

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 16 September 1987

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**Chairperson:**
Ms D.L. Gayler**Members:**
Mr S.J. Baker
Mr H. Becker
Mr M.G. Duigan
Mr G.A. Ingerson
The Hon. T.M. McRae
The Hon. J.W. Slater*The Committee met at 11 a.m.*

The CHAIRPERSON: The procedure to be adopted will be relatively informal. There is no need to stand to ask or answer questions. The Committee will determine the approximate timetable for consideration of proposed payments to facilitate the changeover of departmental advisers. Changes to the composition of the Committee will be notified to the Clerk as they occur. If the Minister undertakes to supply information at a later date, it must be in a form that is suitable for insertion in *Hansard*, and it must be submitted, at the latest, by 2 October. I propose to allow the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make a short opening statement, if they so wish. The Committee will take a flexible approach to giving the call for the asking of questions, based on about three questions per member and alternating sides. Members will also be allowed to ask a brief supplementary question to conclude a line of questioning, before the next member is called. In case there is any confusion on this matter, I interpret that as three questions and one supplementary, and not three questions and three supplementary questions.

Subject to the convenience of the Committee, a member outside the Committee who wishes to ask a question will be permitted to do so once Committee members have exhausted a line of questioning. An indication in advance by members outside the Committee who wish to ask questions would be appreciated. Questions should be based on lines of expenditure as revealed in the Estimates of Payments. However, reference may also be made to other documents such as the Program Estimates and the Auditor-General's Report. Ministers will be asked to introduce advisers prior to commencement and at any changeover. Questions are to be directed to the Minister and not to the advisers, but of course the Minister may refer questions to advisers for a response. I invite the lead speaker for the Opposition and the Minister to make an opening statement if they so wish.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This financial year, 1987-88, will see the implementation of vital legislation in the areas of occupational health and workers rehabilitation and compensation. By this, of course, I refer to the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986 and the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1986. These will significantly improve the rights and conditions of both employees and employers in South Australia. The 1987-88 budget includes \$353 000 to establish the Occupational Health and Safety Commission, and provides a further \$330 000 for 18

inspectorial and support staff to administer the occupational health and safety legislation.

Other major developments proposed for 1987-88 include: Provision of a \$75 000 grant to be made to the United Trades and Labor Council to coordinate the training of job representatives in occupational health and safety.

Provision of \$20 000 to publicise amendments to legislation affecting outworkers in South Australia.

Two additional staff (\$54 000) for the extension of dangerous substances legislation to include class 6 and 8 substances.

Continued development and implementation of the Justice Information System.

The development of a comprehensive package to reduce the cost of workers compensation for Government employees.

The mainstream functions performed by the department will continue to be monitored and developed to respond to changes in legislation and the impact that this has on all areas of the workplace. In addition, as part of the overall budget process, some operations of the department will be abolished or rationalised in 1987-88. These include the abolition of the Workers Rehabilitation Advisory Unit, although some staff will be retained to handle Government employees: the abolition of the Noise Control Section; and the closure of the western regional office at Bowden, with services being reallocated to other offices.

In summary the \$11 617 million allocation for the Department of Labour in 1987-88 as shown in the Estimates of Payments is made up of:

	\$	\$
Salaries and on costs	7 798 000	
Accommodation and service costs	1 343 000	
General operating expenses	1 107 000	
Reporting services	598 000	
<i>Industrial Gazette</i>	200 000	
Grants—		
Occupation Health and Safety Commission	353 000	
Various organisations	178 000	
Office machines	30 000	
Overseas visits	10 000	

11 617 000

However, in comparing these details with the Program Estimates in the yellow book, I remind members that they do not include other payments made by and on behalf of the department such as: special Acts relating to the Minister and judges and magistrates of the Industrial Court; the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Fund; the Government Insurance Fund; interagency support services such as debt servicing, maintenance and minor works done by the Department of Housing and Construction; the Silicosis Fund and other minor deposit accounts. The impact of those areas increases the total expenditure for programs under the Department of Labour as shown in the Program Estimates to \$62.983 million in 1987-88.

Labour, \$11 617 000

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Labour.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr H. Bachmann, Director, Department of Labour.

Mr A. Dangerfield, Assistant Director.

Mr G. Billett, Manager, Administration and Finance Branch.

Mr P. Hanson, Manager, Regional Services.

Mr N. Ford, Assistant Director, Occupational Health and Safety.

Mr C. Meikle, Chairperson, Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

Ms B. Good, Women's Adviser.

Mr B. Shillabeer, Industrial Registrar, Industrial Court and Commission.

Mr D. Turner, Manager, Government Workers Compensation Office.

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

Mr S.J. BAKER: My questions will be in sequential order according to the Estimates of Payments and Program Estimates booklets. Has the department monitored the impact of the deregulation of trading hours on petrol stations and, if so, what have been the results in terms of petrol station closures and proprietor bankruptcies?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know whether they have been monitored but the department has certainly asked the oil companies for the number of petrol stations that have closed in that period. From memory, about 25 petrol stations have closed. That is a Question on Notice from the honourable member that I have sighted and signed recently and it will be incorporated in *Hansard* in the usual manner when Parliament resumes.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to say whether closures have been caused by either deregulation of the selling of petrol or of the hours when petrol can be sold. I have not, to the best of my memory, received any complaints about the legislation. I think normal market forces are working as they ought in this area, and I am sure the honourable member would agree that that is the way it should be.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Has the Minister received representations from the Motor Trades Association concerning the attitude of oil companies and their lack of assistance to petrol station proprietors who are in financial difficulty?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In general or in relation to the deregulation of hours?

Mr S.J. BAKER: Since the new hours were brought in.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Complaints have always existed, but are minor in nature. The oil companies have always negotiated with the MTA before and after deregulation in relation to financial arrangements that need to be made when a petrol station closes. Occasionally the MTA receives a complaint from a petrol reseller that the oil companies are not being as generous as the reseller feels they ought. I have discussed this matter with one oil company, and the results were totally satisfactory.

Oil companies have been negotiating closures since petrol stations were established, and with few exceptions those negotiations have been conducted amicably and resolved to the satisfaction of both parties. When a reseller feels that this is not the case an approach by the MTA or by me has solved the problem. I did say when petrol retailing hours were deregulated that if problems were encountered the Government would consider providing an arbitrator. That has not been necessary, but the option exists. Because I have stated this option it will probably never be availed of. I have found oil companies to be most cooperative, and I think the MTA would agree.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What stage have the negotiations reached on the extension of retail trading hours to include Saturday afternoons, bearing in mind that the Minister has stated that it is up to the unions and the retailers to reach agreement on this matter?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The negotiations do not directly involve me other than the fact that I have encouraged them. The negotiations are between the RTA and the Shop Distributors and Allied Employees Union. It is a vexed area, and I do not think there is a single solution which will suit all parties. There are a few people who believe in total deregulation.

Those who have total deregulation do not believe in any more deregulation. Of course, they want to maintain the advantage that the regulation of others gives them at the moment, and total deregulation has the potential to severely affect their business, because they have an advantage over their competitors, and they want to keep it. There is a lot of self interest in the area. I think that at the moment the policy of the Retail Traders Association of S.A. Inc. is for an extension only to Saturday afternoon and it does not ask for total deregulation.

Some special areas are a problem. For example, the specialist furniture retailers believe that the pattern of trade has shifted considerably and the policy of some of them is for total deregulation so that they can meet their competition head on. Some of the larger carpet retailers, because of the size of their stores, are not allowed to open at the weekend, so there has been a tremendous shift away from those stores to companies which use the present legislation to the maximum and which have built their businesses on the present regulation. Those carpet retailers feel that they ought to be able to compete with those other stores. Of course, those carpet retailers who have built their businesses on the present regulated state of the industry are bitterly opposed to specialist furniture retailers and specialist carpet retailers having the right to trade in carpets on weekends, so again we see very clear self-interest arising whenever the area is discussed.

Not all specialist furniture retailers are interested in deregulation. I have received some letters from specialist retailers who have very strongly opposed any further deregulation of the area on the basis that they cannot employ qualified casual staff and their permanent staff would finish up working, if not every weekend, then a good number of weekends. They believe that their staff do not want to do this; in fact, the staff have written to me saying that they do not want to do it. I would say that I receive far more correspondence opposing any further deregulation of shopping hours than I do in support of it, but most of the correspondence opposing further deregulation is from firms and sections of industry that already have it, so I always take that into account when I am considering their representations to me.

I do not think that the Government has made any secret of the fact that, if the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association and the Retail Traders Association came to us with a package that involved an extension of shopping hours, the Government would give that very close consideration. I believe that, without being able to commit the Cabinet, such a package would be favourably considered, but that is not to say that the Government will not act unilaterally in the area. We certainly do not give up our rights to the SDA and the RTA to regulate or to deregulate the area. If those organisations cannot come to some agreement that is generally in line with the Government's policy of more relaxed trading hours in certain areas, the Government will have to consider acting unilaterally, whether by my giving permits as provided under the present legislation, or indeed by changing the legislation. We would not want to do that and that would be a last resort, so we have put the onus very squarely back on the RTA and the SDA to bear in mind that we want a measured relaxation in these

areas. I think total deregulation at one stroke would very severely affect some businesses that would find it difficult to meet the competition. Nevertheless, there is an awful lot of vested interest in this area and it is a bit of a minefield to try to pick your way through.

Mr S. J. BAKER: I gather two things from the Minister's response: one is that he believes the RTA to be the only representative body of retail employer interests in this State; the other is that, if indeed no agreement is reached, the Government will go ahead and introduce legislation to allow this reform to occur. Given that that is the information he had provided to the Committee, can the Minister indicate when he intends to move in that area, or what time frame he is allowing the RTA and the Shop and Distributive Allied Employees Federation to negotiate before there is legislative action?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The honourable member is quite incorrect in his assumptions. We do not believe that the RTA is the only representative of employers in the industry. I stated quite clearly that there were others with a different view from that of the RTA, particularly in the small business area—those people who are already deregulated. I recognise those organisations as representing employers and having a legitimate say in what goes on in this area. By and large, they do not represent employers of the bulk of the unionists in the area, such employers being represented by the RTA. That is why I state that the negotiations occurring between the union and the RTA are very important.

I also said that the RTA and the unions will not dictate Government policy. I was very careful to say that we do not abrogate our responsibilities in the area in favour of the SDA, the RTA, the Mixed Business Association, the Furniture Retailers Guild, or any of the parties concerned. What we have indicated very clearly is that we want a relaxation of shopping hours in a measured and sensible way. I have made that clear to both the SDA and the RTA. As there are no negotiations going on between the Mixed Business Association and the SDA, that does not really come into it because the Mixed Business Association and others in those areas are already totally deregulated, so there is nothing really for them to discuss with the SDA—they already have it. The fact that they do not want it for anybody else is somewhat understandable.

In relation to when we will move, if it is clear that the RTA and the SDA, representing those areas that are at present regulated, are not going to be able to come up with any agreement for relaxation, obviously the Government would have to consider whether it ought to act without the agreement of those parties. I made clear to both parties at the beginning of this year that I thought a year for those discussions to take place between the parties was a generous period, and certainly by the end of this year I would like to see some further relaxation in hours. I would prefer it by agreement. I would not want to recommend to the Government that it act unilaterally. However, as I stated earlier, that may well be the position that we could adopt.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: At page 484 of the Program Estimates there is a comment that the gradual deregulation of the legislation in relation to shop trading hours is favoured. Additionally, it states:

Investigation officers investigated approximately 106 complaints in regard to shop trading hours, bread baking and employment agencies and made 488 inspections.

What are the anticipated savings for the public sector in the review of current closing times, as set in the Shop Trading Hours Act? Further, how many inspectors are employed by the department to carry out the duties necessary to be undertaken in that regard?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It certainly does not account for a huge amount of our budget. We spent \$83 000 because of the legislation, most of which we could save if there was no legislation, if the area was to be deregulated. I think it involves 2.2 full-time equivalents in this area. It is not a huge part of the Department of Labour's work, although I think it is a huge part of its headache. It is a constant source of irritation to everyone in the department. However, the legislation is in place and it is our job to deal with it whether we like it or not. We state quite clearly that we would like to see some measured relaxation of hours in this area.

Mr DUGAN: The member for Gilles referred to 106 complaints having been made, while the Program Estimates book indicates that 106 complaints were investigated: do those figures relate to the number of registered complaints?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Further to a question that I asked previously about retail trading hours, can the Minister assure the Committee that, in the event that the Government legislates to allow for an extension of retail trading hours on Saturday afternoon, the position of small business retailers in shopping centres will be considered? The Minister would be well aware of conditions of leases that exist in relation to traders in shopping centres and of the considerable cost burdens that are borne by these retailers. Some protection should be provided to traders operating within strip shopping and shopping centre premises, because of their leasing arrangements, which require them to be open for all the hours that the shopping centre is open.

Various estimates are available from around Australia concerning the impact of extended trading hours. Studies undertaken in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia show that when shopping hours are extended the major losers, in terms of trade, are those operating in the small business sector. I understand that in Western Australia during the America's Cup there was a relative change in the distribution of business. I understand that up to 40 per cent of trade was lost from the small business sector at that time. Obviously, a loss of business in the small business area, coupled with the increased costs of operation of having to remain open at uneconomic times, will place extraordinary burdens on the small business sector.

Will the Minister give an undertaking that he will seriously review the results of the studies done in other States in this area? Further, with the introduction of legislation in this regard will the Minister provide for some means of reducing the cost impact of the measure on the small business sector?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will certainly take into account the honourable member's comments and any other work that has been done in other States, including the results of any studies. Whether I or any other Minister will find it necessary to legislate further in the area to, as the honourable member put it, protect small business, I cannot commit the Government. I am not sure that we have to go to other States to get experience because the majority of the State is deregulated in this area. We have the example of what occurs here in South Australia. I do not want to be parochial, but perhaps I could enlighten the Committee about our largest provincial city. The Coles-Myer group owns the principal shopping centre there, and there is no regulation in the district regarding shopping hours. In the shopping complex the two major stores—Cole-Mart and New World—are at either end of the complex and stay open Saturday afternoons and sometimes on Sunday whilst the shops in between close. They do not bother: they do not open Saturday afternoons or Sundays.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Hang on. I have not heard of any pressure from the Coles-Myer group to make them do so. It seems to work without any fuss whatever in Whyalla, so I would expect, particularly in regard to the retail area, that similar provisions would apply in the metropolitan area. If we did get Saturday afternoon trading and it was found that there was a problem because of people becoming compelled to open as a result of their leases, obviously the Government would have to consider that if those people made representations to us: of course we would consider it. I have seen no evidence in the areas of the State where it is deregulated that that is a problem.

In the shopping centres today the majority of the shops are perfectly free to open; it related only to the large stores. As regards the Shop Trading Hours Act, those shops and the majority of shops in the shopping centre (or a good proportion of them) are less than 200 square metres, and are free to open now under Government legislation. Whether their leases prevent them from so doing I do not know.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Different leasing arrangements exist in the city of Adelaide. Taking up the matter raised by the Minister's colleagues opposite, in the booklet comment was made about the 106 complaints and 488 inspections. This referred to trading and working conditions, particularly in respect of payment for employees. Has the Minister a summary of what areas these complaints fell into, how many were found to be correct and what was the result of the 488 random inspections in terms of non-compliance with awards or conditions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will have a summary prepared for the honourable member and incorporate it in *Hansard*.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My third question relates to a matter that was raised previously. The Minister touched on it when responding to the question of general extension of retail trading hours. Certain furniture retailers have been to see the Minister. Have they presented the Minister with data to say to what extent their business has suffered because people have taken advantage of the 200 square metre rule? What stage have those negotiations or discussions reached?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Specialist furniture retailers have certainly been in to see me. Individual specialist furniture retailers have made very strong representations and opposed the position put by the Furniture Retailers Council. The Government is considering those representations. They have put their case together very well and done a great deal of work, including market surveys. They have in effect changed their previous position, which was that, rather than their opening themselves on Sunday, we should close down those stores that were selling similar products. They realise that the pattern of trading has changed, that consumers are demanding and voting with their dollars, particularly in relation to trading on Sunday. The Government is considering and will continue to consider their case, but I cannot put a timetable on it or give a date when a final decision will be made. I stress again that very strong representations have been made to the Government, by specialist furniture retailers who at present are not allowed to trade on Sunday, that that position be maintained. There is no consensus at all on shop trading hours; nor has there ever been, and my suspicion is that there will never be.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I refer to bread baking hours. In relation to the deregulation of bread baking in 1986-87, what effect has the Minister's opinion had on the industry? More importantly, what effect has it had on the price of bread?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The deregulation has not been in place for long enough (total deregulation started on 1 June) for any clear pattern to have emerged. It is clear that

since Saturday morning baking was allowed the major bakeries (members of the Bread Manufacturers Association) have taken advantage of it and have baked on Sunday mornings, mainly to supply the supermarkets. I have not heard any complaint from those bakeries that were deregulated or that exist in deregulated areas about having to meet competition from people who were, at that time, regulated against baking on Saturdays and Sundays. I can only assume that the bakeries on the metropolitan fringe have not suffered any adverse effects. If they have, they have certainly not advised me. It would be interesting to find out.

As regards the price of bread, I am not sure (except from what I read in the newspapers) of the situation—the Minister of Consumer Affairs would have more detailed information. It is a very competitive market, and people do shop around. I can remember that recently one of the retail chains was advertising standard sliced white loaves at 65c, which I think is the cheapest I have seen it for many years.

Because of the very fierce and ferocious competition in the retail area, any additional costs that have been incurred through the deregulation of hours have, in the main, been absorbed by the industry rather than passed on to the consumer. I do not know any more than what I read about it in the newspapers. It is not an area into which the Department of Labour puts a large amount of resources. I am sure that the Minister of Consumer Affairs would have a greater idea what has happened regarding prices in that area.

Mr INGERSON: About six weeks ago there was a disagreement between the operators of the *Troubridge*, the unions and the suppliers of petrol to Kangaroo Island, principally concerning its transportation and related safety measures. A committee was set up to investigate the problems, and it was reported in the press that it would report within a couple of weeks. What is the current position with that committee?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: This was an *ad hoc* committee established by me and comprised representatives of the Department of Labour, the Seamen's Union, the Merchant Service Guild and the oil companies. The committee has met very successfully on a couple of occasions, according to reports that I have received. The problem is a very real one and it has been recognised by that section of the oil industry that distributes petrol on Kangaroo Island.

The publicity prior to the establishment of the committee was unfortunate. The people on Kangaroo Island, without the full possession of the facts—not through any fault of their own, I hasten to add—saw it as some kind of attack on the islanders from the maritime unions, which was certainly not the case. When the facts were explained to them and they had a clear demonstration of the problem, they were completely supportive of the measures being taken to make the transport of petroleum safer. It was interesting to note that representatives of the media and the oil companies were present at the unloading on Kangaroo Island of the first shipload of petrol that was sent after the ban was lifted following the establishment of the committee. The tankers that were put on the *Troubridge* were leaking, and it was a very clear demonstration to everybody precisely what was the problem. It is being addressed by the oil companies and it will have a very successful outcome.

Mr INGERSON: When is the committee likely to report and some action taken so that everybody knows where they stand? There is no question about the safety issue; everybody supports the need to make sure that that is the case. When will the standards be set and when will everybody know what they must comply with?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The standards have been set. The Department of Labour sets the standards and enforces them, so there is no question of there not being standards. It is the practice of the oil companies and the particular type of equipment used to transport petroleum to Kangaroo Island that was less than satisfactory. Action was taken instantly by the oil companies, and my understanding is that the committee has achieved its purpose. Action has been taken and I do not expect any further problems.

Mr INGERSON: My next question relates to the regulation of gas supply, which appears on page 485 of the yellow book. Have tests by departmental officers revealed any inadequacies in the reticulation system or the quality of gas?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: What about?

Mr INGERSON: Have any tests by the department revealed any inadequacies?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr INGERSON: There are no concerns about the quality of gas?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: None whatsoever.

Mr INGERSON: I mention it because of the reference on page 485. On page 486, in relation to industrial conciliation and arbitration, there is a significant fall in administration expenses from \$383 000 to \$175 000. Could the Minister explain why that has occurred?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is the transfer of the cost of the *Industrial Gazette* to another line. Unfortunately, it does not represent savings of that magnitude.

Mr INGERSON: I thought that you might have become efficient.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We are very efficient, and I am sure that it was done for a very good purpose.

Mr DUGAN: I have a couple of questions that relate to the overall resources summary which is contained on page 478 of the Program Estimates and which is further elaborated on page 483, where the source of funds for the department is defined. The examination in which the Committee is involved concerns the appropriation of approximately \$11.6 million from Consolidated Account to the Department of Labour for the purposes set out in the program. However, I notice in the source of funds two matters on which I seek an explanation. The first concerns the recurrent payment of \$50.371 million from trust and deposit accounts. Can the Minister say what that is and where it comes from?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I refer that question to Mr Graham Billett, who is the Manager of Administration and Finance and the expert in all things financial.

Mr Billett: As the Minister said in his opening statement, the Program Estimates include other funding, and that deposit account involves mainly the contributions from workers compensation premiums, which are paid into a separate deposit account.

Mr DUGAN: From all Government departments?

Mr Billett: Yes, from all Government departments.

Mr DUGAN: On the other side of the ledger on page 483 is an amount of \$634 000, which is a payment of a capital nature. It is classified as interagency support service not paid for. What does that mean?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is quite an extensive list and includes motor vehicles, etc. I ask Mr Billett to expand upon it.

Mr Billett: That refers to the minor works program of the Department of Housing and Construction for buildings and offices.

Mr DUGAN: My third question goes back to the resources summary on page 478, where I notice that there has been a slight increase in the number of full-time equivalents in

the department from the 261 that were proposed for 1986-87, which actually fell over the period of the year to 252.8. This year it is proposed that the number will be 263.5 and that the allocation to the department from Consolidated Account will increase from \$10.3 million to \$11.6 million. Do I take it that the increase in the appropriation from Consolidated Account is to take account of the increased staff together with increases in salaries that are brought about as a result of the quarterly wage increases? Is that the major reason for the increase in the departmental allocation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, Madam Chair.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Page 479 of the Program Estimates and page 149 of the Estimates of Payments booklet state that full-time employment in the industrial conciliation and arbitration section is expected to decrease from 50 to 47 persons. Why has the total bill increased when the number of employees is expected to fall? Are delays being experienced in the Industrial Court and will these be exacerbated by the decrease of staff.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Are you talking about the Industrial Court or the court and commission?

Mr S.J. BAKER: The court and commission.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The decrease in staff is a minor adjustment which is made when vacancies occur. No Government policy exists to reduce resources to the Industrial Courts or commission. The Industrial Commission deals with section 31 cases of unfair dismissal and has a severe workload. Those cases are processed efficiently, preliminary discussions taking a couple of weeks and cases being heard within six or eight weeks.

As a result of the 4 per cent pay negotiations there will be an increase in the workload of the commission. Additional resources will need to be found, but at this stage the commission is coping with the current 4 per cent applications.

The bulk of the Industrial Court's work relates to workers compensation, delays being of the order of about 8½ months. That situation will improve. One judge is on leave and that has reduced significantly the available staffing for the court. The workers compensation jurisdiction will eventually fade away when cases that occurred prior to 30 September are dealt with. We believe it is not necessary to increase resources in this area at this stage—the lists are manageable and, whilst the delays are a little longer than we would like, they are not exorbitantly so. If the delay becomes significantly more than 8½ months temporary arrangements can be made to increase staffing levels of the court to make the lists more manageable, but we do not expect that to happen.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What elements of the industrial conciliation and arbitration section's operations will be included in the JIS?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will give the committee an up-to-date picture of the effect of the JIS on the Department. If that does not totally answer the honourable member's question I shall be happy to answer any supplementary questions. The JIS is high on the Government's list of priorities and that of the Department of Labour because of the benefits that will and are being achieved at the moment. The main benefits that will be achieved from the implementation of the JIS within the Department of Labour can best be described by referring to the components of the departments involved.

Award text applications: The major benefits will be a faster more complete and accurate response to inquiries on awards and a reduced need to manually maintain award text follows that access to the data is required. Information will be more timely, leading to a better more professional

industrial advisory service to the public. Other benefits include the ability to reduce the cost of recalculating wage rates following a national wage case, the ability to increase the number of labour rates sheets that are produced, and savings in regard to type-setting and printing charges from the Government Printer for the production of the *Government Gazette*.

Industrial regulation: The major benefits arise from the removal of support manual recording systems in each regional office and head office for licences and permits that the department issues. The Justice Information System will automate the clerical process of collation and preparing of expiry/renewal notices. Information regarding visits, inspections and orders placed on employers will be integrated into the system. This will provide an aggregated picture of an employer's involvement with the department and provide more effective information for the management of the department's resources. The system will also record and analyse work injury reports, allowing identification of organisations where the department should concentrate its visits.

Case administration and judgments: Benefits will accrue in the management of cases before the Industrial Court and the recording of judgments. I hope that overview of the effect of the JIS on the Department of Labour answers the honourable member's question.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister mentioned the large number of section 31 cases. Can he provide a summary of the number of cases dealt with, the number that were satisfactorily negotiated, those that flowed on to the Industrial Court, and those that were rejected by the commission in the last year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: A study is being conducted at present; when it is completed I will give the honourable member a copy.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Page 486 of the Program Estimates refers to the new two-tier wage fixation system. It states:

... a new set of wage guidelines will be seriously tested by unions and employers in the first 12 months or so of operation. This could well have implications for the workload of the Industrial Commission.

