first, the scope of the problem in South Australia and possible responses to that problem will be taking into account the New South Wales experience, but it is a very difficult area for us.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I was delighted to hear the Minister say in his earlier comment that he was attempting to encourage rather than compel us as far as occupational safety is concerned, and I assume he will withdraw all derogatory remarks he has made previously about the way employers act. The next question I wish to ask is about the provisions dealing with future legislation, and there are two: one is a proposed amendment to the Long Service Leave Act and another to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Can the Minister say what those amendments will entail?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Mitcham said that he was praising my earlier words about encouraging workers and employers in the area of occupational health and safety. I think that on at least two and possibly more occasions I have stated that the whole thrust of the legislation is to place that responsibility back at the workplace where it logically belongs. If workers and employers do not respond sensibly to that wish of the Government, there have to be quite extensive penalties for them. I do not think that this is argued. One can argue the scale of penalties at the top end, but what one cannot argue—and what employers do not argue—is that the present penalties are totally inadequate and a substantial increase in penalties is warranted.

In other Acts penalties have been increased very significantly, with the concurrence of the Opposition. Indeed, in the period 1979 to 1982 the present Opposition, when in Government, also increased penalties substantially in certain areas of occupational health and safety, including the provision of prison terms. We commended that Party then and I will be commending it again when we debate the occupational health and safety legislation.

Membership:

Mr Duigan substituted for the Hon. T.M. McRae.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I wish the honourable member had quoted the derogatory remarks he says I have made; then I could respond. The most publicised case over the past few weeks has been the case of a firm called Spic N Span. Since 1979, that firm has had about 27 reports made on it by the Department of Labour. It has gone through four prosecutions and convictions for operating machinery, for example, that was not properly guarded. On the last occasion, when it really became prominent, that company operated an unsafe press which cut eight fingers off the hands of one of the company's employees. The only training given to that employee was 'Don't stick your fingers in the machine.'

It seems to me that one cannot really say anything too bad about a company like that. To me, that company is utterly irresponsible, and to be fined \$450 with a record like that is appalling. Responsible employers also think that it is appalling. I have not yet heard one word of condemnation from the member for Mitcham, so I can only assume—using his somewhat twisted logic—that he supports the present position. I certainly do not.

As to the two Acts foreshadowed to be amended, when Cabinet has debated them, discussed them and agreed, and when they have gone through our Caucus procedure, they will be introduced to Parliament and the member for Mitcham will see them then.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I can only assume that the Minister has no faith in himself, if he cannot tell the Committee the general areas which will be covered, or that he does not know his portfolio. I will leave that question aside and ask the Minister about the workers compensation premiums. As the Minister is well aware, the Auditor-General's Report shows that in 1982-83 there was \$11.5 million in pay-outs for workers compensation for Government employees. In 1983-84, it was \$14.7 million; in 1984-85, it was \$20.9 million; in 1985-86, it was \$26.2 million; and the estimate for 1986-87 is \$32 million. In the space of but four years the claims for workers compensation have increased from \$11.5 million to the estimate of \$32 million in 1986-87. What are the Minister and his department doing about this enormous escalation in workers compensation? I know that he can quote private enterprise, but let me assure the Minister that the private enterprise record in that past four years has certainly been outdone by the Government. Is it the Government's programs which are not working or is the Government not paying enough attention to its own employees?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The figures as quoted by the honourable member are correct, but I think we should put them in context. There is an inflation factor, and in those four years, in the overall figure, as well as the inflated figure, there are the very significant increases in benefits which were introduced by the previous Liberal Government—and I supported them, very strongly; they did not go far enough. There was the increase, for example, in the lump sum payment from \$30 000 to \$60 000—I just forget the exact figures, but there were very significant and long overdue increases, I commend the previous Government for that.

Now those increases are having to be paid for, and that is what we are doing. There is no doubt that the area of workers compensation is of concern to the Government, whether it is Government employees or in the private sector. I regret that the measures we wished to take earlier this year in the area have not yet been agreed by the Parliament. However, I am always an optimist and live in hope that the Parliament will finally pass the Workers Compensation Bill in a form that is fair to all.

I would like to see the evidence to substantiate the claim made by the honourable member that private enterprise has done better, because I assure him that I receive a lot of complaints from private enterprise about the increase in workers compensation premiums organised through private insurance companies. Some of the increases are quite staggering—over a 12 month period up to nearly 200 per cent. I refer the people who contact me to the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Australian Democrats in this place. I hope they do contact them to emphasise the magnitude of the problem facing not only the Government, but also private industry in this State. The member for Mitcham has expressed his concern. I share that concern and I look forward to his showing more concrete concern

by supporting the passage of the workers compensation legislation when it again comes before Parliament.

Some areas of Government cause difficulty with workers compensation. I refer to the Education Department, the Police Department and the Correctional Services Department. As to what action individual departments are taking about their workers compensation premiums, that would be better addressed by the individual Ministers. The Department of Labour is not a particular problem, but the Education Department, in attempting to reduce its incidence of workers compensation claims, is taking the following actions: first, it is developing a structure to manage health and safety developed in conformity with the code of general principles which was introduced by the Government right across the public sector in 1984. Secondly, six area safety advisers are proposed, one for head office and one for each education area, and approval is being sought for that. Thirdly, an employee services unit and the Government Workers Compensation Office meet weekly to consider claims. The claims are analysed and the data sent to management to facilitate managers in each area.

Fourthly, quarterly reports are sent to the Director-General and to the Minister. Fifthly, joint Health and Safety Advisory Committees are functioning well and they are providing a health counselling service. Also, there is a rehabilitation and early intervention program, health and safety data and broad advice to the department. A full report has just been finished on health and safety matters in the Education Department and that is being reviewed and is about to be implemented. Safe work practices for all faculty areas are being collected. An urgent training program about the problems of RSI as it affects keyboard operators is being implemented, and attention is being directed to the safe storage and disposal of chemicals. That example shows what the Education Department is doing and demonstrates that the Government takes this issue seriously and is addressing it. It is of no benefit to the Government to be paying out all this money on workers compensation. If possible, a reduction in premiums would be very welcome.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Will the Minister take on notice the following questions with respect to the Code of General Practice on Occupational Safety and Health first issued in September 1976 and revised in 1984: first, which departments complied in 1985 and 1986 with their responsibility to provide information on occupational safety and health performances as detailed in section 15 of the code; and secondly, which permanent heads have yet to issue a safety and health policy for their departments and, of those who have done so, how widespread has been the notification to employees? I understand that a number of areas have still not complied. This is another area that should have been sorted out some time ago.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My preliminary information is that all departments have issued the general policy, but I will read *Hansard* to see whether there is anything in the honourable member's question that requires a further response and I will get that back to him by 31 October.

Mr DUIGAN: In view of the time and the desire of the Opposition to finish this item by 3 p.m., I have no questions.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I note in the budget that, whilst we do not have any provisions for occupational health and safety commissions and whilst we do not have any provisions for workers compensation commissions, there is provision for a \$50 000 workers health centre. Can the Minister say where this largess is coming from and where it is going?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Mitcham is quite incorrect. We have extensively (and I think for the

second time) reviewed the question of the provision in the budget estimates of the occupational health and safety commission. I am not quite sure what the honourable member means when he says that there is no provision. In relation to workers compensation, I think I have addressed that at sufficient length for it to be clear to all other members of the Committee.

In relation to the provision of \$50 000 to the United Trades and Labor Council, in 1985-86 a grant of \$50 000 was made to the UTLC on the State Government employment line to develop stage 2 of the workers health centre at Trades Hall. This was in addition to funds provided by the Federal Government, through the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, and the ACTU. The centre gives particular emphasis to the development and coordination of occupational health and safety training programs for worker health and safety delegates. Also, it provides an information and advisory service which is available to all trade unions and which would be particularly responsive to the needs and aspirations of trade unions. Stage 2 of the program involves the development of a consultative and information service and the further grant of \$50 000 has been provided to facilitate that aim.

Mr INGERSON: How much money is being put aside for the payment of the fringe benefits tax this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That question would be more appropriately directed to the Treasurer, who is before the other Committee. The Treasurer instructs departments in that area.

