HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, October 2, 1974

The SPEAKER (Hon. J. R. Ryan) took the chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answers to questions be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

TAX INCENTIVE

In reply to Mr. DEAN BROWN (September 12).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In reply to the question asked by the honourable member during debate on the Appropriation Bill, I point out that Fletcher Jones & Staff Proprietary Limited is the only company in South Australia that has been given a pay-roll tax incentive. The incentive was given to encourage diversification of industry in the Mt. Gambier region. As will be seen from the conditions placed upon it, the incentive was not lightly given. The company was required to double its initial employment from 100 to 200 before becoming eligible and, because of the geographical integrity of the area, the amount of rebate has been tied both in percentage and time to the incentive given by the Victorian Government. Cabinet has recently considered proposals on incentives for Monarto and regional growth centres prepared by my department, and I hope a decision on these incentives and their method of application will be made soon.

MELBOURNE RAIL SERVICE

In reply to Mr. RODDA (August 15).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In reply to the question asked by the honourable member during debate on the Public Purposes Loan Bill, it is expected that future supplies of ballast from Mt. Monster will be on a smaller scale than in recent years. Reballasting of the section from Murray Bridge to Serviceton has been carried out during the last three years, and further work of this nature will not be extensive. Ballast required on the Adelaide side of Murray Bridge would normally not be obtained from Mt. Monster. With regard to the future of the Adelaide to Melbourne line, further improvements such as additional passing sidings and other improvements to increase capacity will be gradually introduced on the present alignment. Looking further ahead and expecting steadily increasing freight traffic plus the need for fast passenger transport to Monarto (and possibly on to Melbourne), investigations are in progress into a new alignment between Adelaide and Murray Bridge. This would be much shorter, but would involve extensive tunnelling and new route construction. An express service to Monarto could take 40 to 45 minutes compared to a present travel time of two hours. There would thus be significant reductions in operating costs and travel time. Subject to studies to be carried out jointly by the Australian and State Government Transport Departments into nation-wide main line electrification, the longer-term possibility arises of continuing the suburban electrification to the inter-capital train lines.

CLUB SUBSIDIES

In reply to Mr. MATHWIN (August 20).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Subsidies can be allocated to individual clubs, provided that the intended facilities are of a recreational or sporting nature and will be of benefit to the community at large. Generally, the types of project that will be considered for financial assistance are: construction of sports facilities; development of land for urban and recreational parks; facilities in local communities for passive forms of recreation; and multi-purpose community centres. The Somerton Surf Life Saving Club has already approached the Tourism, Recreation and Sport Department seeking financial assistance towards the cost of erecting their new clubrooms. The application is being considered, and the club will be advised of the outcome early in October.

RECREATIONAL SUBSIDIES

In reply to Mr. EVANS (August 20).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Specific projects have been considered regarding this matter and recommendations made to the Australian Government. If these recommendations are accepted, subsidies will be provided to approved applications generally on a one-third basis involving the South Australian Government, the Australian Government, and the applicant. The closing date for applications for 1974-75 was March 29, 1974, although projects of a minor nature (under $15 000) can be submitted at any time during the year. Generally, the types of project that would receive encouragement are those that: fulfil a significant local need; provide facilities intended for use by the local community, particularly multi-purpose facilities that are properly researched and planned; involve dual use of existing or planned buildings by schools and the local community; and have the support and approval of the council and the community.

LEIGH CREEK COALFIELD

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (September 17).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: As the coal being mined at Leigh Creek is not an extractive mineral in terms of the Mining Act 1971-73, there is no authority for moneys from the Extractive Areas Rehabilitation Fund to be used in the area. The responsibility for any rehabilitation work must therefore rest with the operator, and, in this connection, the Electricity Trust is now carrying out experiments with a view to eventually establishing vegetation on the overburden areas. Five different species of tree have been planted in various situations, and, during this spring, plants indigenous to the area that are now being raised in beds of overburden shales will be transferred to the dump. It is expected that this work will continue, and that assistance will be made available to the trust in the form of advice by the Mines Department's horticultural officer.