What steps can be taken to deal with that situation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If our worst fears are realised and the workload of the commission increases because of the last national wage decision, obviously the Government would have to consider making more resources available to the Industrial Commission by way of an additional Industrial Commissioner and support staff.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Again in relation to the Industrial Commission, are there any delays in hearing claims from dismissed workers under section 31 of the Act and, if so, what is the length of those delays?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The delays are not great. As I stated earlier, the waiting period for an initial hearing would be only two to three weeks. If it is necessary to go to arbitration, then most of the cases are cleared up in six or eight weeks. Whilst it is a very large workload for the commission, it performs those functions very efficiently. However, if the commission has a significant additional burden caused through the national wage case, the time delays relating to section 31 cases would become longer and that would be unacceptable to the Government. At the moment, that is certainly not the case and, hopefully, it will not become the case. At the moment we are crystal ball gazing. We cannot actually forecast the number of cases to go before the commission for the 4 per cent increase and how complex they will be, but the commission is coping

very well both with section 31 cases and applications for the 4 per cent wage increase.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: The new Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act will operate from 30 September. Could the Minister explain the commission's role in workers compensation cases upon the commencement of that Act? What sort of impact will that have on the commission?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Very little. I can give a fairly comprehensive response to that, but in essence it will be in the area of the Industrial Court and not in the commission. For some time discussions have been underway with the judges of the Industrial Court on the issue of the propriety or otherwise of their accepting appointments on the new tribunal. It has now been finally agreed that the President of the Industrial Court (Mr Justice Stanley) will act as President of the new tribunal, at least until the end of 1988, so that an assessment can be made over a reasonable time of the projected workload of the new tribunal. Nominations have already been made by employer and union groups in relation to the ordinary membership of the tribunal. These nominations are being assessed at the present time.

In addition, discussions are still being held in regard to the appointment of an Acting Deputy President of the tribunal, and those discussions should be finalised shortly thus allowing the tribunal to be formally appointed at or near the 30 September deadline. The first cases before the tribunal probably will not be lodged for at least one to two months after the commencement date of the new system but, in the meantime, considerable work needs to be done on the establishment of administrative procedures, etc. The Industrial Court as such will continue its role as a workers compensation court under the current Workers Compensation Act for approximately three years, albeit on a declining basis.

The reason why it will continue is due to two factors: first, the large number of cases presently awaiting hearing (approximately 3 000); and, secondly, the jurisdiction of the Industrial Court under the transitional provision of the new Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act to hear and determine any matters applying to injuries occurring up to and including 30 September 1987: in other words, injuries that take place between now and the operation of the new Act will almost inevitably finish up in the Industrial Court. The impact will be minor in relation to additional work, but it will be major at the end of approximately three years when the jurisdiction will disappear. Of course, those resources that are available now to the Government (in the form of judges in the Industrial Court) will be available for other work within the judicial system.

Mr INGERSON: Can the Minister advise the Committee in which cases during the year the Government has intervened in the commission?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot give that answer off hand, but I will certainly have a list prepared and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr INGERSON: Is the Minister aware of any complaints about bias on the part of commissioners, or the refusal by employers or unions to deal with particular commissioners?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not aware of any.

Mr INGERSON: There has been no refusal at all?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, not that I am aware of. I think that all our commissioners are held in the highest regard by all parties who use the commission.

Mr INGERSON: What funds are in the silicosis fund and has the Minister reconsidered the possibility of returning any surplus to the contributors?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: At the moment the fund contains \$4.87 million, which is invested in inscribed stock,

bankers' bills, deposits and debentures, and in 1986-87 there have been no claims. I have given only some preliminary thought to the future of the fund, but I have not arrived at any fixed view. The fund could be incorporated into the new Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation and it could pick up any ongoing liabilities, because it will be some time before we know how much of this fund will be used, but that certainly is not something upon which I have made a decision. The silicosis fund has not figured prominently or highly on my list of priorities over the past 12 months. It is something that will have to be considered, but obviously that will be done only in conjunction with and with the cooperation of the board members who control the silicosis fund.

Mr DUIGAN: In relation to program 4 and conditions of employment, in particular the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act, I notice on page 487 of the Program Estimates that, as of 30 June 1987, 17 174 workers were registered under the Long Service Leave (Building Industry) Act. Could the Minister tell me how many workers received long service leave payments from the long service leave fund in 1985-86 and in 1986-87 and what was the total amount paid?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1985-86, 406 workers received a benefit from the fund and that totalled \$1 619 552.35, to be precise. In 1986-87 there were two additional workers (408) and the total pay-out for those 408 workers was \$1 721 453.

Mr DUIGAN: What is the balance of the reserves left in the Long Service Leave fund and how is it invested? I notice on page 487 that it indicates an investment return of 14.25 per cent.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The balance of the fund as at 30 June 1986 was \$14.438 million. As at 30 June 1987 it had increased to \$16.174 million. The funds were invested in the following manner, with the balances as at 30 June 1986: cash held at the Treasury, \$1.248 million; bank guarantee bills, \$2.599 million; inscribed stock, \$4.4 million; debenture loans, \$3.891 million; certificate of deposit, \$500 000; and a fixed deposit of \$1.8 million. As at 30 June 1987, the balances were as follows: cash at Treasury, \$767 000; bank guarantee bills, \$4.149 million; inscribed stock, \$5.9 million; debenture loans, \$3.858 million; certificate of deposit, \$500 000; and a fixed deposit of \$1 million.

Mr DUIGAN: Also on page 487 the commentary at the end of the section on the major resource variations also refers to the building fund and mentions the increases in payments to workers being offset. However, the figures that the Minister gave in answer to the first question indicate that there does not appear to be a substantial increase in payments at all, if 406 workers got \$1.6 million and the next year 408 got \$1.7 million. That is pretty well line ball. Could the Minister indicate what the increase in payments to workers refers to on the last part of page 487?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can only respond by assuming that it is to do with longer periods of leave, but I will have that question examined in more detail and provide a report to the honourable member via *Hansard* by the appropriate date.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister will remember that I raised some Questions on Notice about the Government's intervention in the TCR case before the Industrial Commission. I asked why was not an economic assessment made of the implications of the changes proposed in that document. The response from the Minister was that they did not have any statistics on termination. Under what basis did the Minister decide to intervene if indeed he had no knowledge of what the impact would be; secondly, has he

since had the opportunity to look at the increased provisions under that Act which will apply to State awards which do not have those provisions contained therein; and, thirdly, has he received any adverse reaction from employers in relation to the information sharing provisions under that case?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Government intervened in that case because we supported its general thrust. We thought that the time was appropriate for the community to accept a greater responsibility to workers in these areas. We did not support entirely the Trades and Labor Council case but, in general terms, we did. We were successful to a great extent but, again, not totally. We were disappointed in some areas that the Industrial Commission did not agree with the Government's submission.

As regards the complaints from employers, I have no memory of any complaints from employers about the decision. The decision was a very sensible one, which will have little or no cost on industry, provided that it makes a sensible provision. Additional periods of notice have no cost if you give the additional period of notice.

Concerning the question of information sharing, all companies, if they are good companies and intend being in business for a while, will take their employees into their confidence as regards their business decisions. Whilst the Government's submission on that was not totally supported, certainly the commission made it clear that it was highly desirable for businesses to share as much information as possible with their employees. Lots of companies do this, and they are usually the more prosperous companies with the least industrial disputes and those that are more likely to be around for a long time. For businesses in 1987 to be frightened of their employees and not to want to give them information is very short sighted indeed. The good companies always have.

In summary, I do not think there is anything in the decision to add any significant cost to employers at all. Most of the costs can be avoided just by giving the appropriate period of notice. As regards the sharing of information, a maximum amount of information should be shared, whether or not it is a legal obligation.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My next question relates to the submarine project. Does the Minister support the concept of having only one union—this does not mean a closed shop—representing employees on the submarine construction site and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: With the present legislation, that is not possible. Unions do have award rights, and I see no reason to believe that unions will in any way give up those award rights. Certain classifications are allocated to certain unions, and that is the industrial relations framework in which the submarines will be built. However, if the ACTU and the Federal Government are successful, there will be a dramatic concentration of the present very fragmented trade union movement, and in the engineering area there may be a possibility of a single union or bodies under the one umbrella representing the various unions if they do not immediately amalgamate to become a single union. That is certainly something that I strongly support.

In my view, we have far too many unions in Australia, and that creates all kinds of problems, not the least of which at times is inferior service to union members. Where you have very small unions, they cannot possibly give the service to union members that the complexities of modern industrial life demand.

So, as far as I am concerned, the sooner there is a move towards very significant amalgamations, the better. It may well be that by the time the submarine building program is

in full swing that might be possible. However, certainly, under the present industrial legislation it is not possible to have a single union.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Do I take it from the Minister's response that, on the one hand, he supports the principle of having less fragmentation within the union movement and indeed one union covering an area while, on the other hand, he is not willing to do anything to push that proposition on an important project like the submarine project? Further, the Minister would well realise that some negotiations are being undertaken at the moment about who will represent whom on that site. The Minister is also aware that the Painters and Dockers Union want to have a place on the site, with a number of other unions. It is of some extreme concern that the site could become a very unharmonious one, unless the industrial relations area is sorted out before construction starts. Is the Minister saying that, although he really likes the idea, he will not have any discussions with the unions concerned to see if indeed an arrangement can be hammered out on site under which such proposition would be possible?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not quite sure what the honourable member wants me to do: the law is the law. Is the honourable member saying that I should suggest to the unions that they break the law? Of course not. This area is covered by Federal legislation, and it has been made clear by the Federal Minister that the Federal Government supports the amalgamation of unions. Relevant legislation will be introduced at some stage in the Federal Parliament to enable the easier amalgamation of unions. It is something that should have been done many, many years ago. It is one of the sad legacies that we have of missed opportunities during the prime ministership of Malcolm Fraser. However, I am sure that the situation will be corrected.

Whilst unions have legal rights to represent workers on the submarine site or on any other site, obviously, they will exercise those rights. They are perfectly free to do so. Unions do not have coverage of other classifications: if, for example, for some obscure reason one union indicated that it did not want to bother covering its members, there are no provisions for another union to undertake that coverage. The law does not provide for that. One cannot say, for example, that because the carpenters' union does not want to cover carpenters then the Waterside Workers union will cover them. The honourable member ought to be aware that that is not possible.

In regard to what I can do to bring about amalgamations, I have certainly made perfectly clear to the Federal Minister that I support him very strongly in his attempts to have the Federal legislation changed to enable the unions to amalgamate—and the sooner the better. So, as regard the industrial relations on the submarine site, whether it involves one or more unions, certainly the Government will do anything it can to assist that process. But the important thing is that the unions which are represented on that site and which have the award coverage for workers on that site should get together with the builders of the submarines, thrash out an agreement prior to the job starting and stick to that agreement. I have no reason to believe that that will not be done. In fact, I have every reason to believe that it will be done, and that is how the industrial relations on site will go ahead. It is pretty standard; there is nothing novel in it.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I would have thought that if the Minister was really interested in ensuring that the site was a harmonious one he would have put in place some measure to avoid demarcation disputes and jostling or jockeying for positions as far as the representation of members was concerned. It may well be that in relation to this project the

Minister should look at the proposition of one sort of representation on site as far as industrial matters are concerned. This may well be an Australian first.

Under those conditions one would expect that the largest union would take over the industrial negotiating power for the other unions on site. This would avoid the ludicrous situation, which could well develop and which has occurred on other shipping sites here and interstate, where energies and resources are tied up with people determining who will lift the toolbox, who is going to carry the toolbox and who will actually do the work. I would have thought that this was a marvellous opportunity for the Minister to show a little leadership and say, 'Right, we know there are some deficiencies in these areas and we do not want the site to deteriorate with people taking differing stances on which parts of the work should belong to the various unions.' That is the last thing we want. The Minister has given me no confidence that the submarine project will involve an industrially harmonious site.

The CHAIRPERSON: I ask the member for Mitcham to come to his question, please.

Mr S.J. BAKER: That was just a statement—

The CHAIRPERSON: The member for Gilles.

Mr S.J. BAKER:—which is quite allowable, under the Standing Orders, of course.

The CHAIRPERSON: The member could have made a statement at the opening.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I can make a statement at any stage of the proceedings.

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! I call the Minister.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In response to that statement, I do not want to go through the whole matter again, as I thought I had covered it very clearly twice. However, I will just very briefly summarise the matter. We have industrial law in this country which, other than what is strictly within State boundaries, is under the control of the Federal Government. The Federal Government recognises the problem that the member for Mitcham has outlined. It is not a new problem. The member for Mitcham is not the first person to say, 'Hey, there is a problem here.' We all know that there is a problem. The essential thing concerns what is to be done about the problem. I have outlined what the Federal Government is doing about it. I am not the Federal Minister; this is not the Federal Parliament, and so my scope for changing Federal legislation is, to say the least, limited. However, I am confident that the Federal Government will change the legislation to enable amalgamations to take place more easily than is the case at the moment. I strongly support that, but my ability to do anything about it is severely limited, as I am a State Minister in a State Parliament.

In regard to the matter of relations on site, I have stated previously that the key to good industrial relations in any workplace, whether it is the submarine site or any other site, is for the employees and the employers to negotiate an agreement for that site and to stick to that agreement. By and large, those agreements include a dispute settling procedure—because disputes still arise—which ought to be followed and which, overwhelmingly, is followed. That is why we have such a good industrial record.

I have no reason to believe that the submarine site will be other than a site of complete industrial harmony—none whatsoever. The goodwill from the employees and from the employers, as shown by similar operations in this area conducted by Eglo Engineering, gives me every reason for optimism, if not confidence.

Mr INGERSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: You do not know—stick to dispensing drugs!

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: I refer to page 487 of the Program Estimates and to the Long Service Leave Building Industry Board. What is the current composition of the board and what are its members paid in fees?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The composition of the board in 1986-87 was Mr B. Cole, Chairman, with a fee of \$5 346 per annum; Mr L. T. McEntee, with a fee of \$1 355; Mr R.G. Owens with a fee of \$1 355; Mr S.R. Kirkwood, with a fee of \$1 355; and Mr A. Bush with a fee of \$1 355. The fees are paid out of the fund itself—it is not a charge on the taxpayer.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: What was the contribution rate paid by employers to the Long Service Leave Building Industry Fund last year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1985-86 (prior to 1 May 1986) it was 2 per cent of the payroll. After 1 May 1986 it was reduced to 1.5 per cent of the payroll, the reason being that the funds were accumulating at a rate that would exceed that required to pay the benefits, so employers were given a reduction. In 1986-87 it was at the lower rate of 1.5 per cent and that is still giving sufficient return to enable the fund to meet its obligations in the future. It has been an enormously successful operation. It is one of the great successes of an earlier Labor Government.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Despite all political hassles that occurred at the time, it has been a success. How many inspectors have been appointed under the Act and how many inspections were made over the last two years, in 1985-86 and in 1986-87?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In 1985-86 only two inspectors were appointed. In 1986-87 five inspectors were appointed, three of whom have only been operating since May-June 1987. A total of five now includes a senior inspector coordinating the workload of the other inspectors. The number of inspections that these officers carried out from 1 December 1985 to 30 June 1986 was 222. From 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1987 there was a significant increase to a total of 567 inspections. Various inspectors were engaged at the request of the board and there is still something of a problem in the area of companies not fulfilling their obligations and paying into the Long Service Leave Building Industry Act Fund, but the additional inspectors will certainly tidy up the area a great deal and ensure that these companies are taking up their legal obligations and that the burden of long service leave does not fall on the companies that are doing the right thing. It is a pity that we need to have inspectors in this area as one would think that people would obey the law, but it is quite clear that a number of unscrupulous operators do not do that, hence the necessity for such inspectors.

Mr INGERSON: Why does it take 13 people to run the fund—an increase of two more than last year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have just pointed out that it required two more inspectors in the area because of the unscrupulous behaviour of some building industry employers who are not fulfilling their legal obligations. It was regrettable that we had to increase the inspectorate in the area but the board requested that, and I therefore did so.

Mr INGERSON: What is the breakdown of the 1 400 complaints? Is it possible for the Minister to advise how many were for non-compliance with the awards, how many were legitimate, how many were prosecuted, what was the outcome and also what was the outcome of any random inspections?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will attempt to get that information for the honourable member. I do not have that type

of breakdown. I caution that, if the information is not in a readily available form, as there were 1 404, I do not want to turn up 1 404 files to find the information—it would be a tremendous burden on the department. We will do the best we can in response to the honourable member's question. I do not believe that the honourable member would think the question so important that we should have an army of people going through hundreds of files and compiling a list.

Mr S.J. BAKER: It should be on computer now.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It will be eventually, and then we will be able to press a button and give the member for Bragg all the information he wants.

Mr INGERSON: If the answer is not satisfactory we will find another question to ask.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Sure, and I will probably find another way of pointing out the resources that would be wasted in chasing it up. It will soon be on computer and that kind of information will be readily available at a very low cost to the Government.

Mr INGERSON: I now refer to worker rehabilitation. Have statistics been kept on the operation of the Workers Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and, if so, what has been the average time off for employees handled by the committee? What delays have been experienced in referring workers to an accredited rehabilitation program? Did any worker refuse to participate?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am advised that it is possible to get all that information and I will certainly try to do so. One of the benefits of the new Workers Compensation Corporation is that those kind of statistics will be much more readily available. I will have the question examined and get as much information as we have available to the honourable member.

Mr DUIGAN: My questions relate to program 5, which is dealt with on page 488 of the Program Estimates. Under the 1987-88 specific targets, it indicates that the Noise Control Section is to be abolished. What work did that section do and will it be transferred to any other section of Government operations?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Noise Control Section provided a consultancy service to both public and private sectors on the problems of noise and noise control. This service will continue to be available on payment from a number of private noise consultants in South Australia. In other words, the Government believes that it is no longer necessary for it to supply this service. A number of private firms in the field can handle it just as well as the Government can. It seemed to me to be unnecessary duplication without any great social benefit. It is a very important matter but it is not one that we feel needs a Government presence.

Mr DUIGAN: My second question also relates to the program descriptions on page 488 and from referring to *Hansard* of previous years it is often a question that is asked by my colleague the member for Florey who, I understand, may join the Committee this afternoon. In case he does not, I ask the Minister: how many fatal accidents occurred on industrial premises or construction sites during 1986-87?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Labour was informed of 12 fatal accidents. However, four of those were not required to be notified to the department because they were not industrial accidents. The majority of those investigated by inspectors of industrial safety occurred through unsafe work practices and others through unsafe work conditions. For the information of the Committee, I will give

brief descriptions of those fatal accidents that the department investigated.

1. A worker standing by a truck received fatal injuries when parts of a load of timber fell on him.

2. A qualified plumber received fatal injuries when the unshored sides of a trench collapsed on him.

3. A logger received fatal injuries when a tree that he had cut and left standing fell on him.

4. A worker received fatal injuries when a concrete sleeper mould that was being hoisted swung and crushed him whilst he was operating the hoist.

5. A worker received fatal burns while burning out old paint pots.

6. A construction worker received fatal injuries when he was struck by a road compacting roller and fell approximately five metres.

7. A maintenance electrician received fatal injuries when a ladder on which he was standing slipped and fell.

8. A tradesman received fatal injuries when his loose clothing became caught in revolving machinery.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Has the Minister received any feedback on the introduction of the new WorkCover scheme? I have a particular concern that a large body of smaller employers have not been contacted by the corporation or SGIC in this regard. Approximately 5 per cent of employers are estimated not to have received any form of notification and amongst that group are a number who would not be aware of their special responsibilities in this area. If that is the case, what special action will be taken so that they are brought on stream by 30 September?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no line for WorkCover because no public funds are involved; it is entirely industry funds. I do not have any specific responsibility for those funds so I can only assume that, at some stage, whether it is this particular Estimates Committee or the next one, the Chair will not permit questions on a matter that is not subject to any appropriation. However, I am certainly happy, Madam Chair, with your concurrence, to respond to the member for Mitcham on this occasion.

The Workers Rehabilitation Corporation has taken extensive steps to ensure that all employers in South Australia are made aware of their obligations through direct contact, through the availability of registration forms at post offices and through extensive advertising in the press. Whilst it is possible that some employers will have missed the advertising, the direct contact or have not picked up forms from the post office, the number will be very few and it will very quickly become apparent to them that they do not have any workers compensation cover. As 30 September approaches, they will be advised by their insurance companies that they will not be covered after that date. Employers have taken out policies and paid premiums on them until 30 September. I do not consider this to be a major problem. It will require some tidying up by the corporation and I have every confidence in its ability to do so. The very few that will have missed out by 30 September will be quickly incorporated into the system and, by next year, I would be surprised if there is an employer in South Australia who would not be aware of his obligations in this area.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Has the Minister received any feedback on the operations of the WorkCover hot line and has he received similar complaints to me that there have been a number of difficulties with the hot line, particularly with the training of the people operating the line who have been unable to answer questions put to them by employers? I have received a large number of telephone calls from employers who have said that, when trying to get infor-

mation on a whole range of questions relating to their specific circumstances (how they count employees; how they will be treated; and what likely premium levels they will be subject to), no answers have been forthcoming. Two callers complained that a temporary relieving agent was operating the line and because nobody was available to answer their queries at that time they were told to call back later. Has the Minister received any feedback or has he sought any feedback on this operation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My third question relates to the operation of work cover. I refer to the report of the Australian Chamber of Manufactures on the operation of the Victorian scheme. Some of the items on that list do not have any relevance to the South Australian scheme because the legislation is different, but concern is held that many of the problems that have been experienced in Victoria will be repeated in South Australia. I refer particularly to lack of surveillance: there does not seem to be any intention to follow up on strange claims.

Another question relates to the amount of resources that will be made available. Significant delays have been experienced in Victoria of periods up to five months occurring after an accident before rehabilitation services have been commenced. We have not received any information in relation to that aspect at this stage. Employers are required to pay out on claims whether they are legitimate or not and worry about recouping the money somewhere down the track. Objections have been made to the fact that the commission has failed to repay costs incurred on behalf of the commission for periods of from six to nine months. Complaints have also been made about a lack of direction in the keeping of records, the actual requirement for those records and the cost flow-ons which have resulted from the lack of direction from the Victorian agency. In each of those areas there is potential for industry to bear the significant cost, a situation which we would hope to avoid. Has the Minister analysed that report and held discussions with the corporation to ensure that those areas are adequately covered as at 30 September when the scheme comes into operation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will not comment on the Victorian legislation. I am not even sure that I am in order commenting on our own work cover situation as there is no appropriation for work cover. However, on this occasion I will comment on our situation but not on the Victorian legislation and/or experience. As I stated when the legislation was passed by Parliament, we have had the benefit of examining the Victorian experience and learning some lessons from that, and our legislation, whilst modelled substantially on the Victorian work cover system, is different in some very important areas. It is expected that this will avoid some of the problems that have been experienced in Victoria. One of the problems in Victoria was that significant numbers of private insurance companies have been allowed to stay in the field. That has proved to be disastrous and the number of insurance companies that can be used has been reduced. Our system uses one insurance company—the SGIC. It is hoped that will enable the corporation to retain greater control over claims handling procedures.

The system does not come into operation until 30 September. It will take some time for any problems in the legislation to become apparent, but I can assure the Committee that as soon as they do legislation will be presented to Parliament to rectify them, if necessary. As I have stated in the House previously, I will be surprised if we do not amend the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act as often as we did the previous Act, which seemed to be

every Parliament. It is an evolving process, as is the case with industrial and conciliation legislation, the Local Government Act or any other significant Act. I do not see anything significant in saying that at some stage the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act will be amended.

The Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation does not involve Government funding. The board consists of 14 people, 12 of whom are appointed from industry—six from unions and six from employers. It is their corporation. If any problems exist with the corporation there is enough expertise on that board to advise me that changes to the legislation are needed. There are six employer representatives on the board and if the employers are complaining to the member for Mitcham about the scheme, which has not yet been introduced, they ought to complain to their representatives on the board. Prominent people from principal employer organisations are on the board and none of those representatives has complained to me about the corporation. In fact, quite the reverse—all the employers to whom I have spoken who are represented on the corporation board (and some who are not) have expressed only satisfaction with the implementation of the legislation. I congratulate them because it is they who are doing it. It is not the Government who is doing it; it is the employers and the employees. The Government would give every consideration to any suggestions made to alter the scheme by such an august body as the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation.

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

Mr S.J. BAKER: In the *Sunday Mail* of 21 June 1987 there was a report that the Minister was examining superannuation flow-ons from the national wage to State departments. The Minister would understand that some of those flow-ons have been negotiated in New South Wales; I am not sure which other States have addressed the question of the flow-on of that 3 per cent in the superannuation area. What is the current status of that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Agreement has not been reached. An offer has been made to the Trades and Labor Council; negotiations around that offer are continuing.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I understand that in the absence of an agreed position there will be a flow-on of 1½ per cent from 1 January and a further flow-on of 1½ per cent from 1 July 1988. Does the Minister intend to let that non-negotiated position be his stance or will he work towards an agreement before the end of this year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We made an offer to the Trades and Labor Council and we are having some discussions with the Trades and Labor Council about that offer so obviously we prefer a negotiated position rather than have the issue arbitrated in the terms that the honourable member outlined.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What was that offer?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will think about the question: it was a confidential offer put to the Trades and Labor Council, but it has no State secrets in it.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I would have thought that since State funds and taxpayers money were involved the Minister would be forthcoming to the House as to exactly what the Government intended and that it would not be a behind-closed doors arrangement. I would have thought that the taxpayers had a right to know what the Government intended to offer.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Certainly, when an agreement has been reached the honourable member will be advised. I see nothing wrong with conducting negotiations with any employees with a degree of confidentiality until a position

has been arrived at, but I will look at it: it is not a huge issue.

Mr S.J. BAKER: At this stage we have not seen the regulations that are necessary to bring the new occupational health and safety legislation into operation. There has been some suggestion that the commission will be unable to operate as at 30 September. Will the Minister clarify his intentions in this regard?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will be guided very much by the commission in this area. If sufficient of the regulations are not available to proclaim the Act completely I will look at the options: proclamation or deferring it a few weeks until they are ready. I will be guided by the commission at its next meeting.