Mr INGERSON: Surely some calculation must have been made at departmental level.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the honourable member wants to talk about the fringe benefits tax, he will have to speak to the Treasurer.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The Minister seems hell bent on introducing new workers compensation legislation which will severely affect the cost of business. He also said that he has spent considerable effort and money on isolating asbestos which could be harmful to people who work in Government buildings but that he cannot find the money to do anything about it. The Government seems to take one view in regard to asbestos and a completely different one in regard to business and workers compensation.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not sure what the question is, but I shall do my best. As for being hell bent on introducing workers compensation, the Government has a strong desire to introduce reforms in that area with two aims in mind—to reduce premiums and to improve the system of benefits to sick and injured workers.

The member for Victoria's constituents will be interested in this matter and favoured by the new system. That has been recognised by the United Farmers and Stockholders which has behaved very responsibly on this issue. Its officers took the trouble to investigate the system interstate and overseas, and believe that it cannot be introduced quickly enough. I assume that many of the honourable member's constituents are members of the United Farmers and Stockowners.

As for removing asbestos from Government buildings, we spend something over \$500 000 a year, so the honourable member is wrong to say that we do not have the money. A total of \$1.5 million has been spent so far. We will eventually remove all asbestos from Government owned buildings. Like all other programs however, it must take its chance with all other programs. Nobody gives the Government a blank cheque or says, 'Here is \$50 million, fix it up tomorrow.' Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The asbestos might be endangering the health and safety of people who work in Government buildings. How many years will it take to complete the program?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no suggestion of it injuring people's health and safety.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Why take it out then?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no suggestion that asbestos in its stable form or which is covered or is to be found in areas where people do not work is a hazard. It is a potential hazard when it deteriorates or when electricians, plumbers or air conditioning technicians come into contact with it. The program deals first with areas that are most likely to be a cause of concern. We do not do work for the sake of it, but all asbestos will almost inevitably become a problem, even if only when a building is demolished.

Asbestos is not a problem just for workers on building sites. It can be a problem for office workers if it gets free in air conditioning ducts. It might then affect the general public using certain areas of a building. This is a serious issue which we are addressing responsibly to ensure that there is no danger to people who use the buildings.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The Minister forgot to say when the Government's asbestos program will be completed.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is impossible to say when it will be completed. It depends on what resources are available. I can give the assurance that if any building is found to be a danger to employees, the public or anyone else, it will be dealt with.

Mr S.J. BAKER: On page 599 of the yellow book, several targets have been set for 1986-87. We have a special inquiry into insolvency in the building industry, the impending State Termination, Change and redundancy claim, occupational superannuation and new legislation on child employment. Each subject is of interest to me. Can the Minister tell us what he is trying to achieve and what the program is?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As for insolvency in the building industry, there is occasionally a problem, when builders go broke or somehow depart from the industry in an 'unseemly' way, concerning how contractors are paid. It is a complex issue which I do not pretend to have solutions to. Under section 25b of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act I asked the President of the Industrial Court and Commission to make an investigation to see whether a formula could be worked out so that, when builders go out of business, it happens in a more orderly way if that is possible.

House builders might go out of business while in the middle of building a house. If the contractors are not paid for the work that they have already done, there is potential for a dispute which might prevent completion of the house. The consumer has paid the money but has no house.

Mr S.J. BAKER: That is covered under building indemnity.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a matter for the Attorney-General or the Minister of Consumer Affairs. There can be an industrial problem between contractors. Concerning the preparation of Government submissions to significant industrial hearings, including national wage cases and the pending State determination of the change and redundancy claim, I understand that that process is on hold. The United Trades and Labour Council has filed a claim, but I do not believe that it has put its case in detail, so there is no urgency in our formulating a position. When we know what the organisation is applying for, we will respond as we think necessary.

Regarding the protection of child employment, an investigation is being undertaken in conjunction with the Department of Community Welfare, especially in the entertainment

industry where we understand that children are used, quite properly, but we must ensure that the children are protected possibly by an award provision. However it seems to be more a matter of child protection than an industrial issue. We could say, for example, that persons between birth and five years old should be on the set for only so many hours and appropriate child care could be provided for by legislation. That may be done eventually. I have asked the Department of Community Welfare to help us in this matter, as it may be resolved more sensibly as a child care and protection issue. We do not intend to say that only people over the age of 16 years can work in the entertainment industry, but we must ensure that children are properly protected. They are not so protected at present, although I do not suggest that there has been any major abuse.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What are the provisions of ILO Convention 159?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I shall have to get those for the honourable member and send him details.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What was the Government's stance on the Federated Clerk Union's repetitive strain injury claim?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It was not a debate on the merits of the claim, but rather on whether the South Australian Industrial Commission had the jurisdiction to deal with it.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can the Minister comment on the Motor Vehicle Industry Safety and Health award?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We opposed that application, believing that the area was better dealt with by State legislation rather than by Federal award. Indeed, everyone, including the ACTU, did the same.

Mr S.J. BAKER: We have heard much about the Government's efforts in the area of equal opportunities. Bearing in mind the Minister's key role in this area and the provision this year to provide equal opportunities for work, will the Minister or one of his colleagues take on notice a question about the total financial resources and staffing resources that are being devoted to the equal opportunities issue in 1986-87?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I shall be happy to follow that up. I am not convinced that staffing resources are the key. The problem is not lack of staff or lack of any other resources: it is mainly one of attitude. The sum of \$114 000 has been provided in regard to the equal opportunity program for women for 1986-87. Although I welcome that provision, it could be multiplied tenfold but, if there were no attitudinal changes, the money would be wasted. To build the principle of equal opportunities into everything done by the department will not cost anything and that is how the program will be developed. To develop such a program in the Department of Labour will entail an expense, albeit not a major expense. I do not kid myself that the problem will be solved merely by allocating money. I shall be happy to send the honourable member a detailed brief on the equal opportunities program in the department. It is a program of which we are especially proud.

The CHAIRPERSON: There being no further questions, I declare the examination completed.

Mr. R.J. Gregory
Mr G.A. Ingerson
The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Labour, Minister of Correctional Services and Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Strickland, Commissioner for Public Employment.
Mr M. Schilling, Deputy Commissioner for Public Employment and Director, Personnel Development.
Mr G. Lewkowicz, Acting Director, Policy and Support Services,
Mr R. Bishop, Director, Industrial Relations Division.
Ms J. Russell, Head, Equal Opportunity Unit.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Duigan): I declare the proposed vote open for examination. I will provide an opportunity to the lead speaker for the Opposition and to the Minister to make an opening statement, if they wish. Any material to be inserted in *Hansard* must be made available no later than Friday 31 October. Does the Minister have an opening statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. Following the passage of the Government Management and Employment Act through Parliament late last year, I would like to briefly outline the new arrangements that have been put in place to give effect to that legislation. Under the Government Management and Employment Act, the Public Service Board was replaced by a new Government Management Board and the Commissioner for Public Employment and the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations.

I, and the Government, pay tribute to the Public Service Board and the staff of the department for their important contribution to the good government of the State over an extended period of time, nearly 20 years; and, also, for their highly constructive approach to the development of the new arrangements. The Government Management Board reports to the Premier. Under a delegation from the Premier, the Commissioner for Public Employment reports to me for the operation of Part III of the Government Management and Employment Act, which covers the Commissioner's responsibilities for the Public Service and the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations.

The Commissioner has statutory responsibilities for supervising the integrity, equity and quality of personnel practices and for promoting a range of improvements in personnel management in the Public Service. The Commissioner is also responsible for industrial relations, the classification of occupational groups, and the determination of remuneration and conditions of public servants. The new arrangements will be resource neutral: the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations and the Office of the Government Management Board are staffed at a combined level of no more than the former Department of the Public Service Board.

The new arrangements will serve to promote coordination of good industrial relations practices across the Public Service, the public sector and the wider community. In effect, they cement previous arrangements for industrial relations coordination. The new arrangements will also assist in promoting consistency in such other areas as the development and application of occupational health and safety initiatives for the public and private sectors. The Public Service's key resource is people—its staff—and the Government makes no apology for providing jobs for people working constructively in occupations providing essential services to the community.