BOAT PURCHASE

In reply to Mr. MATHWIN (August 20).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The purchase of a boat to patrol the area from the Outer Harbor breakwater to Marino Rocks, from which netting has been banned under recent legislation, is not necessary, as the Fisheries Department has sufficient vessels and equipment for use by inspection personnel to carry out their legislative responsibilities in the marine area off the metropolitan beaches.

MINISTER'S ABSENCE

The SPEAKER: Before calling for Questions without Notice I inform the House that any member who wishes to ask a question that normally would be asked of the Deputy Premier and Minister of Works should address it to the Minister of Education, in the absence of the Deputy Premier on account of hospitalisation.

URANIUM PLANT

Dr. EASTICK: Does the Premier believe that the Commonwealth Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr. Connor) will still proceed with a joint Commonwealth Government

and South Australian State Government feasibility study on the location of uranium enrichment plants in South Australia now that the Commonwealth Government has announced it intends to build a uranium plant in the Northern Territory? Yesterday, in reply to a Question on Notice about whether there were any proposals to build a uranium enrichment plant in South Australia, the Premier stated that the Commonwealth Minister had agreed to such a feasibility study for South Australia, based on several aspects. These aspects were as follows:

(*a*) The availability of coal from either Leigh Creek or Lake Phillipson to provide the necessary cheap electricity generation;

(*b*) the iron triangle to be regarded as a regional growth centre; and

(*c*) the Australian Government considered the area had potential strategic value.

However, at the same time as the Premier was giving that reply in this House, in Canberra the Commonwealth Minister was saying that he had prepared a submission for Commonwealth Cabinet, recommending that the Commonwealth Government build and operate its own uranium mining and milling plant and that the plant be built in the Northern Territory. Whilst I accept that a milling plant is not necessarily an enrichment plant, the Commonwealth Minister went on to say that, in his opinion, the whole of the operation should be in one place. He also went on to say (and this is quoted in the press this morning) that it was in the best interests of uranium that it be milled through one plant; otherwise we would have three or four smaller and relatively inefficient plants in operation. In view of those comments, does the Premier really believe that an enrichment plant for South Australia will proceed, or can South Australia kiss the whole project goodbye?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The proposal for a milling plant in the Northern Territory relates only to the production of uranium cake: it does not relate to uranium enrichment. The Commonwealth Government's proposals in relation to uranium enrichment development in South Australia remain and will proceed.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My question is supplementary to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition and arises out of a Question on Notice I asked yesterday. Can the Premier say what factors are involved in the negotiations between his Government and the Commonwealth Government concerning a study into the feasibility of a uranium enrichment plant in South Australia? The Leader has asked a question based on the reply given yesterday by the Premier to my Question on Notice. However, I notice that the Leader has not acknowledged the source of the question.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: Shame!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I thought so.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MILLHOUSE: If the Leader has to rely—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This is not part of the explanation.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: In the course of the Premier's reply, he said that negotiations were proceeding. I should therefore like to know what those negotiations involve.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I do not know what the honourable member means by "factors", but I will look at his question and see whether I can make something out of it for him.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Mr. COUMBE: Will the Premier say what approaches, if any, he has made to the Commonwealth Government for assistance for the future of South Australia's manufacturing industry? Further, will he say whether he recalls that, in reply to questions that I have asked previously about tariff protection and the motor industry in general, he stated that his department was preparing a submission that he intended to make to the Commonwealth Government? In view of the Premier's statement made, I think on Monday of this week, when he was reported as having said that the Commonwealth Government should assist the State in three specific areas (that is, tariff protection, subsidies for country areas, and funds for fringe area manufacturers, with special emphasis on the car industry), can he now say whether the submissions to which I have referred have been completed and whether they have been presented to the Commonwealth Government? If they have not been completed and made to the Commonwealth Government, when will that be done? If they have been made, has he received any encouraging response?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This Government's submissions on the Industries Assistance Commission's report on the car industry have not been completed. Officers are still working on them. However, our officers have worked closely with officers of the Prime Minister's Department in industry investigation, following publication of the I.A.C. report. I can tell the honourable member that, as soon as our work has been completed and checked with the major car manufacturers (in fact, there was a meeting in this House only last week between our officers and representatives of the major car manufacturers concerning the proposals in our officers' report, and these are now being checked through with componentry companies), a submission will be presented to the Prime Minister. I shall be going to Canberra to present the submission not only to the Commonwealth Government but also to the Economic Committee of the Commonwealth Caucus on this topic. Already, in the course of the work that is being done, I have had some fairly heartening responses in the Prime Minister's Department concerning an analysis of the proposal.