Mr DUGAN: At page 492, the Program Estimates, in dealing with labour policies not elsewhere classified, states that the South Australian Government has agreed to a number of significant international labour conventions. Can the Minister provide a list of those agreements, and what are the consequences of the South Australian Government's agreeing to those conventions, or is the most significant aspect the Australian Government's agreeing to them?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Certainly, the South Australian Government cannot of itself ratify ILO conventions, but we signify agreement or otherwise to the Federal Government. This financial year we have done so to three ILO conventions: convention 151, 'Labour relations in the Public Service'; convention 156, 'Equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women workers', that is, workers with family responsibilities—we did that on 19 June; and convention 159, 'Vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons', on 13 March this year.

Since July agreement has been given to ratify convention 152, 'Occupational safety and practice', as regards dock work. A number of conventions are close to agreement and I am waiting further advice on them from the Crown Solicitor: they are convention 133, 'Accommodation of crews'; convention 155, 'Safety and health in the working environment', and convention 162, 'Asbestos'.

The State Government agrees to the ratification of ILO conventions only when to all intents and purposes we comply with those conventions now. Because we have ratified the conventions does not mean there will be any change in those areas. We have agreed to the ratification of them because, as I have stated, we comply with them and see no reason why the State and the Australian Governments should not agree to the ratification.

Mr DUGAN: I cannot find a program to which to allocate the next question: probably this one called 'Labour policy development' may be the most appropriate place to raise it. I notice in the Financial Statement of the Premier and Treasurer on pages 107-9, where is indicated the Commonwealth specific purpose programs that were made available to the States, there are no Commonwealth specific purpose programs or payments in the labour area. That led me to think about the degree of cooperation that exists between the various State Governments and the Commonwealth in terms of ensuring uniformity of workplace conditions and practices. What mechanisms are pursued by the Minister or the department in ensuring both cooperation and uniformity between the States in similar types of areas that are dealt with?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There are very extensive contacts between the Commonwealth and the States in an attempt to get common policy where that is possible and cooperation amongst the States and the Federal Government on various programs. Various meetings are held several times a year: Department of Labour and Minister of

Labour conferences. A public sector wages and salary and conditions meeting is also held once or twice a year, or more as required. We have very extensive contacts with the Commonwealth and the other States to get this common sense of purpose throughout the Commonwealth.

Mr INGERSON: Why is the employment in the lifts section being maintained when legislation earlier this year reduced the need for regular inspections?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The legislation that was passed earlier this year did not remove altogether the requirement for inspections. With the proliferation of high buildings (which obviously have lifts in them), we were getting well behind in the inspection of these lifts and were not meeting our legislative obligations. The legislation required less frequent inspections, so that now there is no huge backlog of inspections as there was before. Our inspectors are doing the same amount of work but, instead of inspecting an individual lift, hopefully annually as we are supposed to do, that now occurs every two years. So, they are still doing exactly the same work.

Mr INGERSON: The estimates mention a sum of \$75 000 being given to the United Trades and Labor Council for safety training. How is that likely to be spent, or is there any tie in relation to the way that that should be spent?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It will be spent on assisting the training of occupational, health and safety representatives. As the honourable member would know, when the new legislation comes into force very significant obligations will be placed on employers and employees, particularly employee safety representatives. It is in the interest of industry to ensure that those safety representatives have a certain level of training to enable them to understand the Act so that they know what their powers are and, equally importantly, their responsibilities.

Many thousands of safety representatives will be required, and the most cost effective way of training them is to assist (not pay the total cost) the UTLC in running courses. I think that the Trade Union Training Authority also is running courses. Initially, it will be necessary to train thousands, if not tens of thousands, of safety representatives, but that will taper off. It is the initial flush, as it were, of people coming into the system. I do not see it continuing on the initial scale. From memory, I think in Victoria initially, and for a short period, they employed 35 trainers to train the first groups, so there was a significant pool of people on whom to draw who had some training in their rights and responsibilities.

Mr INGERSON: The National Safety Council is now included under health. Is the Minister aware of whether there has been any change in funding as it relates to the National Safety Council?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There has been a reduction from \$100 000 to \$80 000 in assistance to the National Safety Council.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: In relation to support services, on page 494 of the Program Estimates, under 'Specific targets/objectives', an item refers to the introduction of the new AUSTPAY payroll system. I think that it is a computerised form of non cash pay. I ask this question, because I recall that my successor, as Minister, set in train a procedure whereby certain Government departments received a form of non cash pay. I think in my wisdom, and due to circumstances prevailing at the time where people, particularly blue collar workers, for reasons best known to them preferred the old form of pay system, I reversed that decision. What is the new AUSTPAY payroll system, and does it apply only to the Minister's Department of Labour, or does it apply to other Government departments?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The AUSTPAY system is not necessarily a non cash system: it is a system comprising computerised payslip information, etc. which system is being introduced gradually throughout the Government sector. I do not know what the percentage is, but I think that most departments are now on AUSTPAY. In some cases it is possible to negotiate with the unions, coupled with AUSTPAY, a non cash system. If the employees demand cash, then they are entitled to have it. However, in various areas it has been negotiated, and increasingly so, as part of the 4 per cent negotiations that non cash pays be introduced, but that is a separate issue from AUSTPAY. The AUSTPAY is merely a computerised way of detailing employees' entitlements rather than having the handwritten or typewritten payslips, with the very laborious computing. It is more streamlined, but it is a separate issue from non cash pays.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: As a supplementary question, is it run by the Government and not by a private company?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, it is entirely run by the Government Computing Centre.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister would be aware of the model health and safety provisions put forward by the United Trades and Labor Council. Those model provisions run counter to the spirit of the Act as it was passed by this Parliament, and some concerns are being generated in specific areas, for example, the requirement by the UTLC that safety representatives only be allowed to attend UTLC or TUTA run safety courses. There is another provision which requires joint union management teams. One would presume that only this area is concerned, but it is left open. What interface has the Minister had with the UTLC to move against these model UTLC provisions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Apart from the occasional casual conversation, very little. The UTLC has a policy on lots of things which may or may not coincide with Government policy or legislation. We recognise the legislation that we have passed and that is what we go by.

It may well be that the UTLC position on this is in advance of that legislation, and certainly I would be open to any suggestion that seems sensible in advance of the legislation and perhaps even incorporate it into the legislation. However, no demand has been made by the Trades and Labor Council that I abide by its code, and we certainly would not abide by anything other than the legislation unless we felt that any particular item had merit.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In principle, I could say from that response that you would be opposed to the requirement that safety representatives be pulled only from the union movement, and I would assume also that you would be opposed to any move by the United Trades and Labor Council to insist that all safety representatives go through safety courses run by the UTLC or TUTA, given that those two areas were specifically addressed in the legislation.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Regarding the first question, I am certainly not opposed to the Trades and Labor Council's notion that all safety representatives ought to come from the union movement. In fact, that was in the legislation introduced into this Parliament, but the Parliament thought otherwise.

Mr S.J. BAKER: It was not the legislation that was passed by this Parliament.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is what I said. I am certainly very strongly in support of that and, despite the legislation, I would recommend to all employers that, if they want this legislation to work in the most effective way, which is in their interests as well as the interests of the employees, they ought to cooperate with the union by ensur-

ing that safety representatives do come from the union movement. However, there is no legislative requirement—

Mr S.J. BAKER interjecting:

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! The member is not entitled to interject. You have an opportunity to ask a further question when the Minister has finished.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I stand corrected.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: However, there is no legislative requirement for that to take place, but it seems to me to be commonsense. As regards occupational health and safety representatives, I strongly approve of the trade union movement training them. Again, from a practical point of view, if the employer is to have the complete cooperation of the employees and the trade union movement in implementing the legislation and reaping the benefits of it, it is to the advantage of employers to have the safety representatives trained by the trade union movement. I point out that much training is to be done by employers of employers. I am not quite sure how many employers there are in this State, but there would be tens of thousands of them, and there is a great deal of work to be done there.

The employer organisations ought to concentrate on advising their members as to their obligations and taking it right down to the people who are in supervisory positions, on the shop floor. When all that has been done, the question whether there should be some joint training facility can be addressed. That will not occur, in my view, for many years: it will be many years before all the employers are aware of all their rights and obligations under the Act, just as it will be for all trade union safety representatives.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Thank you for that response. I would like then for you to clarify to the Committee whether or not you believe that safety representatives should be democratically elected, because under the UTLC provisions, there is no provision for democratic election, whereas Parliament made it quite clear at the time it passed the legislation that it was contingent upon safety representatives being those people who had the confidence of the work groups from which they were selected. Can the Minister say whether he believes that the UTLC insistence is right or whether he believes in democratic elections?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I repeat what I said: I strongly believe that workers safety representatives ought to come from the trade union movement. There are very good practical reasons why employers should insist on that happening. I have outlined those reasons. Basically, it is one of cooperation. However, as I stated very clearly, there is no legal obligation for that to occur. If safety representatives are elected in accordance with the Act, obviously that is a perfectly proper thing to do. I made that quite clear the first time that the honourable member asked the question.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I do not think you really did answer the question, with due respect, Minister, but I will go on to the other area. I am sure you are aware of the problems that are being created with the refusal, if you like, to allow employer groups to run safety courses for employees. A deal of animosity is being created between the groups on the training of safety representatives. Whilst employers do admit that there are some very good aspects to the UTLC run courses, there have been some reservations about certain segments of those courses, and this has caused problems where there have been previously good working relationships. As I understand the situation, certain statements have been made between the two groups, talking about not allowing the employers or, indeed, any other professional body to train safety representatives. Indeed, there is some suggestion that the UTLC and its member unions will somehow ban or take action against those people who are trained in

ways other than through the union movement. I certainly do not think that that was envisaged under the Act.

What was envisaged under the Act was that the most professional training available should be given to those people who represented the work groups. If the best professional training available—and we must still have a commission to assess this—has to come from a private enterprise group, from the UTLC or from an employer group, then so be it. However, I understand that some problems are being generated in that area. What is the Minister's attitude to this?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think the honourable member is overstating the problems and overstating this as an issue of contention. The Trades and Labor Council has a very fixed view on this, and it is not represented before the Committee to explain its view; nor am I here to explain that view for it. I do not have the responsibility for the Trades and Labor Council, but it is entitled to a point of view, as are the employers. I am saying two things from a very practical point of view: if employers want total cooperation in operating this legislation in their workplace, it is in their interests to be aware of the Trades and Labor Council policy. If they do not, that is up to them. However, I think they ought to make themselves aware of this and the reasons for it. I point out again that I would have thought that the employers had enough of their own membership who required information and training in this area for their hands to be full with training for a long time to come.

The knowledge of some tens of thousands of employers in this State is very deficient in relation to their rights and obligations, and there is an obligation on employer bodies to remedy that deficiency. When they have done that, I think the issue of joint training facilities will be a real one. At the moment, and for a few years to come, I do not see it as being a real issue at all.

Mr DUGAN: My first question relates to Program 5, which deals with the Lifts and Cranes Act. I ask this question on behalf of the member for Hayward, who is interested to know whether the department keeps any statistics on accidents and/or reported accidents involving escalators and lifts, particularly in major shopping centres. If so, can such a list be made available?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The department does keep a record of those kinds of accidents, and I will certainly have the information contained in those records made available through the normal process.

Mr DUGAN: I now refer to Program 8, which deals with equal opportunity for women. This is referred to in the Program Estimates at page 491 and, in relation to outworkers, under the heading 'Issues/trends', the following statement is made:

The position of outworkers, their conditions of work and possible exploitation continues to pose problems.

Some comments are then made about legislation. Further, under the '1987-88 specific targets/objectives' heading the following statement is made:

Legislative reform and complementary education campaign to be implemented in 1987-88 aimed at securing appropriate wages and working conditions for outworkers.

Will the Minister outline the nature of both the legislative reforms that he intends to introduce into Parliament and the education campaign that will be implemented during the year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I thank the honourable member for the question. The matter of outworkers is one that is a problem for us. It is certainly a huge problem in the eastern States, and I am concerned that it could become an even bigger problem than it is at present in South Australia. A

great deal of work has been done on this matter, particularly by the Women's Adviser to the Department of Labour. The unit within the department dealing with these matters has over the past 12 months done a considerable amount of work on the problem and on possible solutions to the problem. I invite Ms Beverley Good, who is the Women's Adviser to the Department of Labour to respond more fully to the question asked by the honourable member.

Ms Good: First, I draw attention to Cabinet's approval, given on 10 August this year, to the recommendation to ask Parliamentary Counsel to draft amendments to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act to the effect that outworkers will be deemed to be employees. This will complement the provisions that are already provided in the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act and the Workers Compensation Act. Thus, outworkers will then have parity with other workers and they will have access to award coverage. Treasury has approved a sum of \$20 000 for the Department of Labour to conduct a publicity campaign to complement the anticipated legislative changes. Legislative change must be publicised in the workplace, with both employees and employers being informed. It is important to propagate such information and I think the best way to do it is by means of a publicity education campaign. Certainly, departmental personnel and I will be working very closely with the UTLC, the Clothing and Allied Trades Union, employers and other relevant organisations in the development of this campaign, in an effort to see that the information is disseminated across the State.

Its main purpose will be to inform employers and outworkers about the new legislation. The main avenues of communication will be through ethnic media, the trade union movement, employers, ethnic community leaders, community places where English lessons are conducted in particular, as well as community radio and talkback programs. This will probably mirror in some respects the work that has been done in New South Wales and Victoria. Those States have run large campaigns because of the problem that exists, a matter to which the Minister has already alluded. We intend to design a pamphlet, which will propagate the message to people. This will involve particularly the five main languages. Outworkers who tend to be disfranchised in the workplace are usually under-educated and have poor language skills, and often they do not realise from where to obtain information. Basically, the information will be available from the Department of Labour as well as other places. I think that covers what we intend to do in this area once the legislation has been changed.

Mr DUIGAN: Is it possible for the Committee to be given some idea of how many people are classified as outworkers or the number of people who are working in occupations, or in one way or another, who will be affected by the proposed legislative changes?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The problem is that we cannot quantify that. The member for Gilles would have wrestled with this problem for most of his working life. It is very much a hidden problem; it is an insidious problem which involves gross discrimination, mainly against women and, in a number of cases, migrant women who, for a variety of reasons, but perhaps mainly due to bringing up a family, are not able to enter the work force in the way that most people do. Because of a lack of protection for them, they are subjected to gross exploitation and on occasion they have little or no means of remedy. Also, in a commercial sense, it is very unfair to those companies in the same sphere of manufacturing which do pay the award rates, which do have workers compensation cover and which do abide by the relevant health and safety legislation. Such

companies are penalised by the operation of other companies that use outworkers.

From time to time we see television programs—and I applaud the producers of those programs—showing the exploitation of people, and in many cases young people, in areas of employment such as packing or minor manufacturing, where often the amount of money that people get for this outwork is quite dreadful. I understand that it is not all outwork, that some of it is done on a reasonably well remunerated basis, in which case there would be no problems with the employers concerned or the outworkers who work on that basis. It is only those employers who exploit the lack of regulation in this area who would have any objection at all to the proposed legislation.

Mr DUIGAN: My question is not related to a program that I can see, but it is classified in the Program Estimates as Government insurance services and appears on page 493. It has a number of references to workers compensation claims. I refer to the heading '1986-87 targets' which contains a reference to a working party established involving the Department of Labour and the Under Treasurer in an attempt to develop a comprehensive package of financial incentives to departments to improve their workers compensation experience. In view of the increased costs for 1987-88 outlined elsewhere in the Program Estimates, will the Minister provide the Committee with further information on how this working party proposal to provide incentives for departments will operate in such a way as to reduce the burden to departments of their premium payments?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have taken a number of initiatives. The first one is to recognise the size of the problem, and it is a large problem in Government departments. If something is not done about it it will become an increasing burden on Government departments and ultimately on the taxpayer. There are some problems in the area, such as the lack of easily accessible records to ascertain the scale of the problem. Currently it is all done manually and we have many thousands of claims in the public sector. If they are being handled manually we will not get the amount of detail we need to pinpoint problems and target the programs to that. We have invested in a computer program called 'fig tree'. I am not sure of the relevance of the name, but we have invested in that computer program which will give us the information we need to be able to target our programs much better. Prevention is the key to workers compensation costs.

The new occupational health and safety legislation and the new emphasis being placed on occupational health and safety in the public and private sectors is such that we expect to have a significant impact on the number of injuries. Once a worker is injured and we get to the workers compensation side of it, we believe that the new workers compensation structure will make it less attractive for people to be ill for as long as possible. Unfortunately, in the previous workers compensation system, there was a positive financial incentive to be as ill as possible for as long as possible. I do not in any way suggest that it was through fraud, but the system was so constructed that it was inevitably the outcome of it.

We believe that the new system with its pension scheme rather than a lump sum scheme and with its immediate acceptance of liability by the workers compensation corporation, the private sector and us (the self-insurers) in the public sector, will also make significant inroads. We have engaged, as a pilot project in the Department of Marine and Harbors, a risk management consultant who has implemented programs in that department that are already showing considerable savings in workers compensation premiums

required by that department. It is likely that we will extend that program to a number of other Government departments and gradually build up the profile of how good is the company in its risk management.

Certainly the initial program management in the Department of Marine and Harbors has shown a great deal of promise and it has only been going for seven months. Already the Department of Marine and Harbors has asked for a reduced demand in premiums for the coming financial year, based on the results of the risk management program. It has shown startling results. However, one swallow does not make a summer and the program will have to be tested in a number of departments to ascertain how good it is. It certainly shows a great deal of promise.

I also point out that South Australia, as well as most other States, has a very good workers compensation scheme. Inevitably, there will be a significant cost for workers compensation. We ought not to apologise for that as we have good workers compensation legislation, but that is not to say that we should not minimise the social damage, personal injury and financial damage to individuals and to the State as far as possible, but it would be unrealistic to assume that workers compensation will not always be a significant financial cost to the public sector as it is to the private sector. Everything we can do to minimise it we will do, but at the end of that process we will still have a cost for workers compensation.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Following on from my previous questions about the quality of training available for safety representatives, why did not the Minister implement a plan that would involve a neutral organisation such as the National Safety Council (and I note that he has shifted the organisation sideways in terms of funding and reduced it), which would have involved both unions and employers participating in a joint program rather than having in-house training.

Some of the difficulties we have had in employee relationships and which still exist today could be exacerbated by that process. We are not after occupational safety procedures to suit employers or employees; we are after procedures that would improve safety in the workplace. I would have thought that the best way of achieving that is by cooperative effort rather than giving one or the other the prime responsibility in this area. Why was not this initiative pursued, as I would have thought that would be the professional way to go?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have any say about the question of the quality of the course. That is up to the Occupational Health and Safety Commission. If the Trades and Labor Council or the Chamber of Commerce and Industry wants to run a course, it must be approved by the commission. That is what has happened. It does not come to me for approval. As the honourable member knows, the commission is made up of representatives of employers and trade unions. I do not think that there should be any query about the quality of the courses. If there is, I suggest that the honourable member take it up with the Occupational Health and Safety Commission. If employers have any queries, they should take the matter up with their representatives on the commission.

Regarding my forcing unions and employers to have a joint course, I am not quite sure under what legislation the honourable member feels that I have the right to compel them to be one happy family and be trained in that way. I have no authority—

Mr S.J. BAKER: A simple way would be to make the National Safety Council a responsible body for organising the courses. It is very simple.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no legislative authority to do that. If the National Safety Council wants to run courses for employers and employees or anybody else, under the legislation it has the right to apply to the Occupational Health and Safety Commission to have those courses accredited or authorised by that body. I believe that the National Safety Council is in the process of doing that, and that is fine by me. However, it is nothing that I would be involved in; the commission would authorise it. Because the legislation passed through the Parliament, I would have thought that the member for Mitcham would be aware of that.

Mr S.J. BAKER: We do not have time to argue the toss of the coin, so I will move on to my next question. Why is the Occupational Health and Safety Commission attempting to set up a register of all workplaces as a separate exercise when the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation is also setting up its own register of employers? I would have thought that there was a commonality of data being collected by the corporation that would be provided to the commission.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member is factually incorrect. The commission is not collecting that data—it is the Department of Labour. With regard to the question of one organisation doing that in future, we would probably consider the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Corporation. The permission of the corporation would be needed to do that, but it is being considered.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Does the estimate for asbestos removal from Government buildings still stand at \$50 million? What has been allocated for 1987-88?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is approximately \$50 million but it has not been assessed precisely. This year's allocation is \$600 000.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Assuming the present rate is maintained, 10 or 12 years down the track asbestos will still need to be removed from public buildings although private enterprise is being forced to remove it immediately. Is that a correct assessment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is not a correct assessment. That is not the way I would put it, but asbestos is a very serious problem and, when building renovations are considered and it is assessed that asbestos must be removed, it is carried out, whether it is in the private or public sector.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: One of the department's roles is the administration of the Silicosis Fund. Can the Minister or his advisers explain the role of that fund and state how many claims were paid in 1986-87?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory, no claims were paid in 1986-87. One does not know with silicosis when claims will be made and it may be that very large claims will be made in the future, and that is the purpose of the fund. Last year we were fortunate not to have any claims.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: How much is in the fund?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: \$4.87 million, which is invested in inscribed stock, bank bills, deposits and debentures.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Following the question asked by the member for Adelaide about outworkers legislation, I take the point made by the Minister that there are instances of gross exploitation in that area and something needs to be done. How does the Minister intend to handle the conflicts that always arise in this area where people can actually earn more by piecework than by an hourly wage?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The best way is through minimum award rates, irrespective of what is produced. I concede the point made by the member for Mitcham that it is a complex area and, before any Bill is introduced into Parliament, a lot of talking must be done between the

employer bodies, the Government and the trade union movement. We do not want to create more problems with the legislation than we have without it. It is not our intention to make life difficult for industry in this or any other area. The legislation will have to be thought out and worded very carefully.

I am pleased that the Department of Labour has come up with a proposal that, on the surface and after some investigation, appears to give us a solution that will catch the people we want to catch without interfering with those who conduct their business properly. The Parliamentary Counsel is having a go at turning those ideas into draft legislation, which will be taken to Cabinet. Because the legislation has not been drafted yet, I cannot give the Committee a definite answer. However, I take the point and it has concerned me, the department and the Government. As far as is possible, the wrinkles will have to be ironed out before any legislation becomes law.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I note that a State women's employment strategy will be developed by the department. When will the Minister outlaw in all existing awards those clauses that preclude permanent part-time work as an option?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: When will I outlaw it? I did not quite catch the question.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Given that the Minister recognises that Parliament has a role in the setting of perceptions and that he has intervened in cases before the commission in the past, is it the Minister's intention to look at all awards that effectively preclude part-time work in certain categories and ask the commission to rule that those segments of the awards be removed?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: I am not sure what this has to do with women—

Mr S.J. BAKER: It effectively stops them from obtaining permanent part-time work in some of those industries.

The Hon. Frank Blewins: I am not sure what this has to do particularly with women, but it is something that I have never thought about and obviously it would have to be looked at on a case by case basis. Those types of provisions are inserted into awards by the appropriate tribunal and can be deleted in the same way. If some unions or employers want the award varied to delete such provisions, I would consider either supporting or opposing them on a case by case basis. I note from reading the press that one of the trade-offs that has been considered in the 4 per cent negotiations for the metal industry is that this type of restrictive provision in the metals industry award should be removed.

I think it should be negotiated between employers and employees and, if necessary, arbitrated by the commission. As far as I am aware, there are no such provisions in any awards in the public sector.

Mr S.J. BAKER: So you would not initiate any action in the commission to remove those provisions, despite the fact that evidence may suggest that women are effectively being precluded from these areas because of these provisions?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: I do not accept the assumption in the statement 'despite the fact that evidence may be available'. That is a qualified statement. If the honourable member has any evidence that this problem exists I shall happily talk to the parties to obtain their views, but I think that these award provisions are better negotiated between the parties or, if necessary, arbitrated by the tribunal responsible for that award. As far as I am aware there are no such provisions in the public sector.

Membership:

Mr R.J. Gregory substituted for the Hon. T.M. McRae.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Will monitoring take place within the department of the new workers compensation legislation or will the Minister rely solely on the corporation to determine and report to him on the effectiveness of the legislation?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: I will not be relying solely on the corporation, but I will rely on it a great deal. I stress again that this corporation is funded not by the Government but by the private sector. Obviously the Government has a responsibility to ensure that business is conducted in a way that is of benefit to all South Australians. I do not say that workers compensation has nothing to do with the Government; obviously in a macro sense it does. The corporation is to be run by unions and employers. The funds belong to them, not to the Government.

I would be very reluctant to interfere if no outrage to the public interest was being perpetrated by the corporation. However, that does not give the corporation a blank cheque; it operates under an Act of this Parliament and under the general direction of the Minister. If Government intervention was seen by Cabinet to be in the interests of the State, I would intervene. I do not anticipate that will happen. However, if the corporation requests an alteration to the legislation the Government will consider that matter.

Mr S.J. BAKER: With respect, that is different from the statement of 9 August in which the Minister promised a full review. When does the Minister expect that full review to take place? The statement went on to say that quick remedial action on WorkCover will take place. If the Minister does not tell the corporation when to do the review, who will do the review and when will it happen?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: The corporation will constantly monitor its performance, not necessarily because legislation requires it to do so but because it is operating in the market place in a commercial area. The corporation is using its own money and not the Government's. Any problem that may arise in the operation of the corporation will be brought to my attention and quickly remedied, if possible. It is imperative that that should occur. I would expect a comprehensive report to be presented to me at least annually and, if the corporation chose to detail any problems that it was having, I would refer those matters to Cabinet. Then, if the Government thought fit, it would take necessary action to correct the problem. The operation of the corporation will be monitored and reviewed daily by the board, which has one of the strongest incentives to do so: it is their money they are playing with.

Mr S.J. BAKER: You cannot promise a full review because that is not within your province?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: It is entirely within my province. I could ask for a full review tomorrow.

Mr S.J. BAKER: When are you going to actually ask for a full review?