Personnel and Industrial Relations, \$6 650 000

Chairperson:
Ms D. L. Gayler

Members:
Mr D.S. Baker
Mr S.J. Baker
Mr M.G. Duigan

The community will benefit from a more balanced debate on the matter of public employment. Public Service bashing, which has unfortunately become very popular in recent years, only leads to an erosion of morale and works against the provision of quality services. The debate should not be about crude cost cutting, but getting more with the resources deployed in the Public Service. It is quite noticeable that there is a lot of rhetoric but little concrete and workable suggestions from the various opposition quarters. The improvement of efficiency and quality of service delivery should be the focus of debate.

Work force statistics show that, despite the extra demands placed on Government, the Public Service work force has remained fairly static over time. Full time equivalent employees in South Australian departments, per 1 000 of State population, dropped from a ratio of 37.8 in 1980 to 35.6 in 1986. Similarly, persons employed in State Government departments as a percentage of persons employed in South Australia dropped from 9.4 per cent in 1980 to 8.8 per cent in 1986. Over the same period, South Australia public sector full time equivalent employment as a ratio of 1 000 population has been fairly static, 70.5 in 1980 and 70.4 in 1986. South Australian public sector employees, as a percentage of the State work force, was 17.8 per cent in 1980 and 17.9 per cent in 1986.

The new Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations, through the powers and functions of the Commissioner for Public Employment, is concentrating on promoting the best use of the Government's people resources through improved personnel and industrial relations practices. The new Government Management and Employment Act gives clear directions for this through the principles of personnel management. The key thrust will be that of departments and line managers applying those principles and this will need special efforts in training and development.

The Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations will be giving its utmost support to departments. In particular:

- Assisting departments implement equal employment opportunity policies and practices through leadership, awareness raising, and support so employees have equal opportunity to secure promotion and advancement, and the potential of our work force is fully realised.
- Improved work force planning will aim at ensuring that the Public Service has sufficient staff with the right skills to conduct its required activities, and that people's capacity to contribute is utilised to the greatest extent possible.
- Special efforts in redeployment and retraining so that the Government can react quickly and its work force adapt to changing community pressures and Government policy.
- Promoting staff development and giving appropriate support so that employees are afforded proper access to training and development.
- Upgrading the quality and performance of the Public Service's senior management through improved selection, deployment and development of executive staff.
- Instituting improved occupational health and safety measures so employees are provided with safe and healthy working conditions.

South Australia has moved rapidly to put in place modern management structures and practices that emphasise getting the most out of staff by providing fulfilling careers, giving the greatest room possible for the exercise of initiative and ensuring flexibility of response to Government and community needs and requirements. This Government will continue to make changes that improve public sector personnel management practices and will be guided by the principles

embodied in the Government Management and Employment Act. In this way South Australia will continue to have a Public Service that is respected as the best in the nation.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Opposition strongly supports changes to the operations of Government management and we will assist where possible to promote the things the Minister believes should be promoted and tear down the barriers that have existed in the past and assist the process of increased efficiency in the Public Service. Will the Minister inform the Committee what stage has been reached in putting senior management on contract? Under the new Act senior management were to be converted to five-year contracts. How many have been converted to such contracts?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Committee will be better assisted if the Commissioner for Public Employment answers that question in the detail required by the member for Mitcham.

Mr Strickland: When the Government Management and Employment Act was proclaimed on 1 July 1986 the schedules attached to the transition arrangements came before us, which meant that all existing Chief Executive Officers (that is, heads of departments) were automatically from that point of time on a five-year contract in regard to that job as Chief Executive Officer. All new appointments made subsequent to that time have been for five years. The Act also contains certain guarantees of continuing employment, if not at that level of Chief Executive Officer, for the people who were permanent heads prior to the proclamation of the Act, but the new ones appointed subsequently (and there have been two of them) have been put on contracts because they have come from outside.

Mr S.J. BAKER: There was also a comment about maintaining an effective redeployment service to meet an expected increase in the number of excess employees. Can the Minister detail to the Committee the estimated number of employees excess to requirement in 1986-87 compared with the number in 1985-86.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Redeployment and retraining is an area which, without a doubt, will become larger in the future. It is something with which the South Australian Government has come to grips in a very meaningful and humane way. The fact that certain specific jobs are no longer going to be in the Public Service could quite often be catastrophic for the individuals concerned. We certainly believe that the people placed in that position should be given every opportunity to be redeployed in another area and, if practicable, be given every opportunity to retrain in areas in which there is a demand.

To give the honourable member a few of the numbers and background information to it, the placements in 1985-86 increased by 14 per cent from 307 in 1984-85 to 350 in 1985-86. Net savings achieved in the financial year by redeployment placements was estimated at \$5.4 million, after deducting the costs of running the redeployment unit, which was \$200 000. An input by Treasury to special placements and retraining of \$750 000 included an allocation for unattached personnel. The staffing of the redeployment unit is six FTE's. The profile of the individual clients of the unit was 49 per cent Public Service Act, 43 per cent statutory salaried employees and 8 per cent weekly paid employees. Emphasis in the weekly paid area is on voluntary movements. Eight hundred positions were filled by application for weekly paid positions in job vacancy notices. Only a small percentage in the blue collar area are dealt with through this unit.

The code of practice for redeployment of South Australian Public Service employees was adopted in the Public Service salaried area to line up with the existing guidelines

in relation to statutory and weekly paid employees. As regards the program for 1986-87, it includes a greater commitment to work force planning to assist prediction of surpluses and occupational shortages; a greater commitment to retraining programs; a greater use of trial placements for redeployees; and improvement of information exchange between agencies. The program is very extensive. We will also focus on supporting agencies and their own management of redeployment and retraining as far as possible, consistent with the thrust of the Government Management and Employment Act. The current client load of the redeployment unit is 300 redeployees with 10 being classified at EO1 or equivalent.

Major initiatives to be undertaken in 1986-87 include relocation in the Education Department of up to 67 personnel; that is a joint exercise with the Education Department. In Agriculture, an internal relocation of 25 people is involved, while in Housing and Construction up to 50 people are to be redeployed from the Supply Branch. In SAMCOR additional relocations are expected following the triennial review. The maintenance branch of the Department of Community Welfare will relocate up to 40 staff. As the Committee can see, it is a very key unit at the moment in the Government and one does not have to be a fortune teller to see that it will be even more important in the future.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Considerable money was spent to attract some 370 young people into the Public Service and that program was allied to the pyramid structure of the Public Service in terms of its age profile. Considerable money was set aside, but the same sums do not seem to be there this year. What is the targeted program for youth improvement during 1986-87?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The problem to which the member for Mitcham drew attention he described, I think, as the pyramid nature of the Public Service. In fact, it was argued that it was an inverse pyramid. Certainly, the age profile of the public sector did give some concern. It was not an expanding public sector as we understood, for example, in the 1970s. People did not leave and were not replaced, and the age profile was of some concern.

For 1986-87, the youth employment program has a target of 240 employment opportunities and 80 training places under the Australian traineeships scheme, and applications for those places are currently being processed. The funding allocated is \$300 000 for the employment and \$45 000 for traineeship contingencies. So, there is still a very extensive ongoing program of the Government giving young people the opportunity to enter the Public Service. That is, obviously, of enormous benefit to them as individuals, but also of enormous benefit to the community in having a Public Service which has a more appropriate profile, whereby the Public Service is not just gradually getting older without any new people coming in.

It is an expensive program. Some would argue, initially, that the young people are surplus employees, that they are supernumeraries, and that we could run the public sector without them. There is some truth in that argument—but only some. If one looks at the benefits over the long term, those benefits far outweigh the few extra positions which may not have been strictly necessary. We believe that it is a service to the youth of this community which the community will applaud.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: At page 614 of the Program Estimates, the following statement is made:

To review and revise overseas travel guidelines; to achieve more effective results from overseas trips; and to reduce costs to Government.

That indicates that, perhaps, it was not quite a satisfactory arrangement before. Can the Minister or his officers give

details of the review and revision of these guidelines and, perhaps, indicate which cost in relation to travel overseas by public servants in the last financial year has been thought to be excessive? Indeed, is that one of the reasons for this review?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The review is not in response to any specific problem of something being too expensive or the value not being there. It is merely reviewing a program which has gone on in the Public Service since the year dot of public servants, for a variety of reasons, travelling overseas. There are very significant restrictions on that occurring, one of which is that they have to run the gauntlet of the Overseas Travel Committee. The Government has decided to have a look at the Overseas Travel Committee and the whole area to see whether the safeguards and the benefits to the community are still there in 1986, as they probably were in 1886. The Commissioner for Public Employment is the Chairman of that Overseas Travel Committee, so we are fortunate in having him with us. I am sure that he will be only too pleased to explain the workings of the Overseas Travel Committee, and give an outline of the review and the possible results.