Mr. Goldsworthy: "Heartening" or "hardening"?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: They have been heartening.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Goldsworthy: That's a change!

The SPEAKER: There has been no change in Standing Orders in relation to interjections.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Certain members ask whether we are getting heartening responses. If the responses are heartening they deride the fact, and if they are not heartening they condemn it.

Mr. Coumbe: What about—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I point out to the honourable member that, since he has been here longer than have most Opposition members, he must remember that, when we were in Opposition, on many occasions when there were beneficial prospects for the State they were supported outright by the then Opposition and by me personally. It has never been the case that this Party has simply taken a line against anything proposed by a Government on the basis that whatever was put up would be criticised no matter how inconsistent that criticism might be.

Mr. Gunn: What about Dartmouth dam? That's a good example.

The SPEAKER: Order! If honourable members totally disregard what is required by Standing Orders, from now on Standing Orders will prevail, and Standing Order 169 will be implemented.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Each one of the other matters I raised on Monday has been the subject of submissions by me to Ministers of the Commonwealth Government. In

fact, not only has the need for assistance of the kind that I have outlined been recognised but assistance has been offered to South Australia now in several cases. This will be of some significance to our industries. I have had much sympathy and understanding from the Commonwealth Minister for Overseas Trade.

Dr. Eastick: Do you—

The SPEAKER: Order! Standing Orders apply to the honourable Leader of the Opposition as well as to all other honourable members.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: One would expect that, where there were specific Ministerial responsibilities in a Cabinet, one would deal with the Minister concerned. Certainly I have dealt with the Minister for Overseas Trade, as I have also dealt with the Minister for Manufacturing Industry on other matters, and just as I have dealt with the Minister for Minerals and Energy in his area, and the Minister for the Environment and Conservation and the Minister for Urban and Regional Development in their areas. It would be absurd if any other situation were to exist. I suggest to the Leader that, when a reply is being given to his Deputy to give him information that will be of assistance to him in the discharge of his duties, the Leader exercise a little bit of intelligence about the kind of interjection he makes.

FLEURIEU PENINSULA

Mr. EVANS: Can the Minister of Environment and Conservation say whether there is conflict between him and the Minister of Forests about the future of land on Fleurieu Peninsula, south of Adelaide? A report in today's *Advertiser*—

Mr. Wells: If they ever take that away from you, you're licked.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. EVANS: —states that bulldozers are ripping into this area. My intention in asking this question is not to stir; rather, I wish to give the Minister an opportunity to clarify a situation in which there appears to be conflict between the Environment and Conservation Department and the Woods and Forests Department. By replying to my question, perhaps he can put a stop to any continuation of a report that may not be accurate.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: There is no conflict between the two departments. Certainly, discussions are taking place between the departments about the future of the land. Recently, some fairly emotional and inaccurate statements have appeared in the newspapers on this matter. As I have said often in this Parliament, the National Parks and Wildlife Service believes that there should be a significant national park in the Deep Creek area and that we would be giving priority to purchases of substantial pieces of land within that area to put together a total national park. In recent months my department has been looking at what would be appropriate portions of land to purchase within the area concerned. It is true that one of the areas that the department believes should be added to the park is currently part of the Woods and Forests Department's holdings. The total area we are looking at is over 8 000 hectares, and the Woods and Forests Department land is about 350 hectares. So it is inaccurate to suggest, as was suggested during the weekend, that all the land the Government wanted to make into a national park was Woods and Forests Department land. That is not true, because it is only a small section of the total proposal at which we are looking. The two departments concerned are now looking at the future of this section of land in association with South Australia's national park needs.