The Hon. Frank Blewins: I will ask for a full review when I think it is necessary to have a full review which may be monthly, weekly or annually. I will certainly ask for an annual review, but I make the point that the honourable member seems to have a great lack of confidence in the employers in this State who are running the corporation. It is their money and they are running it. I have a lot more confidence in the employers in this State than is being demonstrated by the member for Mitcham. I know them well. I know the individuals concerned and the employer bodies and companies concerned and I can assure the member for Mitcham that they will, daily, review the operations of the Corporation.

Mr S.J. BAKER: It is the legislation that we are looking at—not the operation of the corporation.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: Are there any further questions?

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister would have noted with some concern the remarks of the Auditor-General about the workers compensation blowouts that occurred in the last financial year. In fact, he was noted the same problem for the past three or four years. The provision for 1986-87 was \$30.5 million; for 1987-88, it is \$45.1 million. That is a 50 per cent increase in workers compensation premiums. Will the Minister explain how or why we will have this enormous lift?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Government insurance fund operates a pay-as-you-go system, which requires an allocation to be made each year to cover anticipated claims cost in that year; pre-existing liabilities are unfunded. The main reasons for the increase in estimated workers compensation claims is a substantial increase in lump sum settlements expected to be paid during 1987-88. It is anticipated that lump sums will cost approximately \$25 million in 1987-88, compared with approximately \$13 million in 1986. It is also anticipated that 432 non-claims are expected to settle, compared with 256 last year. The reasons for the expected increased numbers of settlements are detailed as follows:

1. An increase in the number of actions at common law. This is because the area of liability for negligence has been increased gradually by the courts. Therefore, plaintiffs are pursuing claims at common law where previously it may well not have been considered.

2. More matters being listed in the Industrial Court as an attempt to clear the backlog of work that exists. In other words, we are doing it more quickly. Presumably, this is because of the new legislation to be effective from 30 September 1987. Since the beginning of this year, the Industrial Court has listed 45 cases twice a week instead of 30 cases. Matters which previously would not have been expected to have a trial date within the year 1987-88 are very likely to come to trial during that period.

3. Pre-trial conferences in the Supreme and District Courts means that more matters are being settled. The pre-trial conference system has operated in the Supreme Court since September 1986 and in the District Court since January 1987. This means that matters which previously would have taken a considerable time to come to trial are being settled at the pre-trial conference stage.

4. Full impact of changes in the compensation limits under the Act following the 1982 amendments are now being felt. (That was when the previous Liberal Government, properly, increased the compensation limits.) Limits in weekly payments were increased from \$18 000 to \$36 000 for partial incapacity, and from \$25 000 to \$50 000 from 1 July 1982. Maximum limits for assessment were increased from \$20 000 to \$40 000 between 1 July 1982 and 1 July 1983. We are now paying for those increased benefits—properly so.

5. More claims are being paid out on a total rather than partial incapacity basis. Partially incapacitated workers are being deemed totally incapacitated for settlement purposes as in many cases there are no alternative positions for them. Some workers are quite young; therefore, the workers compensation common law lump sums for future earning incapacity are much higher. The balance of the increase is due to normal inflationary trends in areas of weekly payments, medical expenses and administration costs.

In summary, the biggest reason for the increase is simply that we will process many more claims this financial year than we did last year, not because there are more claims

but because we are clearing up the backlog and also because of the full impact of the increase in limits that was brought in—quite properly, and with our support—by the previous Liberal Government in 1982.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister was quoted in the *News* on 2 May 1987 as saying that any agreement not within wage fixing guidelines was unacceptable. Does the Minister remember that statement? If so, how does that fit within the bonus or incentive payments that are currently being negotiated with a great deal of vigour on building sites in Adelaide?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no power to force the private sector to pay anything other than the minimum award rates: that power is vested in the Industrial Commission. If some employer chooses to pay more than is legally required there is not a great deal, if anything, that I can do about it. I can make a statement to the press—I did, and it was read out by the member for Mitcham—but I have no authority to do anything other than that; nor would I want that authority. The question of the public sector is different. Certainly, no payments in the public sector have been made outside any wage guidelines or any industrial tribunal decision.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I take it from the Minister's statement that he abhors those elements within the union movement that are pursuing those claims because, in his terminology, they are totally unacceptable.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I certainly do not support any claim by any union for some kind of incentive payment to finish a job on a building site—that is what the honourable member is referring to—nor does the Builders Labourers Federation. I spoke to the Secretary only a few days ago and he does not support it, either. I read in the newspapers only yesterday that an organiser from the Building Workers Industrial Union also said the same thing, so it does not appear to be an enormous problem. It cuts both ways: I abhor some of the practices of employers in this area. On very rare occasions they are brought to me: there was a well publicised one of payments by way of a voucher by some employer to buy whisky and beer.

The employers run their own businesses and I cannot stop them doing it, but I thought at the time—and still do—that that practice was appalling, and I certainly would not want to see it repeated. However, if every employer gave every worker a case of beer and a bottle of whisky every day, there would not be a great deal that I could do about it. The honourable member would remember that a referendum to give power to the Federal Government to control wages and prices was defeated: we do not have that authority.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Hon. J.W. Slater): There being no further questions, I declare the examination completed.

Personnel and Industrial Relations, \$7 467 000

Chairperson:

Ms D.L. Gayler

Members:

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

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Labour.

Departmental Advisers:

Mr A. Strickland, Commissioner for Public Employment, Department of Personal and Industrial Relations.

Mr M. Schilling, Deputy Commissioner for Public Employment.

Mr G. Lewkowicz, Acting Director, Policy Support Services Division.

Ms J. Russell, Head of the Equal Opportunity Branch.

Ms R. Hammond, Project Officer (Aboriginal Development).

Mr INGERSON: In relation to program 3 and staffing of the Public Service, how many people are on the redeployment list, how has this changed over the past year and have any been on the list for more than 12 months?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Without a doubt, the expert in this area (second only to me) is Mr Schilling. I ask Mr Schilling to respond with as much detail as we have.

Mr Schilling: At 30 June, the number on the redeployment list was about 300 and at 30 June 1987 that dropped to about 200. In terms of placements that have been made, in 1985-86 some 350 placements were made and in 1986-87 that number rose to 402. I do not have information as to how long people have been on the list, but it varies from several days and it could go up to quite a number of months. It depends on the availability of vacancies.

Mr INGERSON: I think that the only group with which we were concerned was that which had been on the list for over 12 months. If that information is available, could it be supplied to the Committee?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will certainly get that figure for the member for Bragg.

Mr INGERSON: Have any employees been pushed into statutory authorities, such as the STA or ETSA?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I take issue with the phrase 'pushed into statutory authorities'. Nobody is pushed anywhere. We are talking about very good employees who—

Mr INGERSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Cut out the pejorative stuff. They are very good employees who, because of contractions in certain areas of the Public Service, find that their jobs have been abolished. Certainly, in the Government's view the entire public sector has a responsibility to these employees, and that does not exclude statutory authorities. Of course, it works the other way. From time to time there are surplus employees in statutory authorities that we take into the core public sector, and that is something that has been happening for as long as I, or, indeed, any of us can remember, so there is certainly nothing new. We do not push people into inappropriate positions. We talk to statutory authorities and Government departments. Where there is a vacancy in a statutory authority, we see if there is a suitable person on the redeployment list, and vice versa. So, the statutory authorities are as much a part of the public sector as are the various Government departments.

Mr INGERSON: In relation to industrial and employee relations in program 4, in 1984 the Hon. Jack Wright announced plans to allow public servants to have a say in the selection of departmental heads. How far has this advanced?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It happens. There is always an employee representative on the selection panel, and that has been so for as long as I can remember.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise what progress has been made in the past financial year in relation to the implementation of a recruitment program for Aboriginal people?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a very important issue. A couple of weeks ago I was quite alarmed to hear a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition where he was critical of this Government and its actions in this area. He said that we had not met our target; our target did not have a time limit on it, but nevertheless we have made significant progress. I would like our project officer (Ms Ruby Hammond) to point out the progress that we have made and the very real difficulties that are encountered in bringing Aborigines into the public sector. It is not just a question of placing an advertisement in the paper and being inundated with applicants: it is much more complex than that. Ms Hammond is more than capable of recounting the details both of the problems that we have and of the considerable progress that we have made towards achieving our targets in this area.

Ms Hammond: There has been emphasis in the area of Aboriginal employment, which has been one of the major focuses in 1986-87 and will remain so in 1987-88. Twenty-six mature age Aborigines were recruited into the mainstream area and seven young people will gain positions as part of the school-leaver program. Further, five Aborigines will enter traineeship programs, and 39 were placed in Commonwealth funded areas through those NESAs schemes, with a high probability of subsequent placement in ongoing employment in the State Government.

Two special programs were approved by Cabinet and have now been gazetted and are currently being implemented. They provide recruitment for two Aboriginal cadets per year in the professional categories. The other is that we will have 15 people per year in specially designated positions. A significant number of Aboriginal people are being recruited each year and the important issue of addressing the retention of these recruits will be picked up in 1987-88 because we are clearly conscious that recruitment is a problem. We cannot go on employing people if we cannot keep them, so we have had to look at this area and discussions are currently proceeding in relation to retaining our employees in the Public Service. Aboriginal recruitment was given a special exemption in the current recruitment restrictions, so that we could wherever possible continue to go on because there is this emphasis which we have on the high priority to meet our 1 per cent across the board in the Public Service.

We go into the schools working closely with the Education Department and with TAFE. The TAFE Department is preparing people to obtain skills to become employees in the Public Service. There are programs of orientation, programs of preparing young people for working in the public sector. We found difficulty in the beginning but we have overcome that by actually dealing house to house, where we write articles for publication in the local rags and the local papers which Aboriginal people read, because it seemed obvious that they were not reading the *Advertiser* or the *News*. We had to get into their newsletter areas and we have been able to get 20 Aboriginal school leavers in preparation for the school leaver program which is an area where we would take people in.

As part of the retention of Aboriginal people in the Public Service, we have carried out cultural awareness programs in several departments, namely, the Office of the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity; Environment and Planning—we have done it three times because they are in such diverse areas and we have had to go to country areas where the Environment and Planning Department has done a major recruitment drive for Aboriginal rangers; Community Welfare Department, because it is obvious that Aboriginal people need to be in these areas providing services for Aborigines; Local Government, because the Local Govern-

ment Department had set up a model whereby six trainees have been employed and we have an Aboriginal assistant manager working there, and it seemed evident that we would have to do cultural awareness to prepare people to make the environment conducive for it to be workable; Fisheries; and Treasury. That has been our program, to get people to understand that the Government is serious about the 1 per cent and we are going to prepare people so it will not be such a shock to people when we actually get on with the job that we have been doing, and the percentages have shown that.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise what progress has been made in implementing recruitment programs for applicants with disabilities?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As in our Aboriginal employment, we do have a very extensive program for employment of people with disabilities. We believe that we are achieving a fair bit on this area, and I would ask Miss Russell to outline in some detail just what the Government has achieved over the past 12 months in this area.

Ms Russell: I would like to start by giving the figures for recruitment. We have been fortunate in attracting into the Public Service in the year 1986-87 19 people with disabilities into ordinary mainstream jobs. We have also selected a further two as part of a specialist trainee program, and the area that most of you will already know about is the vocational training scheme for disabled people. At the moment we have 10 trainees placed in that scheme and all of those people have a high expectation of continued employment. Following on in the model of Ms Hammond's submission, we also pay attention to upgrading facilities within the Public Service for retention of people with disabilities and the equal opportunities branch has an officer who, during the year 1986-87, particularly attended to this.

Some of the initiatives which she undertook with the Ethnic Affairs Commission was the drawing up of a glossary of terms so that communication would be smoother among practitioners in this area. She also designed a program of cultural awareness that can be used in any department on general issues around the subject of disability. The most important thing, I feel, in disability and with a non-English speaking background is the collection of statistics. That is why I put these two together: the areas where so far, unless people are willing to volunteer statistics, we do not have any idea of the nature or extent of the difficulty.

Throughout 1986-87 we have worked to have included in the up and coming central data system, Austpay personnel, a coverage of figures of people with disabilities and people of non-English speaking backgrounds. In both areas there are problems about privacy, security of storage and dissemination of information, and we intend to overcome those problems before the Austpay personnel system is implemented across departments.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise the Committee how the 4 per cent second tier wage increases have been negotiated across the public sector?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The trade union movement served a claim on the Government immediately the decision was handed down by the Federal commission. Negotiations around that have been taking place quite intensively since. As all members would be aware, the 4 per cent can only be awarded within the terms of those guidelines on the basis of a productivity increase to offset the cost to the employer of the 4 per cent. I am very pleased that in some areas of Government the negotiations have been successful, particularly the timber workers in the Department of Woods and Forests, and the Department of Housing and Construction

have concluded an agreement with the Government, and that has been processed through the commission.

The same has happened with E.T.S.A., with the 4 per cent agreement having been processed through the commission. Similarly with the Metropolitan Fire Service, the 4 per cent agreement has been negotiated and processed through the commission. A number of others are reasonably close. What we have made perfectly clear to the unions, and the unions accept this, is that we will not be paying the 4 per cent increase without a corresponding 4 per cent increase in productivity.

To do so would be against the decision of the Federal commission, and obviously we will not be doing anything that is contrary to that decision. There are, of course, considerable arguments over interpretation of the commission's decision, but the final arbiter of that will obviously be the commission itself or, in the case of our State Government workers who work under State awards, it will be the State Industrial Commission. I am not aware of any public sector movement throughout Australia in the area of what is the equivalent of our Government Management and Employment Act employees. The Federal Treasurer did make a statement last night, which could not be taken as encouraging for employees in this area. He again reinforced the Federal Government's view that there would have to be a complete 4 per cent offset before Federal public servants received the 4 per cent productivity increase.

So, in summary, negotiations are still continuing. Both the Government negotiators and the union negotiators have done a considerable amount of work, which in some areas has been successful already. I am sure that over the next few months the 4 per cent productivity offsets will be found in all areas of the Government service, and the 4 per cent will be paid after reference to the Industrial Commission. It has been a very difficult operation, requiring a great deal of time and resources, costing various suggested offsets, but I think at the end of the process this will ensure a far more productive and vigorous public sector, as I am sure will be the case in the private sector.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My question also relates to the second tier wage negotiations. In what areas are productivity trade-offs being sought—involving, I suppose, negotiations with the union movement—for those involved in clerical and administrative areas of the Public Service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Offhand, I cannot give the honourable member that information, but it would be a list as long as your arm—a huge shopping list.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Will the Minister canvass the most productive areas being pursued?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It would be inadvisable for me to do that, as I just do not have the information here.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can we say that flexitime is on the shopping list?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can we say that holiday leave loading is on the shopping list?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can we say that having offices manned for the entire time that they are open is on the shopping list?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not understand the question, as that is the case now—we do not open offices without having staff to staff them.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Indeed you do.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have unstaffed offices around the place, do we?

Mr S.J. BAKER: Are you trading off shorter toilet times in the process? I have not heard one area which is significant.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Mr Acting Chairman, I think the Committee is degenerating into the absurd.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I have not heard anything from the Minister to suggest which areas are being tackled. I went through some of the more obvious areas where productivity improvements could occur, and they are certainly not on the shopping list. I am trying to find out from the Minister exactly which areas are involved. If there is a long list, I would imagine that the Minister could remember one or two.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have not seen it. There is a lot of misunderstanding about the second tier and the 4 per cent.

Mr S.J. BAKER: There is no misunderstanding at all.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Well, there is a clear misunderstanding in the mind of the member for Mitcham. He suggests that the 17½ per cent could be a trade-off. The removal of the 17½ per cent loading on holiday pay would do nothing to increase productivity. It might save us money, but it would do nothing to increase productivity—nothing whatsoever. The same applies to flexitime. I would be prepared to argue that flexitime is an asset to productivity, an aid to productivity rather than the reverse, and several studies undertaken in this State proved that. The member for Mitcham would have been in the public sector when those studies were done, I assume. As regards the last point that was raised, concerning a reduction in toilet time, I think that was just being silly and I certainly will not respond to that.

In regard to the list of offsets that has been prepared by the Department of Personnel and Industrial Relations, I point out that different circumstances apply in every department and office. There are some across the service circumstances in relation to which a blanket claim would affect everyone in the service. For example, non cash pay would be something that covers everyone but by and large to find these offsets one must go into the matter department by department and in some cases office by office. That is why I say that it is a very extensive list, and it is the subject of negotiation; in return, the trade union movement has compiled lists of possible offsets, equally as long as the list that we have compiled. I congratulate the Australian Timber Workers Union, for example, which very quickly came to us with a list of offsets and said, 'There we are, that is approximately 4 per cent; we believe it is, having costed it.' We did so too, we said that that was fine, and it was processed through the Industrial Commission and the commission agreed. So, it is possible to understand the decision if one gives it a little thought.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Well, I cannot pursue the matter because obviously the Minister does not have the information. I would just like to point out to the Committee that, when the question was asked of the Premier he said, 'Ask that of the Minister of Labour, it is his responsibility, and he will know all about it.' But obviously there is some shuffling of the feet. That was the response that was given in another place to exactly the same question. My next question relates to the announcement made by Premier Bannon on 5 June 1987 that 4 500 jobs would be lost and that Minister Blevins would set up a committee to manage these job losses. What is the estimated number of job losses that have to be catered for in 1987-88? Has the committee been set up and who is sitting on it?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: First of all, the 4 000 job loss was a newspaper report: it was not a statement from the

Premier but a newspaper report, and the Premier did not make any such statement.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I had presumed that it was one of these little fishing exercises on the part of the Premier, in putting out a press release just to sort of spark a little interest.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The honourable member is entitled to assume anything he likes, and I cannot be responsible for his assumptions, however fanciful. It is the afternoon newspaper that put out that figure; it has nothing at all to do with reality.

The workforce planning committee was established to advise the Government on development of appropriate management and employment policies to deal with changing economic circumstances. The committee advises the Minister of Labour, through the Commissioner for Public Employment, on trends in public sector employment patterns and on strategies to deal with the effects of fluctuating program budgets. Naturally the committee works closely with the Department of Personnel and the Industrial Relations workforce planning unit, and the work of this committee will assist in the early identification of areas of staffing needs and over-capacity.

It is obvious that some sections of the public sector are contracting, and there is nothing wrong with that. We have a constantly changing public sector where some areas are expanding quite significantly and quite properly while other areas are contracting, for very good reasons. That change has to be managed. We are not in the business of dismissing people, and it is not our idea to do so. We have a committee including representatives of unions and Government departments that is chaired by Dr John Mayfield. It will advise the Government on the patterns as it sees them emerging. It is a very difficult exercise. One of the programs we are implementing is a voluntary early retirement scheme in certain areas.

Mr INGERSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, the Liberal approach was a broad-brush approach. It was offered to anybody and was horrendously expensive. We lost some of the best people from the public sector. It was a blunt instrument, ill thought through. Our approach, as would be expected, is much more sophisticated, and people will be asked whether they wish to take early retirement. It may be that some groups of employees will be asked whether they wish to take early retirement. It certainly will not be across the board.

We believe that the overwhelming majority of public servants are of very high quality and we would certainly want to keep them. They in turn want to stay with us. In selected areas it may well be that somebody would prefer to leave than go to another department. If the skill involved is widely available in the public sector, it seems pointless to keep that person in the public sector on pay when they do not necessarily have a specialised skill in demand in the public sector. It seems more sensible all round to offer that person an early retirement scheme, and they can decide whether to take it. It is much more selective.

Mr DUIGAN: Is it possible to determine whether the restriction on outside recruitment has had or is likely to have any impact at all on the filling of positions on the basis of merit?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, it will not have any impact on it at all. We have said to departments that there will now be a reasonably large pool of people with a variety of skills who, through no fault of their own, have had their positions in the Public Service abolished. As soon as departments are aware of a vacancy they should notify us and we will suggest someone that we believe is suitable and that person can then be interviewed. It may be that that person

will need some retraining before they can do that job to the optimum. If it means that departments have to train that person for a few months so that they are completely familiar with the job and doing it 100 per cent, the department has an obligation to do that, in my view. That does not mean that we are saying to Government departments that if they have a vacancy for X, here is Y, cop it and it is tough. We are certainly not doing that, and all the departments and the statutory authorities realise that we are not doing that.

If departments can retrain suitable people, they ought to do that rather than go outside the public sector and say that because they need X they will get him instantly and he can start on Monday. We are saying that we will give them somebody that they can train to be X in a reasonably short time. It is not a question of putting square pegs in round holes—that would be to the detriment of not only the individual but also the public sector as a whole and to the service the public sector provides to the taxpayers of South Australia.

Mr DUIGAN: Is that restriction limiting in any way opportunities for young people to be recruited into the Public Service?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To some extent the contraction of the public sector is having that effect, anyway. What we are doing to address that problem is quite specific. We had a look at the age profile of the public sector and found that, because of fewer employment opportunities outside, people were staying with us longer, so obviously there was not the recruitment at the other end of the service to keep our age profile at a reasonable level. We made a deliberate decision to employ young people.

We had a school leaver program to employ school leavers for whom we had no positions in the departments. That has been a very successful program, funded separately from the budgets of the departments. We have presented supernumerary school leavers and, almost without exception, they have become permanent employees of the Government. We have not dropped that program in our work force restrictions. We have maintained the school leaver program so that we get these high quality young people coming into the public sector in an attempt to relieve unemployment amongst young people and to ensure that the age profile of the public sector stays within desirable bounds. The same thing applied, as Ms Hammond and Ms Russell have pointed out, in our work force program measures wherein we did not include the Aboriginal program or the program for people with disabilities.

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

Correctional Services, \$44 810 000

Chairperson:
Ms D.L. Gayler

Members:
Mr S.J. Baker
Mr H. Becker
Mr M.G. Duigan
Mr R.J. Gregory
Mr G.A. Ingerson
The Hon. J.W. Slater

Witness:

The Hon. Frank Blevins, Minister of Correctional Services.

Departmental Advisers:

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

Mr W. Pryor, Director, Support Services.

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

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Once again, the 1986-87 financial year has been a challenging and eventful year for Correctional Services and one of considerable achievement. Major developments included the opening of the Adelaide Remand Centre, the implementation of the home detention program, the commissioning of the Yatala Labour Prison infirmary and the opening of James Nash House.

The home detention program was introduced by an amendment to the Correctional Services Act in December 1986, and the first detainees entered the program in January 1987. The program, which allows selected prisoners to serve the final stage of their sentence in an approved residence under strict curfew and intense supervision, commenced cautiously with non-violent prisoners serving sentences of more than one month but less than one year being eligible for selection. Consideration is currently being given to expansion of the program and to the introduction of electronic surveillance.

The commissioning of the Yatala Labour Prison infirmary was a landmark in prison medical services providing 24-hour medical cover and nursing care with all the conveniences of a modern hospital ward. This has had a significant impact on the provision of medical and health care and has reduced the number of hospital days spent by prisoners in general hospitals. A similar facility for remand prisoners will be available when the Adelaide Remand Centre infirmary commences as a 24-hour service on 19 October 1987.

Training again assumed a high profile with well in excess of 1 000 staff attending staff development and training programs. Over 150 custodial staff underwent either recruit or promotional training courses. Features of the department's in-service training program included training visits to all country institutions, training for staff in sexual harassment, equal opportunity and stress management and the conduct of special courses for medical staff and casual court staff.

Prison overcrowding remains the most serious issue facing correctional administrators not only in South Australia but in most Australian States. This issue is being addressed on two fronts: first, by the provision of additional prison accommodation and, secondly, by the extension of community based alternatives to imprisonment.

Major construction work on the medium security Mobilong prison has been completed and this new facility, which will be opened on 21 October 1987, will have its first intake of 40 prisoners during November 1987 with the last intake of 80 prisoners arriving in February 1988. The department's 1987-88 capital works program provides for the continuation of the Yatala Labour Prison program with the redevelopment of B Division due for completion in August 1988, the construction of a new 54-cell accommodation unit at Yatala Labour Prison (E Division) due for completion in December 1987, a new segregation unit due for completion in July 1988 and the construction of a new F Division to accommodate 90 prisoners due for completion in June 1989. The Northfield prison complex will be upgraded by the provision of low security cottage style accommodation for female prisoners and a new administration building to replace the existing inadequate facilities. Planning work will commence on an upgrading of the Port Lincoln prison designed to replace existing dormitory accommodation and to provide additional cell accommodation.

Community corrections has not been overlooked with major community corrections centres being constructed at Noarlunga and Mount Gambier. A new fine default program will be introduced in 1987-88. This program, which will be introduced initially at Port Adelaide, Elizabeth and Clarence Park and the Iron Triangle cities of Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie, will enable South Australians who legitimately are unable to pay fines to undertake community service in lieu of imprisonment. It is estimated that up to 2 000 of the 3 000 South Australians currently imprisoned annually for fine default will, under this scheme, be able to engage in meaningful work within the community rather than serve a term of imprisonment. The scheme will be extended to cover the rest of the State early in the 1988-89 financial year.

Australia's bicentennial year will see the closure of the Adelaide Gaol, the State's oldest and most inadequate correctional institution. The gaol, which has consistently housed over 300 prisoners in accommodation designed for a maximum of 224, will close as an operating correctional institution in February 1988.

Mr BECKER: It is good news that there is a definite date for the closure of the Adelaide Gaol. I did not make a statement because there has been much activity within the department during the past 12 months and it is only fair and reasonable to allow it to settle down into a well coordinated routine. The idea of this session is to obtain information that will help the Committee to understand the workings of the Department of Correctional Services in this State.