Mr Strickland: As the Minister pointed out, the Overseas Travel Committee works to guidelines laid down by Cabinet. These guidelines were laid down about 10 years ago, I think, so it is quite some time since they have been gone through and examined for relevance to today's travelling conditions. The real restriction on overseas travel comes not from just applying the guidelines but, of course, from departments' budgets and the fact that they have to justify overseas travel in the context of the budgets which the Government of the day is able to give them.

I think that the guidelines are somewhat out of date in relation to the cost of travel to particular parts of the world. Of course, the falling Australian dollar has had quite a large impact on people's overseas travel budgets, so we are looking at that. We are also looking at the frequency in certain areas and, certainly, if one compares figures from year to year, there does not seem to be any great change in pattern, but there are some areas of Government—quite understandably—in which overseas travel is a more important part of their activity than in others, for example, an area like State development and agriculture, especially in relation to SAGRIC International.

We are really looking at the guidelines and their relevance, and I hope we will be updating them and going back to Cabinet within several months. The work is actually being undertaken by an officer in the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations and an officer in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, in the Cabinet office, and I think that Cabinet will get a report, and probably some suggested revisions, within a couple of months.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The Minister mentioned quite a few figures from a paper a moment ago as to the redeployment of public servants. He mentioned SAMCOR. What is the number that will be redeployed from SAMCOR?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The number was not given. I said that it was anticipated that there would be a significant number.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Can you tell us the number?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know, because I am not the Minister concerned with SAMCOR, but the redeployment unit is mine and if any come from SAMCOR we will welcome them and assist them in redeployment or retraining as appropriate.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What sums have been set aside by the department for personnel training, in addition to the sums set aside for redeployment and retraining?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: On page 606, under 'Staff development' there is \$352 000. If the member for Mitcham wants a breakdown as to how that money will be spent, I am happy to advise the Committee of those activities.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I would appreciate that, because I had difficulty in reconciling some of these figures with those provided on the Premier's line last year. On page 604 reference is made to upgrading the department's and the Public Service's information systems and data base on personnel management practices to give effective support to improving the quality of personnel management and work force planning. Does the Minister contemplate a change with the software in the Government Computing Centre and what program does he have in mind?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That relates to the introduction of Austpay.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can the Minister give some indication of the cost of Austpay and the extent to which the system has been tested?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will advise the member for Mitcham of the cost, because we do not have it here. While the system will be new in the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations, it is certainly not new in the public sector. Other Government departments have used it for a considerable time.

Mr S.J. BAKER: By way of explanation, when I had an interest in this area some years ago, a number of systems were being developed and most of them were untested, were developmental and did not work. It cost the Public Service and many private enterprise firms millions of dollars, because they did not work, but I am sure that this one has been developed to the stage where it is only a matter of punching in numbers rather than being in the developmental stage.

Mr GREGORY: How many people were employed in implementing the equal opportunity program and how many people are expected to be working in that program during the next financial year?

Ms Russell: The Equal Opportunities Branch of the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations has a full strength of six full-time equivalent persons consisting of an equal opportunities officer, a deputy to the equal opportunities officer, who is responsible for the processing of equal employment opportunity management planning, and then three specifically designated project officers, one in the area of disability, one in the area of Aboriginal development and one in the area of employment opportunity for persons of non-English speaking background. We are supported by one full-time clerical information officer.

Of course, responsibility for employment of persons from the designated areas has passed under the Government Management and Employment Act to the chief executive officers and is a departmental responsibility. The role of the Equal Opportunities Branch in the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations is to promote programs of equal employment opportunity and equal opportunity in the departments, and we do this primarily through the workings of the Equal Employment Opportunity Management Planning Working Party. There are pilot programs in eight departments, and those programs have been extended voluntarily into a further eight departments. While I cannot give an exact idea of the numbers of people who will be positively advantaged by these programs, I can indicate that at the moment there is a planned process of implementation of equal employment opportunity in 16 departments.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Premier's line last year showed that 4.6 people were made available for equal opportunity for the disabled, and the allocation for 1986-87 is 1.5 persons. The resource variation is explained by saying that

there were 3.9 average full-time equivalents employed for the handicapped employment training assistance scheme during 1985-86. What is the position with that scheme in 1986-87?

Ms Russell: The specific training scheme referred to was for that program year. The 1.5 full-time equivalents were committed to it. There was a project officer in the Equal Opportunities Branch, and a half-time commitment by a recruitment officer, who was working generally in the Division of Personnel Services and who is to actively promote the employment and training for employment in Public Service departments of persons with disability.

Mr S.J. BAKER: By removing those four people, has the Government reduced the emphasis on that scheme? The numbers have changed quite considerably and I am unaware of what is happening.

Ms Russell: We do not have the employment of persons specifically designated in the way described. We still have responsibility for the trainees, and that is the difference. This year we have a target of 15 trainees and an allocated budget of \$46 000. To 30 September 1986, we were successful in placing three trainees.

Mr Strickland: By way of background information, the figures quoted refer to an overall effort in relation to the program. The way in which the program actually works is that we have, as the equal employment opportunities officer has pointed out, staff in the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations responsible for organising trainees to come in. That is much in the same way as the supernumerary work in the youth employment program or the school leaver program. We hold their salaries in the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations, or the former Public Service Board, and they are made available to departments. Our hope is that departments will find them extremely useful and will be able to fit them into their budgets in the forthcoming year.

We always get a few that drop off. The 3.4 per cent for 1985-86 included the full year effort in terms of people employed with our funds, but they were not in our department. Some of them were found permanent fully funded positions and are now members of the Public Service, others were not. We expect to do much the same with much the same effort this year. The figures are slightly misleading because they do not have explanatory footnotes. That is mainly due to changes in Treasury's format of the budget papers.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can the Minister take on notice a question to list the number of permanent part-time employees in the Public Service by department and by sex at June 1985 and at June 1986?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I shall try to get those figures, but I am not sure how big a job it is. Perhaps the best approach is to give the department of personnel and industrial relations figure and then ask the Commissioner for Public Employment to expand. Overall, there were 113 males and 881 females in part-time employment.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Was that in the Education Department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I request the Commissioner for Public Employment to give some further information.

Mr Strickland: The figures that the Minister gave are for Public Service Act part-time employees, so they would include employees in the Education Department employed under the Government Management and Employment Act. The statistics that the honourable member wants for 1985 are available for total departmental employment in the old Public Service Board's annual report. The 1986 figures will be available in the 1985-86 report which should be available

in a couple of months, but we can probably get them more quickly.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I was interested to have a breakdown according to sex and department to see what effort is being made to accommodate working arrangements different to a 37½ hour week.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Under the heading 'Targets/Objectives' on page 614 of the yellow book, there is an item which mentions development, publicity and promotion strategy to improve Public Service knowledge of the department's services and—I find this intriguing—to improve the image of the Public Service. What sort of campaign is this? I notice that the Minister referred in his second opening remarks to Public Service bashing which occurs from time to time. Unfortunately, it sometimes emanates from Parliament and is promoted by the press. As a member of Parliament and, for a shorter time, as Minister, it seemed to me that the public, although requiring services, were often reluctant to pay for them. What sort of program is contemplated to improve the image of the public servant in the public mind?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The honourable member is correct when he says that the Public Service is under constant scrutiny and that it is being constantly criticised. I doubt whether large firms in the private sector are criticised as much as is the Public Service. I do not suggest that public scrutiny of the Public Service is not desirable, but it often gives a one-sided view of this, or any other, large organisation. My department is taking certain steps to make the public more aware of what it does and, more generally, of what the Public Service does. It has prepared a number of strategy papers which will inform the staff about the achievements of the department and of the Public Service in general.

It is a pity that the Public Service is such an easy mark and that often senior public servants do not explain to the public what they do. Of course, they may be somewhat inhibited in this regard because it is the practice for the Minister to respond to criticism. That is a style that we have developed, but it has not served us so well. I do not object to the chief executive officers of my departments dealing with the press and community groups, provided that they stick to matters of administration and do not argue about Government policy. However, that is not the general procedure in South Australia.

In the areas in which I have been involved, I have told my senior public servants that they can deal with the press. Indeed, some of them, such as officers in the Department of Agriculture, write press articles. It is highly desirable that public servants as well as the Minister should deal with the press and with members of the public. After all, it becomes monotonous if the Minister is the only one to appear on television. This role of public servants in dealing with the press and the public should be further developed. The image of my department and of the Public Service as a whole will be improved by the preparation of informative, high quality annual reports, the like of which we have come to expect over the past few years. Most of our annual reports are informative, readable and a credit to those who produce them. So they should be, because members of Parliament and of the public are entitled to high quality departmental reports.

An area of great concern is the need for departments to keep in touch with their clients, because the Public Service does not exist merely to serve itself. Indeed, its main rationale is to serve its clients, and the Minister and his departmental officers must give an adequate service to parliamentarians, members of the public, and all sections

of industry which they are called on to serve. It is important that they fulfil that function and service their clients. We should not have a navel-gazing organisation merely wishing to perpetuate itself. However, that is not the situation in South Australia, nor in any other Government service, because the working contact of the public servant with the client takes up the whole day. There can be no room for an enclave of public servants seeking only to associate with themselves. Monitoring must go on to ensure quality control of the services that public servants provide their clients.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I wish the Minister and his department luck in this matter, because they are trying to reverse a trend in public thinking that has not assisted the running of the departments or of the State in the past. It is important that the public servant should enjoy job satisfaction, because morale is important. To be constantly under pressure and under attack by the public does not help produce efficiency in the Public Service generally. If I may take issue with the Minister, annual reports of departments are not generally available to ordinary members of the public: they are usually available to interest groups and to members of Parliament. A member of Parliament does not read every report that is tabled. Indeed, to do so would require all the member's time. Is the most important task of the department to change the image of the public servant or to improve morale and increase job satisfaction?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the honourable member, on behalf of my officers and on my own behalf, for his good wishes. What has been said by the honourable member is correct; it would be stupid to deny that there is a perception of the Public Service which I feel is a misconception and is plain wrong. I have outlined some of the things that we do about that. As a very strong supporter of the public sector, I am also very strongly of the opinion that, if the public sector is to survive in the way we know it now, it has to be ultra efficient: it cannot go along from day to day and hope that it will last forever, because that is not the case.

There is no doubt in my mind that, if the public sector fails to be efficient, Governments of all persuasions will gradually reduce its role, so the ball is back in the court of the public servants themselves, to a great extent. With regard to sustaining such a significant sector of our economy, the public will only go along with that if that sector is efficient. If it is not, there will be a day of reckoning. I believe, because of our close contact with our clients, who are to some extent the policemen of the department, that South Australia is in a very healthy position there.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: There being no further questions, I declare the examination of the vote closed.

Correctional Services, \$38 308 000

Chairperson:
Ms D.L. Gayler

Members:
Mr D.S. Baker
The Hon. Ted Chapman
Mr M.G. Duigan
Mr R.J. Gregory
Mr J.K.G. Oswald
The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Labour, Minister of Correctional Services and Minister Assisting the Treasurer.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr M. Dawes, Executive Director, Department of Correctional Services.

Mr W. Pryor, Director, Support Services.

Mr R. Durant, Director, Community Corrections.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Duigan): I declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. I intend to call on the Minister, and on the lead speaker for the Opposition, to make a brief statement, if they wish. I call on the member for Morphett.

Mr OSWALD: The member for Hanson, Mr Becker, is absent today as he is having eye surgery and has asked me to open this afternoon by making a statement on his behalf. The Opposition looks to stronger, secure management of the Department of Correctional Services. Past errors must not be repeated with the commissioning of the remand centre and with the completion of the Mobilong prison, hopefully in September 1987. Operating costs will need to be watched carefully. Greater efficiencies in planning and meeting target times with services coordinated by the South Australian Health Commission also need to be insisted upon. A repeat of the fiasco which occurred at the Adelaide Remand Centre cannot be tolerated and the Minister of Health must be given the message to smarten up the Health Commission in this respect. Overcrowding must be eased. Courts must establish dialogue with the department as to accommodation required.

On the other hand, the Community Service Order scheme must be quickly extended to provide an alternative in minor, petty cases. The Opposition is aware of the mammoth reorganisation that has occurred in past years during the Liberal Government in 1979 to 1982, and under the present Government. We hope that tighter security measures demanded by the public and substantial increases in staffing and improved financial management and control will lead to an efficient delivery of services and provide value for money.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: Would the Minister like to make a short statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The 1985-86 financial year has seen a continuation of achievement within the Department of Correctional Services. Significant milestones have been reached in the capital works area and the appointment of staff. The Government regards the development of community correction programs as of the highest priority and considerable work has been undertaken to promote these programs within the community and courts as a viable alternative to imprisonment. On 30 June 1986 there were 2 820 persons undertaking some form of community based program.

Probation is historically the largest operating community program and as at 30 June 1986 there were 1 915 offenders on probation. In terms of numbers supervised and resources utilised, probation remains the main non-custodial program. Parole and the release of prisoners to serve the remainder of their sentences under supervision in the community is extensively used in South Australia, but the number of parolees does not equal the national average. As at 30 June 1986, 536 prisoners were on parole. The Community Service Order program has had a steady growth since commencement in July 1982 and the expansion experienced in 1985-86 was pleasing. As at 30 June 1986 there were 456 offenders on the program. Since its inception, 1 470 offenders have been through the scheme.

A wide range of projects have been undertaken, with Jubilee 150 activities increasing the range and variety. Local and special projects connected with the Jubilee have been

appreciated by those offenders able to take part. Longer-term projects which have evolved out of these contacts will provide work and skill training for some time in the future. In addition to the actual work programs, the program has provided staff with the opportunity to establish valuable courses in personal awareness and development for offenders. The department is currently examining the feasibility of home detention as a means of alleviating prison overcrowding and to utilise fully the provisions of the Bail Act. A report will be presented to the Government in December of this year.

A courts unit of five officers was established to provide an exclusive and specialised service to the Supreme, central districts, and magistrate's courts sitting in Adelaide. Its function is to provide assistance and guidance to the courts on all matters associated with the department's community-based programs, institutional programs and the philosophy and practices of breaches of orders. The department has recognised staff development and training as a high priority for the 1986-87 financial year. A staff development centre was purchased and equipped at North Adelaide and 228 new correctional officers were inducted during the year. In total, over 500 departmental officers have attended the centre for training sessions since its opening.

During the past financial year the expenditure on overtime and call-backs was reduced from \$1.9 million to \$1.2 million. The savings were achieved mainly through the deployment of Adelaide Remand Centre staff to other institutions pending the opening of this facility. This resulted in a saving of \$314 000 and a further \$368 000 was saved by effecting a reduction in the level of vacancies in the department. Further, the department has purchased equipment and is in the process of further development of its manpower control system which includes the monitoring of overtime and call-backs.

The incidence of workers compensation, particularly stress cases, continues to be of concern. The high level of stress cases supports the department's major initiative to improve its recruitment processes and to provide training and development opportunities for all staff to assist them to cope with the many and varied pressures in this occupation. The department has employed a full-time occupational health and safety officer and his value is reflected in the small increase in the cost of claims in 1985-86 of only 6.3 per cent, which is less than the inflation rate.

During 1986-87, work on the total renovation of B Division at the Yatala Labour Prison will continue. Also, the new medium security prison at Mobilong is well advanced and is expected to be commissioned in 1987. The Adelaide Remand Centre is open and is gradually being increased to full capacity.

The Auditor-General's Report for 1985-86 shows that the average annual cost per prisoner, excluding general administration, has increased from \$33 000 per annum to \$36 000 or an increase of 9.1 per cent. In particular, it should be noted that debt servicing and maintenance costs have increased from \$5.2 million to \$7 million or \$2 365 per prisoner per annum. In the case of Yatala Labour Prison, debt servicing and maintenance costs increased from \$2.6 million in 1984-85 to \$3 million in 1985-86 or \$2 370 per prisoner per annum. Similarly, workers compensation premiums increased from \$512 930 in 1984-85 to \$1 261 538 in 1985-86 or \$4 564 per prisoner per annum.