My first question concerns the procedure for handling the affairs of a deceased prisoner. When is the body released to relatives for burial? I ask that question because I have been contacted by the sister of a prisoner named Paul Cheeseman, who was sentenced to gaol in August of this year for 2½ years and was a prisoner at the Adelaide Gaol. I understand that, on Sunday 5 September or thereabouts, after the evening meal, Cheeseman returned to his cell, was not well and collapsed. His sister has informed me that an autopsy is being held and that his body will be kept at the morgue for up to four weeks. She is quite concerned that the family has not been informed fully of what is happening. Because of the poor financial circumstances of the deceased, she is also worried about who will attend to the cost of the burial. She wants to know why she was not given any information after making numerous telephone calls to the Director's office and the gaol. She resides in the country and has made about 20 telephone calls to Adelaide. Why is it necessary to hold the remains of a deceased prisoner, and is the Minister aware of this death and the cause of it?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: As far as I am aware the relative of the deceased prisoner has not contacted my office, but I will check that. I do not know in detail the procedure when a prisoner dies in gaol, but I will find out for the honourable

member. I do not know any details of this case, but I can say without too much fear of contradiction that bodies are held in accordance with the law, and the legislation that provides for the holding of bodies and autopsies is not my responsibility. However, I will find out for the honourable member what the law provides, and I am quite confident that whatever the law says we have to do with bodies we do.

Mr BECKER: This is a distressing set of circumstances, because this woman's brother was contacted, but he is a truck driver and is not in this State at present. His sister is upset to think that no information was given to her. She contacted not the Minister's office but the Director's office and the Adelaide Gaol. There must be a standard procedure that is followed in these cases, and it would be helpful for us to know it in future situations.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There will no doubt be a standard procedure and legislation, controlled by the Attorney-General, the Minister of Health or whoever, which states what should be done in these cases. I am not aware of what that is, but I am sure we do it. Of course, this would be a distressing situation for any relative of a prisoner who has died, and I regret that. As I have stated, as far as I am aware my office has not received a telephone call from this person; nor has the Director received a call or if a call was made to his office it has not been brought to his attention. I can tell the honourable member for Hanson that the incident will be investigated in the morning, and he will receive the information tomorrow rather than his having to wait for it to be incorporated in *Hansard*, as would normally occur.

Mr BECKER: On page 46 the Auditor-General mentions again the high cost of keeping a prisoner in South Australian prisons. The average cost of keeping a prisoner increased \$8 000 in the last financial year (\$153 per week) to \$44 000 per year (\$846 per week). According to the Auditor-General, to keep a prisoner at Yatala costs \$91 000 per year (\$1 750 per week or \$250 a day). At the Adelaide Remand Centre, the cost is \$66 000 per year (\$1 269 per week). However, at the Adelaide Gaol the cost of keeping a prisoner is only \$25 000 per year (\$480 per week). At Mount Gambier the cost is \$35 000 per year (\$673 per week). What is the department doing to contain and possibly reduce the cost of keeping a prisoner, and is the Minister able to advise the actual cost of keeping a prisoner in gaols or institutions, excluding capital costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Auditor-General's figures are correct. They include the cost of servicing debts that are associated with capital works, and that is apportioned to each prisoner. That is fair enough, although it does not tell the whole tale. I would prefer to have another column in the Auditor-General's Report outlining the cost per prisoner excluding debt servicing charges. I have a table which shows that and I will put it in *Hansard*.

COSTS PER PRISONER EXCLUDING DEBT SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE CHARGES 1986-87

Instituting	Net Cost of Operations	Less Debt Servicing etc	Total	Average Prison Nos	Average Excl H&C Charges	Average Cost in Audit Report
	\$	\$	\$		\$	\$
Adelaide Remand	6 977 231	1 867 334	5 109 897	106	48 207	66 000
Adelaide Gaol	6 924 101	537 511	6 386 590	274	23 309	25 000
Yatala	13 370 140	4 339 074	9 031 066	147	61 436	91 000
Northfield	2 349 004	244 879	2 104 125	59	35 663	40 000
Cadell	2 530 845	499 113	2 031 732	89	22 828	28 000
Mount Gambier	864 826	181 287	683 539	25	27 342	35 000
Port Augusta	2 477 834	416 758	2 061 076	91	22 649	27 000
Port Lincoln	1 179 907	236 502	943 405	43	21 940	27 000
	36 673 888	8 322 458	28 351 430	834		

The table shows that the cost of keeping a prisoner is considerably reduced if the debt servicing charge is deducted. However, the cost is still very high. There are various reasons for it. The reason for the relatively low cost of keeping a prisoner in the Adelaide Gaol is that prisoners are packed in like sardines in an unacceptable manner, and that has the effect of reducing the cost per prisoner down to something like a reasonable level.

In Yatala the reverse is happening. Because of the extensive building program that is occurring, the numbers are deliberately being reduced. It will be seen that there are fewer people in Yatala this year compared with last year and, because of the standing costs for staff and everything else that is used, the cost is higher. The costs at Yatala will reduce a fair bit when the population of Yatala increases to around the 300 mark rather than 100 as it is at present. It will not cost three times as much to keep three times as many prisoners. The debt servicing charge will still be quite high, however.

The reason why the cost of keeping a prisoner, at Mount Gambier is higher than at Adelaide Gaol is that it is a small prison housing approximately 40 prisoners. It is still necessary to have a prison and a certain level of staff, and there are no economies of scale in prisons such as Mount Gambier. However, there are large economies of scale in Adelaide Gaol.

The cost of keeping a prisoner is a high cost for the community to bear, and anything that can be done with community acceptance to reduce that cost will be done. For instance, in Yatala security could be relaxed, but that would be unacceptable to the community because of the high security prisoners.

In Cadell security is on a much lower scale. In fact, there is very little security, because it is an open prison. Consequently, the costs at Cadell are very much less than those at Yatala. There is a whole range of reasons why costs are high, but I believe that the community demands that those things are done. However, there is a price tag on them.

Mr BECKER: What is being done to reduce the costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The only real way to reduce the cost of keeping people in gaol is not to have them in gaol. With this in mind, extensive community correctional programs are being conducted in an attempt to divert offenders at the court stage into community correction programs. The best example of that is the community service order. Another example is the home detention program. Whilst the Government has been ultra conservative in implementing that program, now that we have a year's experience under our belt I believe that people can be contained in the community at much less cost than having them in gaol. Inherent in gaols is high cost, unless security is relaxed, and I am sure that nobody is suggesting that.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: The Minister just made the point that the home detention program was introduced only last year. There is a comment in the Program Estimates about extending the program. Will the Minister explain how far that program can be extended? It fits in with the comment that he made about keeping people in gaol and the significant cost involved. What type of prisoners will be eligible to be involved in the home detention program?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We have stated that a very restricted group of prisoners are eligible for the home detention program. That was proper as it was a new program. Now, with the experience that we have of managing prisoners on home detention, we can extend the range of prisoners and crimes for which they have been committed to prison. We can extend that so as to get a larger group of people on home detention.

One very clear example that I can give—and if everybody thinks about it they will see that I am correct—is that people who have been sentenced to very long terms of imprisonment and have done many years in the prison system because they have been convicted of a violent crime—murder, rape or whatever—are not eligible for home detention. To put a person who has been in the prison system for 10 or 15 years, on home detention for eight or 12 weeks at the end of a sentence is not taking much of a risk of something going wrong. In fact, it could be a very positive way of reintroducing someone to the community, under very tight constraints, for example, a curfew. At the moment we do not do that: we put people who have been in prison for a relatively short time on home detention. They are not necessarily the most stable part of the prison population: the most stable part of the prison population—those who are in the last few months of a very long sentence—are the ones whom we do not let out on home detention. We got the thing wrong in that area, but it is new and we are learning.

The home detention program can be expanded by the use of electronic surveillance, not replacing surveillance by prison officers, which we have at the moment. Electronic surveillance is now recognised throughout the world as an effective means of containing people and of checking where they are and at what time. I have had two demonstrations of electronic surveillance equipment by companies in Australia and I am very keen to get some of that equipment into South Australia. It will give the home detention program a great deal more integrity in the eyes of the public when they can see that it is not just prison officers making random telephone calls and checks but that there is an electronic shackle to the telephone that is under the control of the Department of Correctional Services rather than under the control of the prisoner. As soon as that equipment is available, we will certainly purchase or lease it, and the home detention program will be expanded.

Where there is no point in keeping someone in gaol, for example, in the last two months of a 15 or 20 year sentence, it is folly for the community to pay the enormous sums to keep them there when for \$20 or \$30 a day they can have that prisoner equally secure and involved in some rehabilitation through the home detention program. So, the program has a great deal of scope for expansion in South Australia.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: How many people have been part of the program so far? I realise that it was introduced only last year.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have that figure with me. I can give the honourable member the average figure for a week, but that does not necessarily tell him very much.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Have there been many?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It probably runs into about three figures now, but we have been extremely and unduly conservative with the program.

Mr BECKER: We would like to know how many have been processed through the scheme since the inception and how many currently are on the home detention scheme. Will the Minister advise the Committee how many have offended since the inception of the scheme, and for what reasons? I think that there were two early, which is unfortunate.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get that information for the honourable member. The number of breakdowns is very small. From memory, it is not more than two or three, and one of those volunteered to come back into gaol: he could not hack the home detention. He had a domestic tiff and

decided that gaol was safer than the home detention. We were very happy to bring him back into the system.

It is not a soft option. Studies done on it around the world say that one cannot keep it going for more than a few weeks: a lot of people find it easier to be contained in prison than in their homes. The temptations for them when they are in their own homes are very great, so it is certainly not an easy option.

Mr BECKER: What now are the criteria for offenders to be included in the home detention scheme, and have the original criteria been altered: if so, why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will send the honourable member a copy of the departmental instruction that applies in this area. It has not been changed since the inception of the scheme, but I certainly intend changing it over the next couple of months or so.

Mr BECKER: When will the home detention scheme reach the stated aim of 10 per cent of the prisoner population? An announcement made in the *News* on 27 November 1986 referred to the aim of the scheme to have possibly 10 per cent of the then prison population through the scheme.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot give the honourable member a timetable for that because of the conservative way in which we use the scheme. I am certainly in no hurry to get to the target figure of 10 per cent. We will achieve 10 per cent when our experience with the scheme is such that we believe that we can allow 10 per cent of prisoners to be on home detention with safety to the community. I will not achieve the aim just for the sake of saying that I have made it if a lot of those people who are on home detention ought not to be or are inappropriate candidates for the program.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise when renovations to the old security hospital on the Yatala grounds will be completed and how many inmates will be contained therein?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The renovations are due for completion in December. It will be designed for 54 single cells, but initially some of those cells may have to be used as double cells, so we could have as many as 85 inmates.

Mr GREGORY: As a supplementary question, what classification of prisoner would be contained in that part of the prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: All types of prisoners. Initially, it will be our main reception prison into the South Australian system where people will be assessed before going into the main Yatala prison, to Mobilong, or to one of our other country institutions, so generally speaking that will be the place where people will come straight from the courts into the prison system.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise when renovations to B division will be completed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: September 1988. It has been a very good but difficult renovation. I recommend that any member of the Committee have a look at what has been done. It is very difficult to undertake a program like that when the building is actually being used. We are using the building as a high security prison while at the same time attempting to renovate it. That makes life very difficult for the Department of Housing and Construction workers who are performing the actual renovations; for our own staff who are working in the area; and also for the prisoners. I will be glad to see those renovations finished.

Mr GREGORY: Can the Minister advise as to how many people have used the community service order scheme and whether that is to be extended throughout the State?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The community service order scheme is available right throughout the State. I think that

on any given day approximately 600 people are on the scheme. Since the scheme started many thousands of people would have gone through it, but I do not know the exact figure. The community service order scheme was designed to be available to the courts as an alternative to prison. If those 600 offenders who today are on the community service order scheme were in our system, obviously not only could the system not cope, but also the finances of the State could not cope with another 600 prisoners. That would mean at least three additional prisons costing at least \$40 million each, plus \$5 million or \$6 million in recurrent costs, so the consequence of not having the community service order scheme would be quite horrific.

Mr INGERSON: When will Mobilong prison be ready for commissioning; when will it officially be opened and by whom; and what is the reason, if any, for the delay at the moment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: First, there is no delay. I am not quite sure what the honourable member means by that statement. The Mobilong prison will be commissioned on time and, although this is not my responsibility, I understand it will be within budget, so certainly there is no delay. The opening will be on 25 October and the first 40 prisoners will come in in November. There will be a phased introduction of prisoners. It is not a case of turning up one day with about 200 prisoners and a brand new gaol. They are not sure how it works, so it would be a phased opening between November this year and February next year when the final 80 prisoners will enter the prison. It will be operating on the 21st and, modesty aside, it will be opened by me.

Mr INGERSON: I asked that question, because in the capital works it states that it is due to be opened in September.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It will be completed then. In relation to a new prison, prison officers have to see how the prison operates without prisoners, so we need that two or three weeks between the completion and acceptance of prisoners in order that all systems may be checked. We take visitors and their guests (and the honourable member is welcome to come) and use them as guinea pigs in order to check all the systems and to ensure that the prison works.

Mr INGERSON: Has there been any difficulty in obtaining acceptable housing for staff working at Mobilong and, if so, why?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Not to my knowledge.

Mr INGERSON: What action is it envisaged will be necessary in initiating the required planning processes for the approval and construction of a new prison in South Australia and where?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is certainly no planning going on at the moment, but no doubt at some stage in the future there will have to be a new prison built in South Australia. As there is no planning, the question as to where has not been considered and that decision would be made only after quite extensive public debate.

Mr INGERSON: Why will evening activities be reduced from seven to five days per week at Mobilong prison and will such a cutback be considered at other institutions? I refer to page 509 of the yellow book.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In relation to Mobilong, the original intention was to have seven days of evening activities. For cost reasons, this was found not to be practical. The staff required for such an exercise would make the operation too expensive. We believe that the five nights out of the cells is a very generous provision, as it should be. In relation to other gaols, there may be some adjustments, but they would be minor. I point out that at Mobilong they are

not losing something they had, because no one is there, so to start the prison with five nights out is generous and I think that it will be accepted by everybody, prisoners included.

Mr INGERSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not think that we have seven nights out in other institutions.

Mr BECKER: How will relatives of prisoners at Mobilong prison who do not have personal transport be able to visit the gaol and when?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is public transport to the area and I assume that those who do not have private transport will use public transport. In relation to the question of when, if the honourable member is asking about the visiting hours, probably they would be Saturday and Sunday mornings and afternoons.

Mr BECKER: As a supplementary question, when the Minister says there is public transport to the area, is that to the front door of the prison or is that to Murray Bridge? Just how close is it to Mobilong?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To Murray Bridge. They might drop you off at the gaol if you want to go there. I do not supply public transport. I am not sure what public transport there is to the Port Lincoln prison either, or to Cadell. I doubt whether there is public transport that goes right out to the Port Lincoln prison, but there is certainly public transport to Murray Bridge.

Mr BECKER: It just worries me. It is a little isolated and some prisoners will want the benefit of their relatives to visit them.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot commit private operators who run the bus service to Murray Bridge to what they might do, but I would certainly be happy to make representation to them. If they are passing the prison and people wanted to stop at the prison or get on there, I am sure that the private operators would cooperate.

Mr BECKER: It depends on whether OARS or some organisation like that may make representations or make some facility available, I do not know.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: OARS run a bus service to Cadell.

Mr BECKER: Yes. If OARS do that to Cadell, they may be requested to do the same for Mobilong.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no public transport to Cadell. That is the difference.

Mr BECKER: You have advised that hopefully Adelaide Gaol will be closed in February 1988, and I do hope for the sake of the staff and the inmates that that is a firm figure because—well, the least said about the place, the better. Can you advise the Committee what will become of the property?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In response to the comment 'for the sake of the staff' of Adelaide Gaol, an awful lot of staff at Adelaide Gaol do not want it to close, and an awful lot of prisoners do not want it to close either. That may appear remarkable to us. As regards what will become of the gaol, I really do not know. Being a heritage item, I can imagine it would be handed over to some other Government department, be it the Department of Environment and Planning or the Department of Lands or whoever, I just do not know. All I know is that I will be delighted to hand it over to whoever will accept it.

Mr BECKER: I was wondering whether in the tidying up of the building and repairing or restoring some of the building, community service order work could be used to maintain the old Adelaide Gaol as a museum and tourist complex. Would the department be interested in a museum, because the department does have a lot of early relics, I suppose you could call them, or memorabilia out at Yatala and I wondered whether we could find a permanent place for all memorabilia in relation to the early convict or prison days in this State, and perhaps Adelaide Gaol might be the best place to store or display it?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Using Adelaide Gaol for such a purpose certainly has some attraction. As regards community service order people working there, it would be a public building and, as such, would be maintained by the Department of Housing and Construction employees. I would not think just because it is a gaol that it would be excluded from that.

Mr DUIGAN: Referring to program 1, Institutional Corrections, and the supporting papers on page 509 of the Program Estimates under 'Broad Objectives', the last sentence reads:

Increase the range of programs for special needs groups of prisoners, particularly, drug and alcohol abusers, Aboriginals, the behaviourally disturbed and first offenders.

Would it be possible to get a classification of the prisoners by those categories defined there in terms of the numbers of prisoners in the correctional service institutions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The best thing I can do with that question is take it on notice and see what information is readily available to give to the honourable member. There are also multiple problem prisoners or multiple category prisoners to take account of.

Mr DUIGAN: The reason I asked that question is simply because in 'Issues/Trends' and elsewhere in the program description are indicated specific programs, both management and treatment programs that are having to be developed for people in those categories.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We can give you a very good guesstimate of the proportion of prisoners.

Mr DUIGAN: It was an interest in the nature of the programs as much as in the exact numbers. My second question relates to the second program, Community Corrections, and the supporting documents on page 510 of the Program Estimates. In the 1987-88 specific targets appears the term 'Offender assessment tools' which are designed to help the courts in determining what is called the efficient and effective utilisation of resources. What are 'offender assessment tools'?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take that question on notice to get a full list. It is such things as psychiatric reports and probation and parole officer views after interviewing prisoners, things like that, but I can get a more complete answer for the honourable member.

Mr INGERSON: In the financial year ended 30 June 1987, how many incidents such as disturbances, fights, riots and unauthorised prisoners disruptions occurred in each prison or institution, and how do these figures compare with last year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have a table which is purely statistical which gives that information for 1986-87, and I ask for that document to be inserted in *Hansard* without my reading it.

INCIDENTS IN PRISON
1986-87

Type of Incident	Institution								1986-87	1985-86
	ARC	ADG	YLP	CTC	NPC	PTA	MTG	PTL	Total	Total
Drugs	32	47	26	42	18	11	9	12	197	131
Alcohol	1	27	—	7	2	2	1	4	44	23
Attempted Escape	3	3	2	—	—	1	—	—	9	11
Self Inflicted Injury	8	12	12	5	—	5	1	1	44	46
Attempted Suicide	9	9	2	—	2	2	—	—	24	6
Suicide (1)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Death	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Offender/Offender Assault	26	64	9	7	2	6	—	5	119	60
Sit-In	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Hunger Strike	9	11	10	—	—	—	—	—	30	5
Refuse to Obey Order	—	13	5	2	—	1	2	—	23	17
Fire	6	28	22	6	1	1	—	—	64	19
Other Property Damage	4	9	9	7	1	1	4	—	35	10

Note (1) Although no suicides were recorded within Department of Correctional Services' Institutions, an escapee from Cadell Training Centre committed suicide in Police custody after capture.

I do not have a table for the previous year with me, but I will try to get one and have that incorporated in *Hansard* through the usual procedure so that comparisons can be made. It involves such things as drugs, alcohol, attempted escape, self inflicted injury, attempted suicide, suicide, other death, offender/offender assault, sit-in, hunger strike, refuse to obey order, fire, and other property damage—a pretty comprehensive list.

Mr INGERSON: How many prisoners and prison staff were injured during such incidents and how many of these staff are now on workers compensation and how many other work related injuries were there during that year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have a table which details assaults on prison staff and working days lost for the year 1986-87. I ask that that be inserted in *Hansard*.

Assaults by Prisoners on Staff

Institution	No. of Incidents	No. of Staff Assaulted	Working Days Lost 30.6.87
Adelaide Gaol	19	31	385
Adelaide Remand Centre	8	11	125
Yatala Labour Prison	13	17	261
Cadell Training Centre	1	2	—
Port Augusta Gaol	3	3	—
Mount Gambier Gaol	5	5	—
Northfield Security Hospital	1	1	—
	50	70	771

Notes (1) The number of reported assault incidents rose from 32 in 1985-86 to 50 in 1986-87, a 56.2 per cent increase. The number of working days lost in the year increased from 160 in 1985-86 to 771 in 1986-87, a 380 per cent increase.

(2) 2.4 officers lost 572 days of the total 771 working days lost.

Mr INGERSON: Could Adelaide Gaol be used as an educational medium to deter juvenile offenders, by encouraging senior classes of secondary schools to visit the prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is a very good suggestion which I will pass on to the Government when a decision has been made on the future use of the Adelaide Gaol.

Mr GREGORY: An objective given to at page 509 of the yellow book is to increase the range of programs for special needs groups of prisoners, including Aborigines. Will the Minister tell the Committee what programs there are now for Aboriginal inmates and what is planned for the current financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: All prisoners, irrespective of sentences of six months or more, have programs to help develop skills to facilitate their return to the community.

The Department of Correctional Services runs courses for Aborigines to inform them of their rights. For example, under the parole laws, there is a pilot scheme art course at Adelaide Gaol, involving traditional and contemporary art. One specific project involves the writing of two books, to be published in both Pitjantjatjara and English. Further, there are quite extensive alcohol and drug abuse programs, specifically tailored for Aboriginal prisoners. A variety of support group networks operate within the prisons. For example, there is the Sansbury Group, the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and the Aboriginal Christian Fellowship. All those organisations operate in our prisons, with the cooperation and thanks of the Department of Correctional Services.

A special program, of which we are particularly proud, operates at Port Augusta. It is known as the Wali-Wiru program, which involves tribal elders coming in to work with the Aboriginal inmates and to teach them about traditional ways. My advice from Port Augusta Gaol is that that program has been very successful indeed. It is very beneficial to have the Aboriginal elders actually within the gaol teaching the young people who are in trouble with their heritage and giving them something of which they can be proud—and they can be proud of their Aboriginal heritage. We believe that that program is well worth supporting, and it is one of which the department is particularly proud.

In the community corrections area, we have a metropolitan Aboriginal community service order program, whereby Aboriginal offenders do community service work for Aboriginal organisations or individual Aborigines. For example, the garden of an Aboriginal pensioner living alone or that of an Aboriginal couple may be beyond their ability to manage, in which circumstances we would send Aboriginal offenders there under the community service order scheme to assist those involved, and the supervisors of those Aboriginal offenders are themselves Aboriginal and thus continuity is maintained.

We also have a community service order scheme at Yatala, that has been very successful. But the Department of Correctional Services and the Government do not pretend that the range of programs available for Aborigines in gaols is all that it could be. Certainly, we will do anything else that we can to assist the plight of these people. They are grossly over-represented in relation to the total number of people in our prison system, having regard to the number of Aborigines in the community. Further, because of the tribal nature of some of the Aboriginal prisoners in many instances

their reaction to gaol is quite different from that of white prisoners. We certainly attempt to be sensitive to this when Aborigines go into prison, but we can certainly do more.

Mr GREGORY: The Department of Correctional Services commissioned a new training facility in 1986-87. Can the expenditure on this facility be justified?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We did commission a new training facility in 1986-87. It has been perfectly clear in correctional services for a number of years that one of the greatest areas of neglect has involved the training of our staff. The community expects prison staff to do a job which at times can be quite unpleasant. If anything goes wrong in the gaols the community then apports a great deal of the blame to prison officers—quite unfairly in my view. As a community we have not given prison officers sufficient support, particularly in the area of training. So, there is no question that, in the 3½ years that I have been the Minister responsible for the correctional services portfolio, no money has been better spent than that spent at the facility on Barton Terrace. That facility provides the nucleus for all departmental training and staff development. During the 1986-87 financial year, 95 new recruits undertook the department's seven-week recruit training course. Of the 95, 14 new correctional services staff (15 per cent) were female. Further, four four-week correctional administration and management courses (which are designed to equip custodial staff for senior positions within correctional institutions) and one basic organisation and supervisory skills course (designed to equip custodial staff for first level supervisory positions) were conducted. In total, 159 custodial staff undertook almost 900 weeks of recruit or promotional training at the centre.

In addition, 22 community correctional staff underwent two-week induction courses. The department also conducted two special one-week familiarisation courses for medical staff employed in secure areas. In fact, since 1984, when this Government seriously addressed the issue of correctional services, the department has trained over 475 new recruits, and over 150 staff have participated on the two promotional training courses. This represents about 4 000 training weeks. This Government will continue its commitment to training and retraining. For example, a new course for institutional middle managers is being developed, and the departmental training committee is examining options for senior management development programs. So, in summary, I support the training facility and the training programs of the Department of Correctional Services probably more than any other undertaking.

The staff are professional people and are entitled to be treated as professionals and trained to be professionals. We demand high standards of them indeed, and it would be unfair of the community to demand those standards without giving them the tools to do the job, the most important of those tools being that they have access to adequate training.

Mr GREGORY: I refer to the heading 'Major Resource Variations, 1986-87 and 1987-88' for the program 'Community Corrections'. There is a reference to the 'provision of funds associated with a fine default program'. Will the Minister elaborate?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Sections 5 and 6 of the Criminal Law (Enforcement of Fines) Act 1987 have been proclaimed and the Government intends to proceed with a staged implementation commencing 1 November 1987. These sections provide for persons who legitimately are unable to pay fines to undertake community service in lieu of imprisonment. This is seen as a major initiative in ensuring that a significant percentage of the 3 000 people imprisoned annually

for fine default are not imprisoned, but rather engage in some meaningful work within the community.

The scheme will commence at Port Adelaide, Elizabeth and Clarence Gardens, which will service both the Adelaide and Glenelg areas, and also in the Iron Triangle at Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie. The remainder of the State will be covered early in the 1988-89 financial year. Initial estimates suggest that up to 2 000 South Australians who currently serve terms of imprisonment, for the simple fact that they are poor and unable to pay fines, will, under this scheme, be able to remain within the community with their families. Just as importantly, they will contribute to worthwhile community programs.

It seems to the Government that the previous position where we fined these thousands of people and then gaoled them for non-payment of fines was an absurd situation. Not only did we not get the fine, but the community had to pay for the privilege of not getting the fine by paying tens of thousands of dollars a week out in correctional service costs in institutions. If somebody simply cannot pay because they do not have enough money, what is the point of putting them in gaol? I do not know. It seems to the Government to be a far more sensible use of resources, particularly the human resources of these people, to say that they owe the community something and that the community service order scheme is the way to discharge their debt to the community.

The community service order scheme will be enhanced by having these additional people and as a byproduct it will release some space within our prisons. The amount of space released through this program will not be great because, although we gaol 2 000 to 3 000 people every year, it is usually only for a few days, so there probably would not be more than 50 cells taken up on any one night by people in gaol for fine default. To maintain that 50 every night means 2 000 or 3 000 people go through the system. It is absurd and I am delighted that this financial year will see that system change.

Mr GREGORY: Will the Minister advise the Committee on the cost per prisoner per day of a community service order?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the exact figure with me, but it may be \$20 or \$30.

Mr GREGORY: Will the Minister supply that information to the Committee at a later date?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes.

Mr BECKER: Following the escape by a remandee from the Adelaide Remand Centre (and I believe it is the only escape that has occurred) what construction activity occurred and at what cost? I understand that the person escaped through the roof.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will make that information, from the Department of Housing and Construction, available to the honourable member privately, provided he is prepared to accept confidential information and keep it confidential. It would not be appropriate (I am sure the Committee members would agree) for us to publicly indicate what additional security measures have been taken at the Adelaide Remand Centre.

Mr BECKER: I am not prepared to accept that as I have been around too long. If somebody leaks that information, I will get the blame. I will not be placed in that position. I understand that the roof had to be bolted down and it was quite an expensive operation. There was obviously a flaw in the construction of the roof. I do not want the information, as various people come to me from time to time with all sorts of allegations, and I do not want to be in that position.

Since the occupation of the remand centre by remandees, what other construction flaws have been detected by the staff and what action has been taken to rectify any flaws? I know that at one stage there were allegations of prisoners digging out some of the brickwork between the units within the centre, but nobody could expect a new design in a newly constructed building to be absolutely perfect. I accept the statement from the Minister that the biggest difficulty is keeping people inside—they are always wanting to get out. This building is the first new institution for many years, if not decades. Has there been close scrutiny of the construction and the activities that the inmates get up to in an attempt to beat the system?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Any new institution is subject to immediate testing by the inmates of that institution. No institution has been built yet that is escape-proof.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Alcatraz was pretty efficient.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: They closed down Alcatraz because somebody escaped. The testing of any institution goes on daily. It is not something about which one can say that on any one day we have found 16 points that may be vulnerable, that we have closed them and that that is the end of it. When we close 16 another 16 will be probed over the next few weeks, and so on. It is a never-ending feature of prisons that prisoners constantly test the security. We try to pre-empt what they are doing, by trying to second guess them, and they do the same. We plug any gaps that we find in the security. That happens in every institution every day and that is the nature of institutions. There is no way that the Adelaide Remand Centre, Mobilong or any other prison in the world will be immune from that process.

Mr BECKER: Is the glass in the external windows of the Adelaide Remand Centre the standard specification demanded by the department and, if not, why not? At the time of the letting of the contracts for the remand centre, there was a lot of correspondence by a South Australian company and a Victorian company. The South Australian company disputed the standard of the glass in the windows. The Victorian company was awarded the contract, and changed its specifications to those similar in the South Australian company's tender, and an almost identical type of glass was installed. I wonder whether the glass in those external windows meets with the department's rigid specifications for that type of building.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The building was built by the Department of Housing and Construction. Perhaps questions of that nature should be directed to the appropriate Minister. However, I point out that the Department of Housing and Construction has developed an extremely high degree of expertise in prison design and construction and, as a client of the Department of Housing and Construction, for correctional institutions, I cannot praise it enough. Regarding the glass in the remand centre or any other institution, I am not prepared to make public the quality of the glass. I am happy to give that information to the honourable member on the understanding that he is prepared to accept it on a confidential basis and keep it confidential. I do not make those kinds of statements because we have anything to hide in the Department of Correctional Services.

Any member of Parliament is entitled to go to the institutions at any time and ask any questions, and they will be answered fully. However, prison security means people's lives, and I am not prepared to give any member of Parliament a headline that may be paid for with people's lives. Any information which is available to the Department of Correctional Services and contained within it is available to any member of Parliament.

Mr BECKER: A considerable amount of research was undertaken in the design and type of construction required for the remand centre. One would hope that, given the research that was undertaken overseas, the building would contain the latest developments, and no doubt it does. I want to know what was the outcome of the inquiry into the gun attack on the Adelaide Remand Centre earlier this year. An article in the *News* of 16 June referred to this unfortunate incident when somebody fired a shot at a window. The allegation was that fragments of the bullet entered the building. It was reported that a spokesman for the Minister said that the incident was being investigated by departmental officials and police. Are the details of that incident to be made public?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot speak for the police. I have not seen a police report on the incident, and I am not sure whether one is available. The honourable member will have to ask the Minister of Emergency Services about that. Details of the investigation of the incident as it related to the Department of Correctional Services as opposed to the investigation that was quite properly the province of the police are available, and I am happy to make the report available to the member for Hanson or any other member of the Committee on the basis that it may contain confidential information of a security nature that I would expect any member seeing that report to treat accordingly.

Mr BECKER: Is the Minister able to advise the Committee of the extent of the damage, the cost of repairs and whether there were any injuries?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know what the cost of repairs were because that is the province of the Department of Housing and Construction. From memory, there were no injuries.

Mr BECKER: Were the repairs charged to the department under normal maintenance costs?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Housing and Construction carries out maintenance on Government buildings. The amount would not have been charged to the Department of Correctional Services. My department does not maintain Government buildings. I will check it out, but I am sure that my department does not get a bill from the Department of Housing and Construction for broken windows.

Mr BECKER: Does the department receive an account at the end of the financial year from the Department of Housing and Construction, or does it receive a monthly statement of what work the Department of Housing and Construction has undertaken on behalf of the Department of Correctional Services for maintenance, repairs, etc? How are these figures arrived at?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr BECKER: This issue was raised in 1978-79 in the Public Accounts Committee when it looked at the Hospitals Department. It was found that on 30 June the department received a bill for X amount of dollars. It was claimed that it was work undertaken by the then Public Buildings Department for maintenance and repairs. The Public Accounts Committee found that nobody ever checked the bill, and the Hospitals Department could not tell the committee whether it was getting value for money, what the bill really contained or what was going on. There seemed to be some doubt as to what was actually contained in those accounts.

It seems to me that it would be very difficult to run a department or an operation with a budget such as this, where the figures, although not in millions, are still in hundreds of thousands of dollars. I would have thought that any account that came in would show the ways and means and would be able to be checked, and that the

department would have time to vet those bills to ensure that it was getting value for money and was not being debited X amount of dollars on 30 June. What is the practice?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services is not billed at all, either on 30 June or at any other time. The Department of Housing and Construction obviously has a line for general maintenance of Government buildings, and that depends on what Cabinet allocates every year. It is out of that line that such things as repairs of broken windows and other minor works are paid. The department does not check the bill because it does not get a bill. I am sure that the Department of Housing and Construction has its own procedures for recording the work that it does in my department and other departments, but there is no duplication of that.

Mr BECKER: The department does not receive any maintenance bills at all?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No.

Mr BECKER: What external surveillance is available at the Adelaide Remand Centre to warn the authorities of attacks such as the gun attack this year? Is that system satisfactory?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am not a policeman, but as I understood the attack that occurred this year, from what I read in the newspapers somebody drove past and fired a shot at the building. I cannot imagine any warning system which would alert anyone that somebody was about to drive past and shoot at a building.

Mr BECKER: I understand that the motor vehicle pulled up, the person got out and left the scene leaving the rifle in the car with the engine running, or the car was ready for someone to drive off. Is there any surveillance outside the centre where any abnormal act would be noticed? It appears to me that the building could be vulnerable to large gatherings of people or to attack by someone in a motor vehicle. Were these surveillance systems looked at in the original design and construction of the building?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If I knew what type of system the member for Hanson was referring to when he asks if these systems have been looked at I could perhaps respond more clearly. I am unaware of any system that would warn that somebody was about to drive up to the remand centre in a car to take a shot at the building.

Mr BECKER: There are surveillance cameras on the outside of the building. Is that surveillance system satisfactory so that anything unusual that is happening outside the building can be picked up on the monitor?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In relation to the outside surveillance of the building, I will make that information available to the honourable member on a confidential basis on the understanding that it will be handled in that way for security reasons. However, I point out again that, even though there could be 100 cameras, if somebody wants to drive up and shoot at the building cameras will not make any difference.

Mr INGERSON: When did the Minister's department advise the Minister of Health and/or the Health Commission that the Adelaide Remand Centre would be ready for commissioning and what was the reason for the delay by the Health Commission to provide the necessary staff?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The staffing and opening of that facility is under the control of the Health Commission. I suggest that the question be directed to the Minister of Health.

Mr INGERSON: Surely there must be some communication between the Minister of Health and the Minister of Correctional Services to give a reason for the delay.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not accept that there was a delay. The infirmary in Yatala has only just been commissioned. The Health Commission, the same as any other Government department, opens facilities that are of a particular standard in accordance with its ability to finance them. The 24-hour service at the Adelaide Remand Centre or at Yatala would be provided by the Health Commission on its own scale of priorities of every other claim on the Health Commission from metropolitan hospitals, country hospitals and all the other things that it does. When the Adelaide Remand Centre was built an infirmary was included. However, when that facility is to be opened is a Government decision that is to be made on the advice of the Health Commission.

Mr INGERSON: How much did this delay cost the Minister's department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It would be more cost effective for the Government not to have that facility there. It is probably more expensive to staff the facility 24 hours a day than it is to take prisoners to hospital. It is done for convenience much more than it is done for cost benefit. I do not have the figures in my head, but I am sure it is more expensive to staff the facility than to take prisoners to hospital. It is certainly more inconvenient to take prisoners to hospital and less secure for the community. My guess is that it is not a cost effective exercise to have the infirmary, so the Government has probably saved money by not opening the infirmary on a 24-hour basis when the remand centre was opened.

Mr INGERSON: Are women warders present when male prisoners are strip-searched? I refer to an article in the *Melbourne Sun* dated 28 August 1987 which states:

Some of Australia's toughest prisoners are being strip-searched in the presence of female prison officers in Victorian gaols, but this is because of staff shortages and unforeseeable emergencies, not a calculated attempt to humiliate and degrade prisoners. A team of two officers conducts a strip-search before and after contact visits.

Does the same situation apply in South Australian prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No, our legislation precludes that from happening. I do not necessarily agree that the legislation is right. I think a very good case could be put forward for having one correctional services officer present at a strip-search of the same sex as the prisoner. When prisoners are being searched, irrespective of whether they are male or female, there should be one warder of each sex doing that strip-search. Strip-searching is a visual inspection. I should have thought that if there was any controversy in this area it would be in relation to normal searching where there is no discrimination: male prison officers as a matter of course search female prison officers, and vice versa, female prison officers as a matter of course manually search male prison officers. The fact that our legislation precludes people of the opposite sex from strip-searching a prisoner, which is only a visual search, seems to be a little off beam.

I do not have the issue sorted out or decided whether anything requires to be done, but I believe that the proprieties would be maintained by ensuring that on a strip search at least one prison officer is of the same sex as the person being searched.

Mr BECKER: What notifiable diseases, including hepatitis A and B, AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases, have been detected at each prison or institution in the financial year ended 30 June 1987, and how do these figures compare with the previous financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no knowledge of that. That is not an area of my responsibility: it is entirely the responsibility of the Health Commission, and I can only

suggest that the member for Hanson ask that question of the Minister of Health.

Mr BECKER: I find this very frustrating. The Minister is running the Department of Correctional Services; he is running institutions or prisons. Subcontracted in there somewhere is the Health Commission—I assume that it is a subcontract—yet the Health Commission tends to hold up the operation, or does what it wants to do in its time. The Health Commission would keep the statistics. I do not see how that works because surely it is in the interests of the Minister and of protecting his staff. He has made some pretty strong statements about employers and the way in which they handle the employees and provide a good, safe and healthy work environment—I do not disagree with him on that—and I would have thought that he would have these figures at his fingertips, daily, to know which risks his staff is placed at in his prisons.

The diseases that I have mentioned are of grave concern to everybody in the community, and I know that they are of grave concern to his staff and to some of the prisoners within the prisons. He is either hiding behind the Health Commission, or the Health Commission is frustrating his operation. What really is going on within the Department of Correctional Services in relation to the Health Commission's role?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is very simple: the Health Commission runs health services in this State. It has a prison medical service that operates out of Modbury Hospital and runs the medical services within our institutions. We do not have a medical service of our own; we have no expertise in the area. Doctors and nurses in this State generally speaking—certainly in the public sector—are within the area of the Health Commission. It is the same with education services within the prison; we do not have our own; they are run by the Department of Technical and Further Education. So the organisational structure is very simple and logical.

The fears that were expressed by the member for Hanson are unfounded because procedures are very simple. We act on the orders of the doctors. We are advised where a prisoner has a communicable disease. We are not told what the disease is, but are told that this prisoner has X disease or illness and has to be treated by our staff in such and such a way. We abide by those instructions.

Mr BECKER: You must know the answers to questions.

Mr GREGORY: Madam Chairperson, can you ask the interjectors to speak up?

The CHAIRPERSON: I prefer that there be no interjections. There is time for others to ask questions.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the Health Commission says, 'Prisoner X has a communicable disease; he ought to be in a single cell, in the infirmary, in a cell with running water, or ought to use particular eating utensils, or whatever,' that instruction by the Health Commission is relayed to our officers and that is how they manage the prisoner. It is a very simple, straightforward and effective procedure, which safeguards the officers. There is no problem with it at all.

We do not answer questions on the medical condition of our prisoners because we do not know, nor will the doctors of the prisoners tell us. They have a doctor-patient relationship, which is exactly the same as we have with our doctors, but they ensure that nobody in the prison system is at risk by advising us how that prisoner ought to be managed.

Mr BECKER: Now the Minister is starting to really confuse me. As the Minister for Labour he is enforcing strong conditions on employers, and as the Minister of Correctional Services he is an employer. Is it not in his interests

to know the health risks with which his staff are faced daily within our prison system? What is he doing about that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have just told the honourable member.

Mr BECKER: Why does the Minister not answer the question?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have just done that.

The CHAIRPERSON: Order! The Minister is answering the question.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do know; there is no danger to any of my staff. The staff are told that prisoner X requires managing in a certain way, and we do that, so there is no danger to the staff or to the prisoners. We do not know the specific disease. Unless there is some reason for us to know the doctor will not tell us. To the doctors the prisoner is a patient, not a prisoner. The prisoners are their patients, and they have obligations not to discuss the patient's medical condition other than on a need-to-know basis. What they tell us—and it is adequate for all our purposes—is that a person is sick and has to be given that regime, and that is what we do: it is really not a problem.

Mr BECKER: How many incidents of notifiable disease have been detected within the prisons of South Australia? Can you answer that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Probably not. Certainly the Health Commission would be able to. I do not know whether we keep a record for ever and a day of what the doctors tell us: there is no reason to. The patient records are with the Health Commission.

The CHAIRPERSON: The Minister of Health will appear before Committee A some time this week or next week. Perhaps those sorts of questions could be directed to him.

Mr BECKER: Did the South Australian Health Commission give you any reason why it took so long to fill the staffing requirements for the Adelaide Remand Centre?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I am only assuming. Why does the honourable member not ask the Minister of Health? Why is he asking me?

Mr BECKER: Was the Minister not concerned with the delay?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The delay was not affecting the operations of the Department of Correctional Services. If a doctor says to us that a prisoner needs to go to the Royal Adelaide Hospital or the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, or any other, we do it: we act on the instructions of the medical staff. Really, it is irrelevant whether we take them to Royal Adelaide, Modbury, or treat them in an infirmary. Certainly, it is more convenient for them to be treated in an infirmary than us having to take them to Royal Adelaide Hospital, but we do hundreds and hundreds of prisoner movements a day, so if there are two trips a day to the hospital, really that is not of great concern.

Madam Chair, I may be out of order here, but I can speculate that it is a question of priorities and resources, the same as the waiting lists at the Royal Adelaide or anywhere else. These things have to be balanced off. If my speculation is correct the best person to jiggle these priorities is the Minister of Health and as you, Madam Chair, said, he will be here and the honourable member can ask him those questions. You will get speculation from me, but you will get facts from him.

Mr BECKER: I do think that the Minister should have some of this information, but did the Health Commission advise the Minister as to how the \$315 000 cost of commissioning the Health Commission part of the remand centre was made up; and is he able to tell the Committee how this was expended?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Do you mean how many nurses and how many doctors?

Mr BECKER: I wanted to know what the \$315 000 was spent on.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again, I am speculating. The \$315 000 is not in my line, but if you, Madam Chair, permit some speculation, I would imagine that it was salaries for doctors and nurses engaged by the Health Commission. That seems to me to be a reasonable assumption but, as it is not my line, I would not know precisely, so again I can only suggest that, when the Minister of Health is here, the question can be directed to him.

[Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.30 p.m.]

Mr BECKER: Just before the dinner adjournment I asked the Minister some questions in relation to the activities of the Health Commission. I checked my source of information and the Health Commission budget was overdrawn considerably. Included in that was \$315 000 in commissioning the Adelaide Remand Centre. In the Minister's budget, there is a variation of \$501 000, and \$429 000 of that is put down to the non-closure of the Adelaide Gaol. Does that mean that that is the wages and expenses of running the Adelaide Gaol, because it was anticipated it would be closed earlier than it is now to be closed?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer is 'No'. What we have at the moment is additional staff for Mobilong as well as Adelaide Gaol. We are in a transition, and you cannot employ your staff on the day you open the gaol. There is obviously some overlap there, but there are also other facets to the sum quoted. I will ask Bill Pryor, who is the Director of Support Services, to enlarge upon that for us.

Mr Pryor: The major reason for that overrun was that we were originally expecting that the Adelaide Gaol prison population would revert down to a figure of 165, and therefore we reduced the staffing from 160 to 131. Prison numbers increased, and we were still running the gaol at over 224, which was the authorised capacity, so we had to get restitution in the budget for the 29 staff that were reduced.

Mr BECKER: Did the department refer plans of the Noarlunga Community Services Centre to the Noarlunga council for approval and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot say definitely if that occurred. However, what I can say is that the Government abides by the law and, if the law required us to do so, I assume we did. If it did not, I assume we did not. Whilst I am not conversant with the exact details of the Planning Act—in fact, I am not conversant with any details of the Planning Act whatever—I am sure that we complied in all instances.

Mr BECKER: What objections has the department received about the proposal for the Noarlunga Community Services Centre, and what action followed? In the *News* of 23 June 1987, an article headed, 'Anger over centre plan' stated:

Noarlunga council wants the State Government to relocate a \$1.45 million community corrections centre. The council has

received complaints from ratepayers about plans to locate the centre in Noarlunga's commercial zone.

The Town Clerk, Mr Chris Catt, said the matter had not been formally discussed with the council. 'We read in the paper about plans to build the centre and some councillors are upset about that,' he said. The proposal was for a single storey building to replace existing offices at Lonsdale and Noarlunga.

It appeared planning for the centre, which would provide supervision for people on parole, probation and community service orders, was well advanced. The Correctional Services Minister had been asked to relocate the centre.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My understanding of that is that some of the residents and apparently some of the councillors assumed we were building a gaol. Of course, we were not; we were only consolidating something that was already there and putting it in more appropriate accommodation. There will be no activity occurring at the new building that was not occurring at the old building. It was merely a consolidation, but there was obviously some misunderstanding. They thought we had decided to build a gaol in the middle of their shopping centre.

Mr BECKER: So, you did receive some objections?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. I think I got a letter from the council, from memory, and again, from memory, I was able to put to rest their fears about precisely what the centre was for.

Mr BECKER: How many staff, and at what classification levels, will be employed at the new centre, and what is the estimated number of clients to be served by the centre?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the precise number of staff. The clients will be the normal clients that were served at the old centre, such as community service orders, and people on probation and parole; that is our clientele in any of our community correction facilities. They will be no different from what they are now, except there will be a nice new building.

Mr BECKER: Can the Minister give any estimate of the number of clients served in that area?

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

Mr BECKER: When will this centre be opened?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: March 1988.

Mr BECKER: What was the cost of call-backs and overtime for the financial year ended 30 June 1987 for each prison or institution, and how do these figures compare with the previous year? The Minister will recall that the Auditor-General in the 1985-86 financial year mentioned on page 57 of his report that call-backs and overtime cost about \$1.2 million or approximately 4.8 per cent of salary costs. In the previous financial year, the call-backs and overtime costs were about \$2 million. The Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee had a look at the system of call-backs within the department, and some significant savings were made the following year. I wonder whether that has continued.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have a table which details those figures for the honourable member. I will make it available to have incorporated in *Hansard*.

NUMBER OF CALLBACKS AND OVERTIME AS AT 30.6.87

	Callbacks (Units)				Overtime (Units)			
	Annual Budget	Ytd Budget	Ytd Actual	+/- Variance	Annual Budget	Ytd Budget	Ytd Actual	+/- Variance
Yatala Labour Prison	2 234	2 234	3 178	944	3 000	3 000	8 577	5 577
Adelaide Gaol	3 371	3 371	1 993	(1 378)	6 388	6 388	6 592	204
Adelaide Remand Centre	1 369	1 369	1 620	251	2 000	2 000	6 573	4 573
Northfield Prison Complex	473	473	787	314	350	350	788	438
Cadell Training Centre	275	275	383	108	1 000	1 000	1 915	915
Mount Gambier Gaol	104	104	245	141	380	380	371	(9)
Port Augusta Gaol	373	373	812	439	3 700	3 700	6 748	3 048
Port Lincoln Prison	159	159	129	(30)	580	580	700	120
Dog Squad	125	125	185	60	700	700	1 014	314
Courts Complex	10	10	14	4	450	450	610	160
	8 493	8 493	9 346	853	18 548	18 548	33 888	15 340
Staff Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	431	431
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	509	509
	8 493	8 493	9 346	853	18 548	18 548	34 828	16 280

COST OF CALLBACKS AND OVERTIME AS AT 30.6.87

	Callbacks (\$)				Overtime (\$)			
	Annual Budget	Ytd Budget	Ytd Actual	+/- Variance	Annual Budget	Ytd Budget	Ytd Actual	+/- Variance
Yatala Labour Prison	357 440	357 440	513 811	156 371	48 000	48 000	142 300	94 300
Adelaide Gaol	539 370	539 370	316 383	(222 987)	102 200	102 200	107 595	5 395
Adelaide Remand Centre	219 030	219 030	256 029	36 999	32 000	32 000	114 031	82 031
Northfield Prison Complex	75 740	75 740	126 136	50 396	5 600	5 600	14 590	8 990
Cadell Training Centre	43 930	43 930	59 936	16 006	16 000	16 000	32 288	16 288
Mount Gambier Gaol	16 650	16 650	35 458	18 808	6 080	6 080	6 301	221
Port Augusta Gaol	59 640	59 640	119 430	59 790	59 200	59 200	112 951	53 751
Port Lincoln Prison	25 420	25 420	19 509	(5 911)	9 280	9 280	12 550	3 270
Dog Squad	20 000	20 000	30 579	10 579	11 200	11 200	17 308	6 108
Courts Complex	1 600	1 600	2 137	537	7 200	7 200	10 499	3 299
	1 358 820	1 358 820	1 479 408	120 588	296 760	296 760	570 413	273 653
Staff Development	0	0	0	0	0	0	7 040	7 040
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	7 997	7 997
	1 358 820	1 358 820	1 479 408	120 588	296 760	296 760	585 450	288 690

Mr BECKER: What is now planned to ensure a reduction of overcrowding in prisons and institutions, and what is the accepted level of numbers of prisoners per cell at the various prisons or institutions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To take the last point first, we prefer all single cell accommodation. It is not always practical to have that. We anticipate that before long we will have that, with the possible exception of E Division at Yatala. E Division at Yatala resulted from the conversion of the old Northfield Security Hospital into prison accommodation. Initially, when we close Adelaide Gaol it will be necessary to have two prisoners in some cells. We have a dormitory at Port Lincoln, which I am sure the honourable member has seen, and that will be converted to single cell accommodation this financial year: funds have been allocated to do that. It is also proposed to increase the size of Port Lincoln Gaol by adding an additional 12 single cells to that institution. Although it is desirable to have single cells, it is not always possible.

The first part of the honourable member's question asked what we are doing. I have detailed extensively to the Committee what we are doing in the area of community corrections. We have a diversion from prison sentences to community service orders. Also, the community service order scheme is being enlarged to deal with fine defaulters, rather than gaoling them. The home detention scheme, too, has some potential to relieve the overcrowding position. But gaols will always be tight. I have never heard anywhere a proposition to build a spare gaol in case an extra 100 prisoners turn up—that would just not be a productive use of taxpayers' money. So, I can never see a stage reached where this system or any other system proposed will allow for a surplus of prison accommodation of any note.