If those two items are deducted from the increased costs per prisoner per annum, Yatala Labour Prison's increased cost per prisoner is in the vicinity of \$1 066 per annum, which is an increase of 1.6 per cent per annum, which is much less than the actual inflation level. The department

continues to provide an efficient and effective service to the people of South Australia in a most difficult, demanding and often unappreciated area. The Government has supported and will continue to support the department and its staff.

Mr OSWALD: The Minister provided us with a lot of information. If in the course of questioning my questions should traverse some of that information, I will be happy for the Minister to refer me to it. The department's corporate and management objectives include on page 617 of the yellow book 'to ensure the safe and secure custody of inmates'. How many prisoners escaped custody in the past 12 months and how many are still at large?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot give that figure, but there are none at large. We have them all back. As regards Yatala Labour Prison, there were no escapes from inside the prison last year, which, I think, is the first year in 25 years in which there were no escapes. There was one escape from outside the prison under an escort. I will get the precise figures from the various institutions for the honourable member. From memory, they all came back—there is none at large.

Mr OSWALD: Page 617 of the yellow book refers to the over-representation of Aborigines in custody and the lack of culturally specific programs for Aborigines. What action is proposed to resolve this issue? How many Aborigines are in custody in each of the prisons and what percentage of the total prison population is made up of Aborigines?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the figures and percentages that the honourable member requested, but I will get those figures for him and outline some of the programs that we have in the Department of Correctional Services and the various institutions for Aboriginal prisoners and what we are trying to do to redress what is a horrific imbalance.

Mr OSWALD: Why was a staff car park not provided at the new Adelaide Remand Centre and is a staff car park provided near that centre? If so, how many parking bays are provided and at what annual cost to the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As regards why there was no car park provided, as the Committee would know, Currie Street is a high value piece of real estate and it seemed to us to be, quite frankly, too expensive to do it there; it was cheaper to do it elsewhere. We have provided 40 places for the staff of the remand centre. I will obtain the cost of that for the honourable member and have the information inserted in *Hansard*.

Mr OSWALD: What brand of locks were used on the cell doors at the Adelaide Remand Centre and at what cost? What was the original tender for the locks? Were the original locks replaced and, if so, why and at what additional cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I would not have any idea, the reason being that it has nothing to do with me but rather with the Department of Housing and Construction, which built the Remand Centre for the department. I will refer the query to that Department of Housing and Construction and ask it to respond either directly or through me.

Mr OSWALD: Have any pre-release prisoners been attending courses at TAFE colleges and, if so, have these programs been cut out? If they have been cut out, will the Minister say why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There have been prisoners and there are prisoners attending TAFE courses. Certainly the program has not been cut out. Whether the criteria for eligibility have been changed, I could not say offhand, but I will get that information for the honourable member.

Mr OSWALD: It has been put to us that there have been reductions in attendances at these TAFE colleges due to staff shortages and no escorts being available.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That may well be the case. Correctional Services, like other Government departments, does not have an open cheque and merely because prisoners wish to attend a TAFE course outside prison does not mean we have an obligation to provide it to every prisoner irrespective of cost. We do our best within our budget but, if there are not enough funds to respond to every request, we have to refuse them.

Mr OSWALD: At page 617, the Program Estimates refer to the emergence of organised criminal activity within institutions in the community. What evidence does the department have of organised criminal activities within institutions and what is being done to combat such activity?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The question is predominantly one for the police, and we have very strong links with the police. We have regular briefings from them and to them in what is a very sensitive area.

Mr OSWALD: I really do not think that answers my question. If the Minister has picked it up as an issue in his department there must be a situation in which he is concerned about criminal activity within these institutions. We would like to know what is happening in our gaols. If there is organised criminal activity there, I would like to know a bit more about it.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Of course, it is a concern to us because we have to run the prisons, but the primary responsibility for criminal activity in South Australia lies with the police. We are also concerned about the health of our prisoners, but the primary responsibility there lies with the Minister of Health, who has responsibility and the Health Commission, which runs the prison medical services. We get information from the police from time to time and have briefings from them on criminal activity in the community as a whole, and any connections they may have in prison.

It should not be surprising that there is criminal activity in prison. Prison is full of criminals. Unfortunately, they do not necessarily suddenly change because they go to gaol, but if there is any suggestion of criminal activity in prison, whether it is assaults or drugs or anything else, we immediately call the police. We do not act as a police force: we are a custodial force and our job is basically to lock them up and let them out as the courts say, and keep reasonable order whilst prisoners are there. We certainly do not involve ourselves other than to assist the police wherever possible in investigating criminal activities in the prisons.

The Hon. TED CHAPMAN: My question is in four short parts. Will the Minister seriously consider adopting the policy and instigating legislative changes where necessary to enable:

1. the death penalty for all convicted murderers;
2. the flogging of rapists;
3. the hard labour employment of all physically and mentally fit adult prisoners; and
4. the abolition of the South Australian parole system?

Much has been said about whether or not it is appropriate to apply the death penalty to murderers, and the argument of those favouring it over the years within this Parliament and about this place has generally centred on the element of its alleged deterrent effect if it were to apply. My argument in favour of the death penalty has never sought to incorporate that as an excuse or justification for its introduction. I argue that it is an appropriate penalty for the crime.

The suggestion of flogging has always attracted a bit of flak toward those who make such utterance on the basis

that it is archaic and undesirable, but what is more undesirable. I put to the Minister, than rapists in our community at large and, indeed, as reported regularly nowadays, the increasing impact of those rapists? I support the application of corporal punishment accordingly.

On the matter of hard labour employment of all those who are physically and mentally fit amongst our adult prisoners, I put to the Minister that, in ordinary circumstances and, generally speaking, within the community at large, people who are busy do not get into mischief. I do not know why prisoners in our institutions get into mischief and seek to damage facilities, upset the administration, escape and all those other undesirable activities we hear about from time to time. I seriously put to the Minister that, if those prisoners were working for longer hours than they appear to be and, indeed, working harder during those employed hours, they might not be so ready to get into mischief during their leisure or otherwise resting time.

In relation to the fourth point, the abolition of the South Australian parole system, I do not propose to canvass that at any great length, because I think that we are all aware of the mockery which has surrounded that system, particularly in recent years, albeit its having commenced with the best of intent and the expressed desires of quite notable people in the legal profession and around it to have such a system in this State. However, it has collapsed: it is a joke. It is not being applied, apparently, in the way in which it was originally intended to be and, from the point of view of the public at large, the offenders who are enjoying the benefits of the parole system as applied are not therefore paying the penalties which are handed down to them—or even close to the penalties that are being handed down to them—from the various levels of the judiciary.

I sympathise with the difficulty the public at large have in trying to understand why, when a committed offender receives a judgment involving a prison term for a period, only a pittance of that period turns out to be served. In other words, they get out a long time—indeed, in my view, too long before—the time set down in the sentence. Thus the application of the parole system, given the loopholes or apparent anomalies within the system and the opportunities for favour to be extended to prisoners who are good guys or girls, has become an absolute joke.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As a matter of policy, the Government is opposed to capital punishment. I believe that the Opposition is, too. As regards flogging for rape, again as a matter of policy we do not believe in committing physical violence on people, whether legally sanctioned or otherwise. I am not quite sure whether the member for Alexandra is expressing a personal viewpoint or the viewpoint of the Opposition.

In relation to hard labour for prisoners, as the honourable member said, prisoners should be kept occupied usefully while they are in prison and we try to do that. The industries complex at Yatala was planned earlier but it was built during the period of the Liberal Government between 1979 and 1982, and I commend that Government for that. It is an excellent and an expensive facility costing many millions of dollars, but it is a very good facility for the Yatala Labour Prison.

One of the problems in Adelaide Gaol is the lack of work for prisoners. There is simply nothing for them to do in the Adelaide Gaol. I think that we can give only a third of our prisoners in the gaol any jobs such as cleaning, cooking, or other work around the gaol. Employment within the prison is highly prized by the prisoners. Those prisoners who do not have a job want one and queue up for them. Prisoners want to work and we want them to work. When Adelaide

Gaol closes down (and the sooner that happens, the better) and when Mobilong opens, we will be able to provide more meaningful work to all prisoners in the State.

In relation to the abolition of parole, I will not consider that. We, as has the Opposition, have a policy on parole. Again, I can only assume that the honourable member was speaking as an individual, because the Opposition has a very detailed policy on parole. I happen to disagree with that policy, but nevertheless it is a policy that has some legitimacy, but I prefer a different style of parole. Both Parties agree on one thing: there ought to be a parole system. In relation to what part of the sentence is served on parole and what part of the sentence is served in prison, that is very much up to the courts.

Within the parameters that Parliament sets (minimum sentences in a few cases, but certainly maximum sentences), the courts are free to ensure that people stay in gaol for as long as the courts wish. Of course, the courts are aware of the parole legislation and there is in fact a Bill currently before Parliament which will ensure that the courts will take notice of the parole system when setting sentences, so it is very much in the hands of the courts as to how much of the sentence prisoners serve inside and outside gaol. I think it is appropriate that the courts should make that decision.

Mr D.S. BAKER: I note that \$1 017 757 was paid to prisoners for work done within the prison system last year and only \$867 000 is budgeted for this financial year. Why is that so; what are prisoners paid daily; and how many prisoners receive payment?

Mr Pryor: The increase in 1985-86 to over \$1 million from the budget was primarily as a result of the provision of \$151 000 to establish a trust account for prisoner pay, so that we were actually bringing to account our commitment in the year that it occurred. Prior to that we did not have a provision that would accurately reflect our commitment to the prison population, so the reduction from our actual expenditure last year to the proposed figure of \$867 086 is basically as a result of that. Also, we have taken initiatives to not reduce the actual payment to prisoners but to exercise greater control over the use of payment for skill and performance. We have taken steps also to reduce the number of overtime jobs and seven-day-a-week jobs within the institutions, so it is a result of the tightening of the management of the payment system and the fact that we no longer need to provide that \$151 000 for the trust account.

Mr D.S. BAKER: What are prisoners paid daily or weekly and what category of prisoner receives payment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: All prisoners receive a payment in one form or another, from very minor to not quite so minor. None of them is very well paid. It is necessary that all prisoners have some money in prison in order that they may buy the basic necessities of life, including toiletries, etc. The amount received by each individual prisoner depends on what job is done and whether one is paying somebody to do something relatively skillful, such as cooking, or paying somebody to do something less skillful, such as sweeping the yard. I will have incorporated in *Hansard* the formula used for deciding how much pay prisoners receive.

Mr D.S. BAKER: As a supplementary question, in the past have prisoners been paid overtime and penalty rates?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, that is correct, but I think that the honourable member should wait until he sees what they are. I can assure him that they are very minor. If we did not do this and if one had to pay staff award rates to do some of this work, it would be horrendously expensive. By paying prisoners a small percentage of the award rate it really saves the State an awful lot of money.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The interjection was that we should not pay them anything. I am not sure what the honourable member would do if a prisoner were asked to handle dirty clothing and to launder it for other prisoners and he said 'No'. I know what the member for Alexandra would do; he has made that perfectly clear. He would beat them insensible until they did it, but the member for Alexandra is very tough when he talks here. I am not sure that he would be able to effect his remedy or get his laundry done at Yatala.

Mr D.S. BAKER: As a further supplementary question, even if prisoners do not work, do they still get a fixed amount of money?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Even if they do not do anything, there has to be a minimum for the purpose of hygiene, if nothing else.

Mr OSWALD: How well is the community service order scheme working? How many people were placed under the program during the financial year 1985-86? What action is being taken to extend the scheme this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I gave the figures in my opening statement. I shall examine the honourable member's question to see whether any of the figures for which he asked were not supplied in the opening statement and, if so, have them incorporated in *Hansard*. The most important thing that we can do in the community service orders is to establish a system by which people expunge their fines rather than be gaoled. We can do that relatively easily and quickly, so I expect legislation to give effect to that to come forward before long.

Mr OSWALD: What action is being taken to expand and use the prison industries fully?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The most significant of our prison industries is Yatala. The problem is the shortage of prisoners. There is a shortage at Yatala because of upgrading. We have cells for only about 120. When the upgrading is finished, we will have 225 prisoners. Another 100 prisoners will dramatically reduce the cost of keeping each prisoner. I hope that the Government is commended for that. It costs about \$70 000 a year to keep a prisoner but the additional 100 prisoners will cut the cost and enable us to use the industries complex more fully.

Mr OSWALD: Who will make up the proposed prison industries advisory committee?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no such committee at the moment. We had one, but it was not terribly effective. It is possible that another will be established. The problem is that we cannot use a complex of that size. We have virtually half a prison at Yatala and, until we have the extra 100 prisoners, the complex will remain too large to be used fully.

Mr OSWALD: On page 56 of his report this year, the Auditor-General says:

The lack of accountability over the operations of the prison industries has been raised by audit and private consultants over a number of years.

What action is being taken by the Minister and the department to improve accountability over the operations of the prison industries? Why should the Auditor-General keep commenting about this issue? Is it an indication that his comments are being ignored?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am sure that the Auditor-General's comments are not being ignored. The issue stems from a Royal Commission. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there were queries about people in the prison system having work done by prisoners under permit. They got a permit from the institutional head to have something done by prisoners and charged out. The Auditor-General raised

queries then. The system has changed dramatically since then. Mr Pryor can probably expand on that answer.

Mr Pryor: We have provided a computer facility at Yatala Labour Prison with a view to establishing an industries costing program. We have expanded the industries management team to provide for a 12 month placement of a specialist in industries costing. Once we have established that for Yatala, we intend to expand to Cadell and then all other industries so that we have a firm industries costing base which will enable us to be more accountable in industries and to assist with cross charging.

Mr D.S. BAKER: The Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service in this State has proved invaluable to prisoners, ex prisoners and their families. Last year, it was allocated \$219 000 and spent \$362 000. This year, its budget is \$272 000. Will that be enough? What restrictions have been put on the service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The figures do not reflect the truth. I agree with the member for Victoria that OARS is a successful and highly regarded organisation. It got into some financial difficulties last year, and we gave it a grant of \$143 000 to enable it to clear its debt. We made clear that that was a one off grant and that it had to work within its budget. We helped it to adjust its organisation so that it could come in on budget, but the figures do not show that we granted it \$143 000.

Mr D.S. BAKER: So it has been allocated more to spend than the year before, taking account of the \$143 000?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr D.S. BAKER: How many psychologists are employed by the department? Are they located at various prisons? If so, which ones? What role and extension of psychologists is envisaged this financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services employs five psychologists, two in the community corrections area, two in the operations area to look after all prisons, and one in the support services area. We feel that the present level of service is appropriate and have no plans for expansion.

Mr OSWALD: How many disturbances, fights, riots, and serious incidents have occurred over the past 12 months involving confrontation with staff and attacks on inmates and staff, and what positive action is being taken by the department to reduce the number of such incidents?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get the incident statistics report and have the information included in *Hansard*. Many courses are being pursued in order to improve the running of the prisons. These include careful selection of new staff, constant training and retraining, and upgrading of prison accommodation. Most of our prisons can only be described as medieval. Our educational programs and the upgrading of work skill programs are designed to help the prisoner cope better with the prison environment and with the environment outside when the prisoner leaves the prison. They are also designed to help the staff cope better in a high stress area.

Mr OSWALD: How many prison personnel are now on workers compensation leave and how does this figure compare with the figure in each of the past two financial years? Could the Minister provide a breakdown of these figures by individual institutions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. I will get those statistics for the honourable member.

Mr OSWALD: What has happened to the prisoner who was attacked and reported to be in a coma? Has his health improved? Is he still under guard and, if he is, will that guard continue? Have police inquiries led to prosecutions in this case?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The person concerned is no longer in prison; he has been discharged from prison and is in the Julia Farr Centre. I could not comment on the precise medical condition of the prisoner, nor can I say what police action has been taken. If the police will inform us of their inquiries, I will get a report for the honourable member.

Mr OSWALD: On page 178 of the Estimates of Payments, the sum of \$1 350 is provided as a payment for unlawful imprisonment during 1985-86. To whom was that sum paid and why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will have to get that information for the honourable member.

Mr D.S. BAKER: When will victim impact statements be introduced and what benefits will follow their introduction? How will the statements benefit rehabilitation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The honourable member will have to ask the Attorney-General that question.