Mr BECKER: Are offenders being turned around at Port Augusta prison? Allegations have been made to the Opposition that some offenders, charged mainly for minor offences, such as non-payment of fines, are travelling to Port Augusta, presenting themselves, being admitted and then being released as soon as the paperwork is processed—in other words, people with warrants out against them. Is the Minister aware of these allegations or whether they are true? If not, will the Minister have this matter investigated? I understand that the manager of a gaol or institution is authorised to release offenders within a certain period, that a manager has some latitude to do that, depending on the condition of the prison at the time.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Under the Correctional Services Act, the Executive Director has the right to release prisoners 30 days early for administrative reasons or for any other reasons that the Executive Director thinks appropriate. That authority is delegated to the managers of the various institutions. I certainly know of no instance of the practice as outlined by the member for Hanson having occurred in South Australia. I understand that it does occur in other States, but to my knowledge it has not occurred in South Australia. I will check with the Port Augusta Gaol tomorrow, but I will be very surprised indeed if that has occurred. It is more likely that what would happen is that people would be held in police cells until such time as accommodation was available in the prisons—and that does happen from time to time. I believe it happened in the Christmas-New Year period this year. I will check with the prison tomorrow, but I am fairly certain that that would not have happened.

Mr BECKER: How many people were admitted to each prison and institution for the financial year ending 30 June 1987? Further, how do these figures compare with those for the previous year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will obtain the precise information for the honourable member.

Mr S.J. BAKER: What now is the condition of the prisoner who was attacked whilst an inmate at Yatala, and reported to be in a coma? When does his gaol term expire, and what will happen to him after that date?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not know his exact condition, because the prisoner is in the care of the Health Commission, but the most recent knowledge that I have (and it is very old information) is that the prisoner was still in a coma. But he has been released from prison, he has been released from his sentence.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON (Mr Duigan): While I acknowledge the relevance of the question to the general correctional services area, I doubt whether the Estimates Committee, which is to examine the finances allocated to departments, is the appropriate place to seek information in respect of individual prisoners.

Mr S.J. BAKER: With respect, Mr Chairman, it obviously has an impact in terms of how the prisons are run.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: In terms of general policy, yes.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Just to follow up: this person was released whilst in a coma from the prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: He has been cleared.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Is he a resident of the RAH. Where is he at the moment?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Julia Farr Centre.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Has any person been charged with the attack on that prisoner? What was the outcome of police and departmental inquiries?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My understanding is that no-one has been charged. Obviously a criminal offence was committed and the police were called immediately, and the police take over from there.

Mr S.J. BAKER: So the Minister is not aware of whether in fact someone has been identified as having been involved in the offence?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have not had a report from the police. They do not report to me, but my knowledge of the incident is that nobody has been charged as there was insufficient evidence to charge anyone. That is not a definite statement; that is just to the best of my knowledge, as it is not my area. But that is my understanding of the position.

Mr S.J. BAKER: So the attacker is anonymous at this stage?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: My understanding is that the police do not have enough evidence to charge anybody.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: I suggest that the member for Mitcham perhaps leave the examination of the police investigation that is underway, which has been referred to by the Minister, and perhaps pursue the matter through other quarters.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My last question relates to the conditions at the women's prison. Is the prison air-conditioned throughout? If not, which parts of it are air-conditioned?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no idea. I cannot be precise about which rooms in the women's prison are air-conditioned, but I will have a very careful examination made into the women's prison.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The Minister hasn't been there?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have been to the women's prison many times, but I must admit that I did not go into all the rooms and check whether or not there was air-conditioning there—it escaped me; I will never look at the place the same again! From now on I will make detailed notes of such matters.

Mr BECKER: Supplementary to that: I understand that part of the women's prison is fully air-conditioned, while the other part is not. The Opposition has received several complaints that during this past winter—a bitterly cold winter—the women did experience problems. I want to know what heating arrangements exist for women prisoners in winter! Is it not appropriate or feasible to air-condition their quarters?

I think that the design of that building and its layout mean that it can be very cold. Some consideration should be given to the condition of the Remand Centre and other modern developments. Is it feasible to air-condition the part of the women's prison that I understand is not air-conditioned, namely, the sleeping quarters?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will have the matter examined. I point out that the women's prison is a relatively modern establishment and was built in the 1960s. It was for many years the pride and joy of the South Australian prison system. In fact, it was the only thing about which the South Australian prison system could be proud. Certainly when the Adelaide Gaol is closed and the upgrading is finished at Yatala, the accommodation within the prisons system will be very good indeed. Some new units are being built at the women's prison that correspond with the units of the cottages. They are low security units and will assist. Certainly the women's prison has not been neglected, but it is, compared with other institutions, a relatively modern building.

Mr BECKER: I can understand the view of women prisoners when they can see what is being developed. Is the women's complex now fully occupied or is it overcrowded? If so, what facilities exist in the country prisons to cater for women prisoners?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: A couple of months ago the women's prison was full for probably the first time since it was built. Generally speaking there is not a shortage of accommodation, and certainly the extra units that we are building this financial year will relieve the occasional pressure that we have on accommodation. Provision exists at Port Augusta and Mount Gambier for women prisoners, but they mainly serve the local population. We occasionally allow women prisoners to transfer to Port Augusta.

The women's prison is a very small community, and for the mental health of women prisoners who are serving a period of many years we attempt now and again to give a change of scenery, albeit another gaol, at Port Augusta. It is much easier for men, as we can move them around a number of country and metropolitan institutions, and this gives them some change of scene every few years. It is more difficult for women, but we attempt to do it as best we are able.

Mr BECKER: Has the Minister had any complaints from women prisoners or women's organisations that perhaps women in prison may be discriminated against in this respect?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is certainly a feeling amongst some women prisoners that they do not have the variety of programs available to them that men have. For example, there is not an industries complex equivalent to that at Yatala. I have some sympathy with that, but we are dealing with such a small number of people with a high turnover (only very few women prisoners are there for any length of time) that it is very difficult to devise a range of programs equivalent to those available at Yatala. The biggest institution, the Adelaide Gaol, has minimal programs (even fewer programs than the women's prison). One cannot say that discrimination exists, but I concede quite readily that the range of programs available to that group of pris-

oners is not as broad as I would like it to be, and that is inherent in having very few people and a very rapid turnover.

Mr BECKER: What is the department's policy in relation to pregnant women sentenced to prison, particularly at a time when it is necessary for them to give birth whilst in prison, and in relation to prisoners keeping their baby with them while in prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: They certainly do not have the baby in prison but in a hospital, as does everybody else. If they have a sentence, we obviously have to carry out the sentence of the court. A case was publicised recently when the court on appeal altered its original sentence, making reference in the decision to the fact that the prison was an undesirable place for a child. Basically I agree with that, but I am not sure how one gets around it if the court says that a person has to be locked up in prison. We must carry out the court sentence and have no discretion.

We have a policy of keeping children up to three years of age. There are pros and cons to that policy and, whether it is appropriate to have a young child in prison for that length of time, I am unsure. I do not have the total answer and I am not sure that anybody else does. My view is that we can and ought to be able to devise a way of dealing through the home detention program with women in prison, particularly those who have babies. We cannot do that to the extent of interfering significantly with the court sentence. If the court states that the person will stay in gaol for three years, it is not for me to say, 'That is okay, you have a baby; turn around and go home for three years.' That would be a gross distortion of what the court had in mind. The court is aware of all the facts in sentencing the prisoner, so it is a difficult problem. However, we allow children to stay there, if we have sufficient accommodation, until they are three years of age.

Mr BECKER: What facilities exist in the women's prison to accommodate young children up to three years of age, and what programs or educational opportunities are provided for these young children to ensure that they are given the normal benefits that other children of their age would get in the community?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: One cannot give normal benefits in an abnormal situation. The question of education for children up to three years old is not a problem. Probably the three-year limit came in when it was time for the child to attend pre-school or kindergarten and it was considered that gaol was not an appropriate place for such children to be going out from every day. The education side is not an issue.

My department does not have any particular facilities. The infirmary is used for those women in prison with children. It is not a huge problem. When such a case comes along it is difficult to deal with but it is not a big problem. We are not inundated with women coming into prison with children so we do not have extensive nurseries, and so on. It is only an occasional problem, not a perpetual large problem.

Mr BECKER: I realise that it is not a huge problem, but it is a one-off situation that creates problems. That is why I am interested in the department's policy and whether it has developed a new policy following the wave of publicity over the last case. There is a new line of thinking in some sections of the community about programs for educating children at the earliest possible age, almost from the time that they can sit up. It depends on what demands can be put on them. Further in regard to women prisoners, what is the likelihood of women prisoners being accepted for the home detention scheme?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: They are considered; there is no discrimination. Women prisoners have been on the home detention scheme. As I stated in response to a couple of previous questions, the home detention scheme can be extended considerably. In my view, women prisoners would benefit from it greatly. My understanding is that most women prisoners are not in prison for crimes of violence, which is the type of crime which quite properly causes alarm in the community. If we can get prisoners of that classification out of prison on home detention, a very significant number of women would fall into that category and would be able to leave the prison on that scheme. Any broadening of the guidelines for home detention would probably benefit women prisoners disproportionately because more of them would fall into that category than would male prisoners.

Mr INGERSON: When will all prisoner labour be removed from canteens? What stock control improvements have been achieved by removing the prisoners?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Prison labour is only used in canteens at the Adelaide Gaol (that problem will solve itself with the closure of the gaol) and Cadell. It may be that prison labour will be removed at Cadell at some time in the future when resources are identified to replace it. It is not a problem at Cadell. One prisoner who is completely reliable has been doing the work for quite a while.

Mr INGERSON: Why has an assets register and an inventory control system not been established to date? How quickly will that objective be achieved? The reference is on page 511.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: It is only a question of identifying the resources to achieve it. It would just be good management to do it. I do not believe that it is a result of any major problem; it is just how things should be done. The member would be aware that, in the past four years, the Department of Correctional Services has had to set its priorities because there was virtually no area of the department that did not require lots of things to be done to it because very little had been done in the previous 145 years of Australia's settlement. This is not high on the list of priorities, but it is desirable and will eventually be achieved—not in response to a huge problem but because it is good management.

Mr INGERSON: My next question concerns page 509 of the yellow book. What was the outcome of the review of prisoner education requirements and what positive action is being taken to assist prisoners to improve and attain their education and academic skills?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That review is due to come before me at the end of September or the middle of October, so until it does, it is impossible for me to comment on it.

Mr INGERSON: What were the significant developments undertaken in 1986-87 for prison industries and what new contracts have been obtained?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the details of the contracts but I will get them for the honourable member. I am advised that there has been an increase of \$200 000 on our investment in the industries complex. I will obtain a detailed list of the contracts and what has been done.

Mr INGERSON: Can the Minister detail what the prison drug unit has achieved since its formation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That program is one of the Health Commission, not of the Department of Correctional Services. We are custodial officers. We have no training or skills in drug programs or any other program. We act on the instructions and advice of the Health Commission, whether it involves counselling or information. If the department receives funds from the Commonwealth, as it has from time to time, it must ask and pay the Health

Commission to put in the programs. My department is a custodial department, not a health department.

Mr INGERSON: I think that the member for Hanson made a similar comment earlier. Whilst I understand the lack of experience in this area, if it is listed in the program, it seems strange to me that the Minister does not have some knowledge of how the program works and what its results might be. I understand what the Minister will say and I understand why he will say it, but it seems strange to me that within prisons he is not aware of these things and of why they are going on.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I could speak for quite a while in a philosophical debate about why a drug program is needed in prisons. I do not understand why the honourable member should see it as strange that custodial officers are not doctors or teachers. I do not find that situation difficult to understand. If the department is supplied with funds because of a particular problem that requires medical attention, treatment or information to be given to prisoners, then the matter is obviously referred to the prison medical service. If a pamphlet is to be prepared, it cannot be prepared by the department, which is only a custodial department which knows nothing about it other than general knowledge gained from day to day activities.

The same situation would apply with a teaching program on literacy. We are not teachers; we are custodial staff. I have seen a figure that suggests about 30 per cent of prisoners have literacy problems. We do not try to correct those problems because we have no experience to do that; we go to the Department of Technical and Further Education, and that department does it. I cannot understand why the honourable member finds it strange. To me it is perfectly logical: if you do not have the expertise then you give the job to somebody who has.

The Hon. J.W. SLATER: Following what has been said by the member for Bragg and the member for Hanson, what is the situation in the other States? Is the Minister aware that the same situation pertains in States where correctional services are custodians of prisoners, but the health authority in other States provides the same sort of service that is provided in South Australia?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot speak for the other States. It may be that in New South Wales, where approximately 3 000 prisoners are cared for by the Department of Corrective Services, that that department has medical and education sections. It may be possible to sustain those sections where 3 000 prisoners are involved. I do not know of my own knowledge what occurs in other States; all I know is that my officers are custodial officers with no training in medicine or education.

Mr INGERSON: I find it unusual and I will use my own background as an example. If a pharmacist is unaware that something is going on it is normal for him to get the necessary expertise, to question what is going on and then to understand the problem in principle. That does not mean that the pharmacist becomes an expert in the field of the information that he has collected. I find it amazing that the Minister cannot say what a unit has achieved. We are not asking, has the Minister carried it out and are his custodians capable of carrying it out? The question is, what has been achieved, and I find it surprising that the Minister would not be aware of what this particular unit, as it relates to drugs, has achieved. I am not asking the Minister to be an expert on drugs because I understand that that expertise is provided by the Health Commission. As a consequence, I ask again: is the Minister aware of what has been achieved?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I undertake to obtain a full report from the Health Commission on this program. We

do not keep records or make evaluations as that would be an unnecessary duplication. It is quite proper that the Health Commission should keep the records and make the evaluations. I am happy to obtain that information for the honourable member for Bragg and I will ask the Minister of Health to supply the member directly with that information.

Mr INGERSON interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The member for Bragg makes a comment. I can assure him that as Minister of Correctional Services I have enough to do worrying about the areas that I have responsibility for without wanting to duplicate the knowledge that the Minister of Health would have in this area or that the Minister of Technical and Further Education would have in the education area or that the Minister of Housing and Construction would have in the construction and maintenance of the prisons. I have enough trouble dealing with the areas for which I have responsibility.

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: We should restrict ourselves to an examination of the correctional services programs and policies that are under review. It is listed in the yellow book as a program that is organised and structured by the Correctional Services Department to be made available to inmates of the correctional services institution and is run by other institutions. Legitimate questions about the program relate to whether or not time is made available by the department for prisoners to be able to participate in the programs.

Mr INGERSON: Mr Chairman, with respect, page 509 sets out the 1986-87 specific targets and objectives of the department and I would have thought that if it was an objective of the department it would be a fairly specific matter that it was involved in. I understand what you are saying, but surely—

The ACTING CHAIRPERSON: Order! It is an objective of the program. The Minister has given an undertaking that a report will be provided to the Committee by the specific provider of that service, namely, the Health Commission. I think we should therefore continue the examination of the specific programs organised under the two program headings that we are considering. The member for Mitcham.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Page 505 of the yellow book summarises the changes in the expenditure and employment receipts of the department. It shows an increase of 57.6 in average full-time equivalents. Can the Minister confirm that this increase is mainly due to the opening of Mobilong prison? Can information be provided about the number of new staff employed in the financial year ended 30 June 1987, that is, how many new people have been brought on stream and how many have resigned during the same period and for what reasons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will obtain a further breakdown of the figures for the honourable member and have them incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr S.J. BAKER: My next question relates to workers compensation. The Minister would have noted in the Auditor-General's Report some comments about the Education Department and the Correctional Services Department in respect of the need to improve occupational safety. I note that the Minister has already alluded to the fact that the marine and harbors experiment has shown some significant gains in this area which will hopefully spread to other areas. Can the Minister provide information as to how many staff were on leave for workers compensation reasons during 1986-87; how many are currently on workers compensation, for how long, and for what reasons? Where in the departmental budgets are workers compensation costs shown in relation to each department? I note that there is a covering

item within the Labour portfolio of \$45 million for 1987-88. However, I have been informed that each department will be charged for workers compensation against their own budgets and I understand that this also is a new initiative.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will ask Mr Pryor to answer the technical side of that question in relation to where it is charged and where it is not in relation to correctional services. From those figures the Committee can extrapolate information regarding other departments. The average number of correctional officers on workers compensation throughout the year was 33 and at the moment that figure is 35. I cannot give a breakdown as to the reasons why they are on workers compensation but, if you wish, I can obtain that information and have it inserted in *Hansard*.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In relation to my previous question I asked whether or not the Minister could confirm that the increases were due mainly to Mobilong. The related questions were, how many new employees were put on the payroll during 1986-87 and how many resigned during the same period?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have a table which details all our staff as average full-time equivalents. As members would know, it is quite misleading to give the Committee the number of people, but that information is available and I will have it inserted in *Hansard*.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
STAFFING LEVELS

Average Full Time Equivalents	
Actual 1986-87	1 005.5
Proposed 1987-88	1 063.1
	57.6
being:	
Mobilong/Adelaide Gaol decommissioning	18.0
'E' Division	26.8
Fine Default Scheme	8.4
Yatala Segregation Unit	5.3
AIDS Strategy	1.5
JIS Development	1.0
Adelaide Gaol overcrowding ..	2.1
Reduction in vacancies	7.9
	71.0
less	
Savings on closure of Adelaide Gaol	10.9
Reduced activity—Mobilong ..	2.5
	13.4
	57.6
Target 30.6.87	980.9
Target 30.6.88	* 1 055.6
	74.7
Initial 86-87	980.9
plus:	
Restorations	
Adelaide Gaol	29.0
Advanced Recruitment	4.0
Home Detention	10.5
	43.5
Revised 86-87	1 024.4
Additional 1987-88	
'E' Division	54.0
Fine Default Scheme	11.7
YLP Segregation Unit	6.0
CSO Supervisors	4.5
AIDS Strategy	1.5
JIS Development	1.0
	78.7
	1 103.1

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
STAFFING LEVELS

less:	
Reduced Activity—Mobilong ..	5.0
Closure of Adelaide Gaol	26.0
Home Detention (at 86-87 levels)	6.5
AO/EO Savings	1.0
	38.5
	* 1 064.6
Target 30.6.87	980.9
Actual 30.6.87	1 044.9
	64.0
being:	
Non Reduction Adelaide Gaol ..	29.0
Home Detention	4.0
Training School at 30 June	24.0
CSO Supervisors	5
Recruited in advance	2
	64

* Treasury accepts that a discrepancy exists within the TARGET 30.6.88 and a submission for adjustment has been made.

The specific details of the staff increases in the financial year 1986-87 were as follows: the assessment unit, 2; Adelaide Remand Centre weekly paid, 6; courts unit, 2; support staff, Adelaide Gaol, 1; community corrections, 1; Mobilong task force, 5; home detention, 4; training school, recruitment for vacancies and expansion (and that is the normal recruitment intake), 25; reduce clerical vacancies, 2 and that gives a total of 48 FTEs.

Mr S.J. BAKER: I thank the Minister for that information, but the original question really related to staff turnover within the department.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory, I think that out of a staff of about 1 100 we average about 35 to 40 a year.

Mr S.J. BAKER: That is a surprisingly low figure, but I will take your advice.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: In actual fact, historically it is a high figure. In previous years it was about six and, if somebody left the department, it was quite an occasion.

An honourable member interjecting:

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Exactly. As the honourable member says, it is a very low percentage turnover.

Mr S.J. BAKER: The other question that remained unanswered related to how workers compensation is represented in the departmental budgets.

Mr Pryor: Actually, we get a premium figure which is split between our programs. That figure has increased this financial year.

Mr S.J. BAKER: So, within these budget items, it is under administrative costs?

Mr Pryor: It comes under 'Salaries and wages and related payments'.

Mr BECKER: Page 508 of the yellow book refers to source of funds, payments of a recurrent nature, and it states that interagency support services not paid for in 1986-87 was proposed to be \$8 742 000. The actual outcome in 1986-87 was \$12 212 000, which is almost a 50 per cent increase, and this year it is proposed that it will be \$13 032 000. What is the reason for the large increase last financial year in the final outcome and what does that \$13 000 000 this financial year cover?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will return to that question in a moment.

Mr BECKER: The Auditor-General commented that it is very difficult to link up the yellow book with the Estimates of Payments, so that is why I asked that previous question. Earlier this afternoon I believe that the Minister advised that during the past 12 months about 95 recruits were

trained for the service in the department. How many of those recruits were offered full-time employment with the department and how many recruits from those initial training programs have remained with the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not have the precise figures, but usually in every intake one or two trainees do not complete the initial training course. Of those who do, all would be offered full-time employment on a probationary basis as is the case for everybody else who comes into the Public Service. I think that probationary period is for 12 months. The overwhelming majority stay with us. As I pointed out, staff turnover is relatively low at about 45 a year. I can have those 95 recruit positions examined individually and obtain that precise head count.

Mr BECKER: As the Minister has given a comparatively low turnover figure, I think that really we are getting down to the selection of the recruits in the training program; in other words, with a low turnover, does this mean that the department's evaluation of those who offer themselves for the recruitment program is successful, because you can recruit any number of people? Of course, it is a matter of how many will be retained and it is a very expensive program. The department must have developed a considerable amount of skills in selecting the right recruits in the first place.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We are quite proud of our selection procedures and we are very proud of our recruits. We have a large pool from which to choose. Again, from memory, we took in 25 or 27 at the last intake to the training school, and we had 600 applications for those places. We do our own assessments and private management consultants, Winter Craig, assist us with the selection process. As the member for Hanson said, it is a very expensive program. It is easy enough to pick up 25 people off the street and put them in the training program, but the chance of their being any good or staying is pretty remote. Correctional services custodial work is a difficult but very satisfying job, requiring certain qualities and attributes that not everybody in the community has. It is a very carefully tailored selection process, and the popularity of the department and the esteem in which the department is held is indicated by the very large number of applicants we have for our vacancies. The vacancies are mainly caused through expansion, not through resignations.

Mr BECKER: Is the Minister able to advise the Committee why there is this large number of applications for employment within the department? Is there a discernible trend amongst applicants, whether from the armed forces, the police or any one section of the community, or is it perceived that television programs such as *Prisoner* have made working in the Department of Correctional Services a popular occupation?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is no doubt that the image of the correctional services officer in this State has risen enormously in the past few years. I think it is unfortunate and unfair that in the past correctional services officers were not held in the esteem that they deserved. It is a service provided to the community in a similar vein to that provided by the police, firemen, teachers and a number of other professions, and it is at last being recognised as such. It is a job that, as I say, is difficult. It certainly has its livelier moments, but the capacity for prison officers to be creative in their work and in their relationships with prisoners is now high indeed. I am delighted that my prison officers are very proud to be prison officers, proud to wear the uniform and proud to show that they serve the State in a very professional and commendable way.

Mr BECKER: Does the Minister have a comparison of figures for the institutional industries for the past two financial years?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, I have a document which provides the relevant figures and which I now give to the Clerk for insertion in *Hansard*.

COMPARISON OF INSTITUTIONAL INDUSTRIES
Year Ended 30 June 1986

	Contingencies	Less Credit Internal	Transfers External	Net Contingencies	Production Receipts	(Profit) Loss
Yatala—						
Beef cattle	6 099	3 740	1 924	435	60	375
Cereal	1 207			1 207		1 207
Poultry	14 244	17 605	8 452	(11 813)	1 373	(13 186)
Vegetable	4 052	3 551	1 610	(1 109)	5	(1 114)
Boot shop	45 413	15 534	9 681	20 198	1 727	18 471
Carpentry	40 074	3 719	4 046	32 309	20 585	11 724
Engineering	32 820	6 995	1 202	24 623	35 054	(10 431)
Sheetmetal	20 224	3 743	2 711	13 770	50 607	(36 837)
Spray	34 331	1 790	1 672	30 869	19 408	11 461
Garage	2 779	2 786	2 288	(2 295)	1 391	(3 686)
Laundry	10 359	118	1 336	8 905	4 118	4 787
Locksmith	443	300	294	(151)		(151)
	212 045	59 881	35 216	116 948	134 328	(17 380)
Adelaide Gaol						
Adelaide Gaol	88 102	31 311	33 371	23 420	15 447	7 973
Cadell Training Centre	128 508	67 605	64 768	(3 865)	104 356	(108 221)
Mount Gambier Gaol	748	2 683		(1 935)		(1 935)
Port Augusta Gaol	7 142			7 142	479	6 663
Port Lincoln Prison	16 617	14 680	1 972	(35)	2 216	(2 251)
	453 162	176 160	135 327	141 675	256 826	(115 151)

Year Ended 30 June 1987

	Contingencies	Less Credit Internal	Transfers External	Net Contingencies	Production Receipts	(Profit) Loss
Yatala—						
Beef cattle	5 461	7 921	152	(2 612)		(2 612)
Cereal	5 352	2 000		3 352		3 352
Poultry	11 706	10 884	11 530	(10 708)	418	(11 126)
Vegetable	1 932	2 566	2 478	(3 112)	65	(3 177)
Boot shop	24 369	31 207	794	(7 632)	1 250	(8 882)
Carpentry	21 772	2 245	3 585	15 942	26 806	(10 864)
Engineering	27 248	3 984	1 796	21 468	35 790	(14 322)
Sheetmetal	34 299	6 433	276	27 590	63 189	(35 599)
Spray	33 107	3 130	3 461	26 516	26 395	121
Garage	3 905	3 223	2 460	(1 778)	303	(2 081)
Laundry	16 507		7 467	9 040	5 781	3 259
Locksmith	2 881	2 088	1 209	(416)	4 818	(5 234)
	188 539	75 681	35 208	77 650	164 815	(87 165)
Adelaide Gaol						
Adelaide Gaol	106 291	52 782	51 051	2 458	37 430	(34 972)
Cadell Training Centre	133 629	86 039	68 988	(21 398)	92 438	(113 836)
Mount Gambier Gaol	1 724	2 702		(978)		(978)
Port Augusta Gaol	8 039	696		7 343	1 168	6 175
Port Lincoln Prison	27 383	26 454	4 181	(3 252)	4 359	(7 611)
	465 605	244 354	159 428	61 823	300 210	(238 387)

Mr BECKER: In relation to a question that I asked previously about inter-agency support, does the Minister have the information that I sought?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes, I have that information here concerning the reasons for the differences. It is not terribly illuminating. I now ask Mr Pryor to go through the differences and the reasons, as far as we know, why the agencies charged us differently from what they first indicated.

Mr Pryor: The variation between the budgeted \$8.7 million and the \$12.2 million actually spent in 1986-87 resulted mainly from an increase in debt servicing of \$3 million, an increase in the Department of Housing and Construction's maintenance costs of \$106 000, an increase in Health Commission services costs of \$388 000, and a saving on TAFE

prisoner education of \$53 000. That represents a \$3.4 million variation in inter-agency support services not paid for.

Mr BECKER: How is the figure made up this financial year? Proposed expenditure is some \$13 032 000, and it is very difficult to link up the various lines in the yellow book with the details provided in the Estimates of Payments. Does the Minister have a more precise figure somewhere?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think it would be easier for us to examine the question in detail when it is printed in *Hansard* and then to attempt to get some more information for the honourable member. It appears that we may have to go to other agencies to get that information—for example to ascertain why the Department of Housing and Construction has charged differently. I assume that it is because we did not have as much work done by the Department of

Housing and Construction. However, in the interests of providing more exact reasons, it would probably be better if we took the question on notice and possibly contacted the other agencies involved.

Mr BECKER: It is interesting that the Minister has referred to a charge made by the Department of Housing and Construction, when I thought that earlier in the session he said that there were no details of that account charged to the department. So, I would be grateful if the Minister would take the question on notice and examine my previous questions and the answer he has just given to the Committee. I would appreciate a detailed reply.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will certainly do that. However, my information is that this is not money paid out but merely an advice. I understand that this relates to services that we have had that we have not paid for. It is merely information from the department—it keeps the records, not us.

Mr BECKER: I would still be interested in a reply.

Mr INGERSON: How cost effective is the community service order scheme? How many persons have been placed under the scheme in the past 12 months? How do these figures compare with those for the previous year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will get the figures for the honourable member, but the community service orders scheme is very cost effective indeed when compared with keeping somebody in prison. There is at the moment, as I told the Committee earlier, somewhere in the order of 600 people on correctional service orders. That is a fairly stable average. If by 'cost effective' the honourable member means in preference to keeping them in prison, we would have to duplicate the prison system if those 600 people turned up and required prison accommodation. About \$40 million is the current budget. If we increased the prison's population by 600 people we would be up for another \$20 million or \$30 million. The community service orders scheme costs us every year \$984 000. That is cost effective compared with having those people in prison. There is no comparison, but I will get the cost per person for those on the scheme.

The CHAIRPERSON: Earlier this afternoon the Minister undertook to provide those costs in answer to a question by another member and I suggest it be provided once rather than duplicated.

Mr INGERSON: Has the department experienced an increase in the number of offenders being remanded and/or sentenced to prison and, if so, what are the reasons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: For reasons not known to me (although they may be known to the Attorney-General as he has responsibility for the Office of Crime Statistics), South Australia traditionally has a high rate of remanding of prisoners in comparison with other States. The honourable member will recall the new Bail Act. Part of the purpose of that Act was the expectation that there would be a reduction in the number of prisoners on remand. That happened initially, but not for very long—only for a few weeks until the number of remandees returned very quickly to its traditional very high level.

One can only speculate on the reason. I do not want to do that as it would be unfair on the Judiciary if I speculated on why it was doing what I perceived to be the wrong thing in some areas when I do not have the full facts as it does in determining whether or not somebody will be remanded in custody. It would be unfair for me to make that comment, but certainly they manage in other States to have a lower level of remand and that would, without any doubt, alleviate the overcrowding problem we have in our prisons. If we had the Australian average of remandees, it would help us enormously. However, it is outside the control of

the Government. The courts act within the legislation and within their discretion and it is something we have to manage.

Mr INGERSON: Is any communication possible between the courts and the remand centre to advise the centre in particular about likely numbers that will come through late in the day or week?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The Department of Correctional Services has developed certain skills in prediction. It has learnt over the years that certain times of the week, month or year are busier than others. I am not quite sure why. I am not an expert in this area but the department is expert or, at least, has developed some expertise. Even with all the expertise in the world and the ability to predict that, for some reason, the second week in August is always a busy time, there is not a great deal that the department can do about it. Just knowing about it does not really help. If the department does not have spare accommodation, the knowledge is not a great deal of use. I do not know whether the Attorney-General has spoken to the Chief Justice about this but any formal contacts between the Government and the Judiciary would be through the Attorney-General. I certainly have not spoken with him. There may have been some informal discussions by staff of the Department of Correctional Services with the courts but it would not be at a higher level than that, if that has occurred.

Mr INGERSON: How many prisoners or offenders are currently on remand and where are they held?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: To the end of June 1987, 187 prisoners were on remand compared with 168 the previous year. Forty-eight were held in the Adelaide Gaol, 105 at the Adelaide Remand Centre, two at Yatala, seven at Northfield, 10 at the Northfield Security Hospital, 12 at Port Augusta, one at Port Lincoln and two at Mount Gambier.

Mr BECKER: What was the maximum number of prisoners ever held at Adelaide Gaol and what is the number of prisoners currently held?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory about 283 prisoners are being held at Adelaide Gaol this week. I will find the precise figure for the Committee, but it would not be much different from that. I do not know what the highest figure has been. I do not know how far back records go but since I have been Minister at one stage 350 prisoners were held there although accommodation at the gaol is limited to 240. To say the least, life was interesting at Adelaide Gaol during that period.

Mr BECKER: An article in the *News* dated 19 November 1986 stated that the South Australian Police Association was planning legal action against prison authorities to force Adelaide Gaol to take more prisoners. Did the Police Association take legal action against the department or the State Government to force the gaol to take more prisoners and, if not, why? What was the reason for the dispute between the Police Association and the department?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I cannot speak for the Police Association as to why no action was taken, but the reason for the problem was that the Adelaide Gaol could not physically accommodate any more prisoners. Discussions were held with the police, and Cabinet allocated certain funds to the Police Department to enable temporary arrangements to be made for approximately three dozen prisoners to be held for a few weeks. The situation peaked at that time, but has not been a great problem since.

Mr BECKER: What inquiries have been undertaken into prison work and, if none, why? The ALP convention in 1981 resolved by resolution 4.7:

The introduction of programs to ensure that prison work is to the greatest possible extent productive and of benefit to prisoners and closely linked with prisoner education. Prisoners should have

advantages of educational programs which assist in rehabilitation and create opportunities for employment after release.

Although that resolution was carried in 1981, I do not think anything has changed today.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: That is not correct; things have changed enormously. There is no comparison between the prison system of 1981 and the present system. The opening of the industries complex at Yatala is evidence of the dramatic change that has taken place. There has also been a significant increase in the education programs supplied to prisoners by the Department of Technical and Further Education. The Yatala prison is now a labour prison. The industries complex there is magnificent and has the capacity to provide levels of training and work for many more prisoners than are currently accommodated. The planning for that facility was excellent. When the number of prisoners in Yatala is increased to about 300 the industries complex will amply accommodate those prisoners.

It is difficult to provide work for all prisoners in Adelaide Gaol. That has been a major problem—there is nothing to do for at least half the prisoners. Work is provided for the other half in running the gaol, in the bakery and in cleaning and other areas, but obviously that problem will be solved by the closing of the gaol. There is a lot of scope for employment at Mobilong, which has a bakery that will service all the institutions in South Australia. That is a very large industry. There is a large TAFE complex within the Mobilong prison.

There is also provision for a plastics industry. In 1981, apart from Cadell and Port Lincoln, which has a very good farm, these things were not available. By and large the implied criticism at the ALP State Convention about lack of industries was valid and it has been corrected. The industries complex was started, I think, in the time of the previous Government, so perhaps it also read the ALP policy and decided to do something about it, but there is no comparison between the prison system in 1981 and the prison system in 1987.

Mr BECKER: I really was talking about philosophy. I think that the philosophy that was expressed in 1981 still stands today and I have no disagreement with that philosophy: we have to undertake programs in the prisons that involve prisoner education. We have to improve that standard and the prisoners should have advantages in rehabilitation and opportunities should be created for their employment after their release. That is why I think the work release college is a wonderful scheme. Also, that is why I am concerned that prisoners should be assessed and programs should be established so that we have a system where there is work preparation and, when they are released, they will have employment, affordable accommodation and sufficient funds to survive until they receive their first pay cheque. Have any investigations been undertaken to assess whether prisoners, upon their release, do have sufficient funds until they receive their first pay cheque?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not believe that the Department of Correctional Services or anybody else has done any such investigation, but if people are imprisoned for a substantial length of time (perhaps months or years), then that would apply—they would have enough funds out of the savings from their pay in the prison to tide them over. In any event, the Department for Community Welfare or the Department of Social Security would assist in that process. The accommodation problem is much more difficult, but the Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service (OARS) has a number of houses in and around the metropolitan area that it makes available to ex-prisoners. Further, an emergency housing program is operated, I think, by the Department of Housing and Construction or by the Housing Trust

so, whilst it is a difficult problem, a number of agencies are very happy to assist.

Mr BECKER: It has been put to me that occasionally a prisoner is released back into society, but he has little money to enable him to survive until either social security is able to help or, if he has employment, he receives his first pay cheque. That is something we will have to monitor. Are all prisoners engaged in useful and productive work and do they undergo rehabilitation programs to improve their integration into society?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Certainly, rehabilitation programs are there in the main. Adelaide Gaol is not the greatest environment in which to promote rehabilitation that I have seen. The programs are there but they have to be taken advantage of. You cannot compel somebody to use the programs; you cannot force people to be rehabilitated if they do not want to. So, you are very much in the hands of the prisoners themselves. Rehabilitation has to come from the prisoner, but certainly I believe that sufficient programs are available in our institutions, with the exception of Adelaide Gaol, to assist that process.

Without wanting to go into any great deep philosophical debate on the issue, it is extraordinarily difficult to get rehabilitation from people whilst you are punishing them. It is not the greatest atmosphere to be punishing them with one hand and trying to rehabilitate them with the other. There is a certain incompatibility with the two processes which makes it very difficult. This is one of the good features of parole legislation. Irrespective of which system is used, the potential for rehabilitation is in my view much greater on parole than it is in prison, and any parole system lends itself to rehabilitation much more than keeping people in prison. You have then, to a greater extent, separated the punishment from the rehabilitation. However, that is a debate which criminologists and penologists have endlessly, and I do not know that they have come to any firm conclusions.

Mr BECKER: How many prisoners are working in our prisons and paid accordingly, and why does the allocation of \$882 000 in the budget represent a figure that was paid last financial year? In other words, it is so close to what was paid last year. Does this therefore mean that there will be no increase in payments for the number of persons employed within our prisons?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I think we have approximately the same number as last year. Whilst there are variations in pay, the pay in our prisons is so small that a 10 per cent increase does not make that much difference. If we are talking somewhere in the region of \$20 to \$25 a week for prisoners who are working, any increase in pay, whilst it is welcomed by the prisoners, is not significant in the amount of cash actually handed over. Most of our prisoners do work; most have a job. I think the average pay in the prisons is somewhere around \$20 to \$23—something of that order. If prisoners do not work or take part in education programs, that figure reduces dramatically to something in the order of \$10 to \$11 a week. That is for very few prisoners. Most prisoners want to work, and we try to find work for most prisoners or credit them as working if they take part in education programs.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Can the Minister inform the Committee what particular problems are currently experienced in the operation of S and D Division at Yatala Labour Prison?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I do not think there is any difference in operating the place at this time compared with last year. It is a totally inadequate facility and, as you will have seen in the capital works program for this year, S and D Division will be replaced with a purpose built segregation

unit within the grounds of Yatala, which will mean we do not have to use S and D as a special separation part of the prison. It will revert to being ordinary prison accommodation.

The S and D unit is no different really from the rest of the prison. I would welcome any honourable member going to have a look at it at any time; it is only another wing of the prison that we keep separate for prisoners who are having a great deal of difficulty in living a normal life amongst their fellow prisoners and the staff in the institution. It is not physically different to any other part of the prison.

Mr S.J. BAKER: In particular, the question relates to the fact that, whilst there is a very good reason why these prisoners are in S and D, they are allowed out into the light of day for only some 3 1/2 hours per day, and some questions have been asked about that. Suggestions have been made that other jurisdictions interstate and overseas have found that this has not been particularly productive, even though I appreciate that we must have tighter security and a higher element of security in the S and D Division than elsewhere. Will the Minister review the number of hours that inmates are locked away, or will he await the new construction before any changes are made?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: These things are always under review in the day-to-day operation of the prison. It depends very much on the number of prisoners that we have in the S and D unit. 'S and D' is something of a misnomer. I have not noticed any disciplinary provisions, although I could be corrected on that. It is just an isolated wing for particularly difficult characters in the prison system. It is virtually the same accommodation as provided everywhere else; it is just that we keep that separate.

The question of exercise depends on how many people we have in there and what staff resources are available. Also, quite often there are lots of problems in exercising prisoners who are in S and D together. We have a very small exercise yard, and thus it is very difficult to have any number of prisoners in there at any given time. It is a very, very small yard, but that will change when the new segregation unit is on line—and one must remember particularly that it is purpose-built and that we have taken into account the problems that have occurred in the S and D unit at Yatala. When I first became the Minister and I was going around the gaol, I was quite surprised when I saw the S and D unit. I expected something quite different; it is just a very ordinary wing of the gaol. It is to keep the prisoners out of the main prison population. It is not particularly different: there are no chains up on the walls for shackling prisoners; they are not made to march around for 20 hours a day or sit under special lights, or anything like that—it is just a separate wing so that we can keep the difficult characters under closer surveillance and stop them creating a bit of havoc amongst the general prison population or amongst the staff.

Mr S.J. BAKER: How many prisoners are currently contained in the S and D unit? How many prisoners will be catered for in the new purpose-built facility in the new construction?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The new segregation facilities hold 24 people. I do not know the number in S and D today, but will have the figure incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr INGERSON: What is the longest term a remandee has served in South Australia before being sentenced and what was the reason for the delay?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have no idea and no way of finding out, I would think.

Mr INGERSON: What is the average length of remand of an offender before sentencing?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will obtain that information.

Mr INGERSON: If we can get the average we should be able to get the longest serving.

Mr BECKER: The general knowledge of the staff might help there. Somebody was detained for quite a long time and I hope that that situation is not occurring today.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: So do I, but if it is I have no control over something that the courts impose. I could ask around whether anybody can remember, but the information would be anecdotal rather than empirical.

Mr S.J. BAKER: Some prisoners who have had mental problems and have been detained at Her Majesty's pleasure have remained under remand for very long periods.

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I would not have thought that that was the case. People are on remand for a specific purpose before their case is decided. I would be surprised if that is more than a few days in most cases, a few weeks in a number of cases and a few months in a declining number. If somebody was on remand for a year, I would be absolutely staggered. The Office of Crime Statistics may know that and out of curiosity I will refer the question to the Attorney-General. I would like to know myself. We are talking of months and not of years.

Mr INGERSON: How many interstate prisoners are accommodated in South Australian prisons and what are the reasons for that?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: If the honourable member means how many have been transferred from interstate prisons to here, I will obtain those figures.

Mr INGERSON: What are the interstate swapping arrangements?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Again, that legislation is the responsibility if the Attorney. He has the responsibility of they are brought back to this State for trial and I have the responsibility if they are brought back on welfare grounds. I will obtain the figures on that.

Mr BECKER: The Minister will recall earlier this year that I led a deputation of some members of the RSL whose hall was in the grounds of Yatala. I have not received a reply. Has the Minister considered RSL's case favourably?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have had discussions with the Prison Officers Social Club, which seems to have responsibility for the hall. I have made some suggestions that, if the hall is to stay, some changes must be made. I have asked the club to come up with suggestions for changes to make the hall more secure and it has done so in the past couple of days. I do not want to demolish the hall just for the sake of demolishing it. Millions and millions of dollars have been spent to make Yatala more secure, and that has been achieved. There is no question of that. From a history of 20 or 30 escapes a year, there has been only one escape involving three prisoners in the past three years. The Northfield hall has the potential to be a security hazard. How much is a matter of debate, but if it is to stay it must be made more secure. I have not made a decision on the demolition of the hall. I am having the club's suggestions assessed to see whether they are realistic proposals that will help. When that assessment on the security aspects comes back to me, I will contact the Prison Officers Social Club and let it know of my decision. The club is well aware of that and I have kept in close contact with it.

Mr BECKER: I understand that a prisoner at the Northfield women's prison complex complained that on 18 June this year she requested permission to hand over a Jason wool underlay blanket to a visitor. She gave a prisoner's request form to the chief at 7.30 a.m. on that day and

permission was not given in writing. Some confusion existed between the officers about approval. Nevertheless the item was handed over on verbal approval. The prisoner advised me that she has been punished for not waiting for written approval. What is the procedure for handling prison request forms to hand over parcels from within correctional institutions?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I know nothing of the incident; nobody has contacted me about this underblanket. I will have the incident investigated to see whether anything should be done and let the honourable member know. There is a departmental instruction concerning property leaving and entering the gaol and I will have a copy of that instruction sent to the honourable member.

The CHAIRPERSON: On the face of it the question seems very remote from the Estimates of Payments.

Mr BECKER: It is part of the discipline of that particular prison because this prisoner has been penalised for not complying with the instructions. She alleges that she is being punished for doing something that was given verbal approval and for not having obtained approval in writing. Discipline within the prison system must be maintained and prisoners understand the rules and regulations better than most. This matter is of significant interest because it may have been referred to the Ombudsman and the person involved may have been harshly treated. Have all managers of the department's prisons and institutions been appointed permanently and, if not, why not?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: The answer is 'No'. Until the Adelaide Gaol closes permanent appointments cannot be made, but it is not necessarily desirable that we do. It is highly desirable that employees, including managers, are moved around in the system in order to gain experience. Just because a person successfully manages one institution,

which may be a small institution, does not mean he is fulfilling his potential. I encourage managers to move around and gain experience because some of our managers are relatively inexperienced. That situation is inevitable in any system where people are coming in and feeling their way. I am not averse to people moving around the system; in fact I encourage it.

Mr DUIGAN: It has been drawn to my attention that the Committee will not be specifically examining a capital works line for correctional services this evening because the major part of the capital works relates to housing and construction. Some major projects are listed in the capital works program which total \$45.5 million, the proposed expenditure in 1987-88 being \$10 million or \$11 million. The Program Estimates on page 505 indicate a total capital expenditure for the department for this year of \$13.6 million. What are the other projects that make up the difference between the ones listed here and the total figure?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I will take that question on notice. It appears to be the same question that was asked earlier. The capital works budget not only relates to the buildings, for which the Department of Housing and Construction is responsible, but also to capital items such as motor vehicles, etc., which are also listed. I will obtain a breakdown of those items for the honourable member to illustrate the difference between the two figures.

Mr DUIGAN: The total program indicated in the capital works program for all projects listed in the department is the \$45 million limit. Could the Minister indicate over what time that total expenditure is to be spent?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I can provide a table containing the forward projections as to what year projects start and finish. I will have that table inserted in *Hansard*.

CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM FOR YEAR 1987-88

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Item No.	Location and Description of Work	Public Works Committee Report No. and Year	Estimated Total Cost	Actual Total Expenditure to 30.6.87	Actual Expenditure 1986-87	Proposed Expenditure in 1987-88	*Ongoing Expenditure into 1988-89	Planned Commencement Date	Planned Completion Date
			\$'000	\$	\$	\$'000	\$'000		
<i>Correctional Services—Summary</i>									
<i>Annual Provisions:</i>									
	Land and Property				20 025		100		
	Residences—Cadell	PP 153 (Apr. 83)			79 184				
	Minor Works				736 346	850	1 000		
	Investigation and Design				245 861	250	100		
	Final Payments on Completed Projects				385 443				
	Total Annual Provisions				1 466 859	1 100	1 200		
	Total Completed Works—1986-87		25 636	25 225 630	7 290 816	405			
	Total Works in Progress		32 340	26 352 856	18 989 940	5 018	965		
	Total New Works		19 250	444 025	435 582	6 477	10 028		
	Total Correctional Services		77 226	52 022 520	28 183 206	13 000	12 193		
	Deduct Inflation in 88-89 on Major Works (say 87)						879		
	Total Commitment at 30.6.88 (87-88 prices)						11 314*		
	*Increase due to \$1.0M increase in likely cost of Yatala—F Division								
	Commitment Level at 30.6.88 as requested by Treasury						10 247		
<i>Works in Progress</i>									
	Cadell Training Centre:								
	Bulk Gas Supply		69	68 028	63 693	—			
	New kitchen	PP 141 (Jun. 86)	796	520 155	485 349	275		Oct. 86	Sep. 87
	Mobilong Prison	PP 150 (Oct. 85)	20 400	17 912 434	14 211 438	2 487		Dec. 86	Sep. 87
	Yatala Labour Prison:								
	B Division—Upgrading	PP 166 (Mar. 85)	8 400	5 434 386	3 008 918	2 000	965	Dec. 85	Sep. 87
	Forecourt Dev./Peter Brown Drive		525	435 843	188 876	89		May 85	Aug. 88
	Operations and Admissions Building	PP 146 (Aug. 85)	2 150	1 982 010	1 031 675	167		Dec. 85	Sep. 87
	Total Works in Progress		32 340	26 352 856	18 989 949	5 018	965		
<i>New Works</i>									
	Adelaide Gaol—De-commissioning		200			100	100	Feb. 88	Aug. 88
	Mt Gambier—Community Corrections		600			97	503	Dec. 88	Mar. 89
	Noarlunga Community Services Centre		1 450	63 311	58 078	1 000	386	Jul. 87	Mar. 88
	Northfield Prison Complex:								
	Administration Building		300			40	260	Apr. 88	Oct. 88
	Low Security Female Accom.		400			40	360	Apr. 88	Mar. 89
	Pt Lincoln Prison—Additional Accommodation		2000			120	1 100	Jun. 88	Nov. 89

(1) Item No.	(2) Location and Description of Work	(3) Public Works Committee Report No. and Year	(4) Estimated Total Cost	(5) Actual Total Expenditure to 30.6.87	(6) Actual Expenditure 1986-87	(7) Proposed Expenditure in 1987-88	(8) *Ongoing Expenditure into 1988-89	(9) Planned Commencement Date	(10) Planned Completion Date
			\$'000	\$	\$	\$'000	\$'000		
Yatala Labour Prison:									
	E Division	PP 188A (May 87)	2 950	204 303	201 093	2 400	345	Aug. 87	Feb. 88
	F Division		7 500	1 085	1 085	480	5 500	Mar. 88	Jun. 89
	Segregation Unit	PP 187A (Jun. 87)	3 850	175 326	175 326	2 200	1 474	Aug. 87	Jul. 88
Total New Works			19 250	444 025	435 582	6 477	10 028		

Mr BECKER: If there is any confusion over that \$13 million on page 508 of the yellow book, I referred to recurrent costs and of course the member for Adelaide referred to those of a capital nature. In relation to managers of our various prisons, do I take it that, by not making them permanent appointments, we have several acting managers with that new title and, if so, can the Minister nominate which prisons have acting managers?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: There is nothing new about the title of acting manager. At the moment only Adelaide and Northfield have acting managers.

Mr BECKER: In my experience in areas of commerce, I take it that, in relation to an acting manager, you might place somebody in that position for, say, three months, but does the Minister envisage that these office holders might act in those positions for a period of, say, two years or longer?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: No. I would be delighted if I could be sure that people would stay as managers for two years and then move on. Our turnover is much more rapid than that, especially given our building program over the past few years. There has been a significant influx into the managerial ranks and people are now managing our institutions on an acting basis when relieving for annual leave, etc. I am sure that three years ago they would never have believed that they would be in that position some three years later. I am delighted that that is happening. We have some excellent people who are being given the responsibility, as a rule first in our country institutions, but then also as assistant managers in our larger institutions to gain some experience. They will turn out to be very good managers by the time that we have tested them in the various institutions.

Mr BECKER: How much fringe benefits tax was paid by the department last financial year and what is the budgeted amount for this financial year?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: From memory, it was approximately \$75 000 last year, but we will obtain the precise figure.

Mr BECKER: Can the Minister advise the Committee what now is the incidence of illegal drugs and alcohol within our institutions and has there been a reduction in that incidence in the past 12 months?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I have already incorporated in *Hansard* a table giving details. That table also shows last year's figures.

Mr BECKER: The allegations were made to me that there has been a significant reduction, and I wondered what program or surveillance was being used by the department to detect the incidence of alcohol within our prisons, particularly at Adelaide Gaol?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: We do all the normal things such as cell searches on a spot basis. Our prison officers are very observant. We also use the Dog Squad, as the dogs are trained to detect drugs. However, our principal weapon of course is the skill of the correctional services officers. It may well be that there is not a greater or lesser incidence of drugs in the gaols: it is just that we get smarter at finding them.

Mr BECKER: My final question relates to the capital works program. Has the Minister been advised whether all the programs as detailed in the capital works program book are running on schedule so that he and the department can prepare for occupancy at the estimated dates?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: Yes. As far as I am aware, they are all on time and within budget. It has been the history of the Department of Housing and Construction that, when it quotes a cost and a date, in our experience both are met. We not only have no complaints about that, but also are full of praise for the expertise that the Department of Housing and Construction has developed in the correctional services area.

Mr INGERSON: As a supplementary question, is the Minister aware how much of the cost overruns are absorbed by the Department of Housing and Construction itself?

The Hon. Frank Blevins: I certainly would not know. There is no question that that would be detailed and that that information would be available for all members. Certainly that has not happened in the correctional services area. In fact, I think the Remand Centre came in under budget but, like all building projects, they will still be arguing with the builders over final prices, rise and falls, etc.—the normal commercial haggling that goes on at the end of every building contract. Not only do we have no complaints but, we are full of praise for the Department of Housing and Construction.

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.55 p.m. the Committee adjourned until Thursday 17 September at 11 a.m.