Mr D.S. BAKER: When will the new manager be appointed for the Adelaide Remand Centre? What will be the manager's salary and classification? Will the appointee come from within the department or from outside the service? Will the manager be appointed on a contract basis for a certain number of years and, if he will be, why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The new manager will be appointed shortly. As no decision on the appointment has yet been made, I cannot say who will be appointed.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Is not a condition of the manager's appointment the length of contract?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Certainly not, nor should it be. If that is being suggested, I find the suggestion outrageous.

Mr OSWALD: My next question perhaps should go to the Minister of Housing and Construction. However, if the Minister, as Minister of Correctional Services, knows the answer, he may reply. Are capital works programs meeting their financial targets in respect of the Hillcrest Security Hospital, Mobilong Prison, Yatala Labour Prison, Cadell, and other new works that are listed in the schedule in the financial statement?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will have to get those details from my colleague.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Who are the members of the Correctional Services Advisory Council; what are their fees; and what are the terms of their appointment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The members of the Correctional Services Advisory Council are Messrs G.F. Barrett (Chairperson) and R.J. Kidney, Ms C. O'Loughlin, Ms V. Brodie, and Ms S.E. O'Connor. At present, there is one vacancy on the council. The Chairperson receives \$100 and each of the other members \$85 for each meeting attended. Expenses and allowances for travel, accommodation, etc., are reimbursed in accordance with the rates applicable within the Public Service. The term of appointment of members is three years.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Who are the members of the Parole Board; what are their fees; and what are the terms of their appointment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The members of the Parole Board are E.F. Nelson, QC (Chairperson), who is paid \$4 260 a year; D.F. Bright (Deputy Chairperson), \$3,727; A.T. Kyprianou, \$3 207; C. Nayda, \$1 283; Dr J.A. Scanlon, \$3 207; and F.M. Wallace, \$3 207. Their term of office is three years.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Who are the members of the Community Service Order Committee; what are their fees; and what are the terms of their appointment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The members of the Community Service Order Committee are Ken Harrison, George

Apap, Fr Joe Grealy, Ray Kidney, and departmental representative Rob Durant. These are honorary positions for a term of three years.

Mr D.S. BAKER: At page 178 of the Estimates of Payments, it is stated that \$34 539 was paid to members of those committees last year, whereas \$56 000 was budgeted. What amount has been set aside as fees for committee members this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The proposed expenditure for 1986-87 is \$13 500 in respect of fees for members of the Correctional Services Advisory Council. I will let the honourable member know what fees are anticipated in respect of members of the other two committees.

Mr OSWALD: How many remandees are now held at the Adelaide Remand Centre and when will the capacity of that centre be reached?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The number changes daily, but it is something over 100, and it will be up to full capacity when we have full medical services available to us.

Mr OSWALD: When will an inventory control system be established by the department, and why has one not been in operation to date?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is an inventory control system at Yatala. I am not sure of the status of that in the rest of the department, but I will get back to the honourable member about that.

Mr OSWALD: There is reference at page 624 under 'support services' in relation to the following three points:

- Ensure that the principles and guidelines of the State Supply Act, regulations and general principles are adhered to.
- Establish a departmental store and introduce the Common Automated Procurement System.
- Establish an inventory control system.

They are the three clear objectives of the department this year.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think that the objectives of the department are highly commendable. What the resource implications of doing those things are, I am not sure. When I respond to the question through the *Hansard* record I will see that the honourable member's comments are taken into account.

Mr OSWALD: I understand that turn around systems are used for minor offenders who have been sent to gaol, booked in and released immediately on a gaol manager's authority. This was tried interstate and has now been scrapped. Is there any question of that system being introduced in South Australia?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is certainly not our intention to do so.

Mr OSWALD: Was it ever planned for?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr OSWALD: When, and in what form, will a drug and alcohol treatment program commence in our prisons, who will undertake such a program and at what cost?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can give some information on this matter. If the information needs to be supplemented by the Health Commission, I will certainly get further information for the honourable member. The department and the Drug and Alcohol Services Council are engaged in consultations at present and a broad program philosophy has been formulated. A four person team comprising psychologists, social workers and a part-time medical officer will operate the program from the Adelaide Remand Centre.

Emphasis of the program will be, first, purely detection of drug abusing prisoners; secondly, intensive psychological, medical and social work intervention; and, thirdly, sustained follow up of prisoners as they progress through the prison system. It is envisaged that team positions will be advertised within the next month and considerable care will

be exercised to ensure that the best qualified and experienced professionals are appointed.

Mr OSWALD: What is the considered incidence of drug and alcohol related problems in our prisons; how are drugs entering the prisons; and what improved detection methods are being used or considered?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can get a considered reply for the honourable member. In the interim, this is an area which gives us a certain amount of difficulty. This was explained to some extent in the last annual report, which I commend to all members. Some of the problems we have in this area were explained in that report. Drugs are a problem in the community as a whole and it would be unreasonable to think that prisons could escape from the problems that the community as a whole is having, particularly as a high percentage of prisoners have been involved in the use, abuse and trafficking in drugs, anyway.

The problem is one that all prison systems in the world are having to deal with. As regards how drugs get into prisons, I can only say that there are a number of possible ways. We do, from time to time, in more isolated incidents, have a suspicion that people are attempting to take drugs into the prison. What we do is call the police. We are not policemen. We call the police, or flatly turn people away if we suspect that they are carrying drugs. We have no authority to search members of the public coming to the prison. That, again, is not our role.

In Yatala I think that the opening of the new visiting centre is a very significant step in reducing what is already a fairly low level of drug incidence in the prison. I urge honourable members to go out to Yatala and see the security measures that are taken for people visiting prisoners and for prisoners after the visitors have gone. It really is a very extensive security system. We feel that we are having some success in reducing what I say is already a fairly low level of drug use and abuse within the prison system.

When I was a teenager a drug was a bottle of Scotch and it is pretty difficult to get a bottle of Scotch or a bottle of gin, depending on one's poison, into a prison. But today we are talking about very small amounts of illegal substances which can be held very easily in the mouth undetected by prison officers, wrapped in foil or secreted about the body. It is low bulk that is involved, and that is the biggest problem.

Also, people get the impression that prisons are closed societies and that is certainly not the case. It would be very easy to keep drugs out of prison if it was a closed system, but it is not. We have hundreds of people a day, apart from prisoners, going in and out of our prisons; sometimes it is like Grand Central Station, particularly at Yatala where there is upgrading going on while they are trying to run the prison. There are workers, lawyers and visitors going in and out all the time. There are various agencies such as OARS going in and out all the time. Our staff is going in and out

all the time. So, the potential for drugs to enter the prison is very high. I think it is a credit to our staff that we have such a small incidence of drug abuse in the South Australian prison system.

Mr D.S. BAKER: If we are unfortunate enough for the marijuana Bill to pass this Parliament and if its use becomes decriminalised, does it follow that inmates of prisons will be able to smoke it regularly and without being fined?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Just because something is legal outside a prison does not mean that it is legal within a prison. Alcohol is illegal within prisons, for instance. If we will not allow alcohol in prisons, I cannot see us permitting marijuana within them. I must confess that it is not something that has exercised my mind greatly, but there would be no legal problem in having in declared illegal within the prison system. Apart from very minor amounts, money is illegal within the prison—it is not permitted. There are a lot of things that we do not permit, so there would be no problem with that, if that was our decision.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Is smoking allowed in prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, it is.

Mr D.S. BAKER: If smoking is allowed in prison it will be difficult to stop the smoking of marijuana in prison.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is the honourable member's view and not necessarily mine. Drinking water is allowed in prison, but drinking whisky is not.

Mr D.S. BAKER: Few of us can turn water into wine.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Few of us can turn tobacco into marijuana.

Mr OSWALD: What notifiable diseases, including sexually transmitted diseases, have been located in State prisons during the past 12 months and how do the figures compare with those for the previous 12 months? What action is being taken to improve the general health standards between prisoners so that there will be a downturn in sexually transmitted and other notifiable diseases? I am very aware that the information could cut across Health Commission figures. If the Minister does not have them I will be happy if he can obtain such information from the Health Commission.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It really comes under the Health Commission and that question should have been asked of the Minister of Health. However, I will pass on the request of this Committee for those figures.

Mr OSWALD: We have no further questions.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.32 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Wednesday 8 October at 11 a.m.