In relation to the reports of bulldozing occurring in the area, that report is exaggerated. I have received reports that the people associated with the article in this morning's newspaper have pointed out that it severely misrepresents the situation. What did occur was that bulldozers were being used to prepare Government firebreaks in the area concerned and not to bulldoze down scrub for the purpose of preparing the area for pine plantings. I assure the member for Fisher and other members that the future of the land associated with the needs of South Australia's national park development in the area and the Woods and Forests Department's situation are currently being considered by the Government, and that I expect a decision will be made soon.

ABATTOIRS

Mr. CHAPMAN: Will the Minister of Education, representing the Minister of Agriculture in the absence of the Minister of Works, ascertain whether it is the policy of the Government to continue enlarging the Gepps Cross meat-processing facilities in line with the expected increased production and consumer demand in South Australia and, if that is the policy, whether the Government expects that, by continued growth and facility expansion at Gepps Cross, it can reduce the current cost of slaughtering and so compete with charges made in other States and thereby reduce the cost burden on our meat between the paddock and the plate? If that is not the Government's policy, what is the Government's attitude towards the decentralisation of meatworks in South Australia generally and, more particularly, will the Government consider distributing its ever-increasing contribution to selected and established feasible sites? From information received, it seems that the Gepps Cross abattoir is viewed by producers, operators, and consumers as an out-dated, expensive monstrosity failing miserably to service the State as a competitive meat-processing centre. Many producers, in particular, have expressed concern not only about the extreme cost of delivery of livestock to the metropolitan centre but also about the slaughtering charges at Gepps Cross compared to those applying at abattoirs in other States.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I will obtain a report from my colleague.

FLEURIEU PENINSULA

Mr. MILLHOUSE: My question is supplementary to the one asked by the member for Fisher regarding land in the district of the member for Alexandra.

Mr. Chapman: Thanks for the mention.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I was surprised that the honourable member did not ask the question.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Mitcham must ask his question.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Will the Government assure members that no further clearing will take place on the land occupied by the Woods and Forests Department until a decision is made on the enlargement of Deep Creek National Park? Like all members, I presume, I read the report in the *Sunday Mail* over the weekend concerning this matter. I also read the report by Mr. Bernie Boucher in today's *Advertiser* and saw the photograph of Dr. Peter Reeves therein. I am surprised that the Minister would so attack a respected, senior and responsible journalist in the way he did and, by implication, he criticised Dr. Reeves (President of the Nature Conservation Society in South Australia). That was the clear implication in the Minister's reply to the question. The Minister was careful in his reply to the question asked by the member

for Fisher not to give an undertaking that no further clearing of any description (although I accept the fire-breaks to which he referred) would take place on the land before a decision had been made: that is the nub of the whole matter. It is all right for there to be a squabble between the two departments but, if one of those departments were to pre-empt the result by going ahead and producing a *fait accompli*, there would be nothing left for it. All that will satisfy me, as well as the conservationists and the community at large, is a straight-out undertaking, which I now invite the Minister to give, that there will be no further clearing on this land until a decision has been made whether or not to add it to Deep Creek National Park.

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The honourable member has not listened or I may not have explained the postion clearly. However, I thought I made clear that there would be no further clearing on this land before a decision was made.

Mr. Millhouse: What about the Bernie Boucher report?

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I think I ought to take this opportunity to refer to the understanding I have from reports that have come to me this morning. I was certainly not trying to suggest that Dr. Reeves was at fault in relation to the report in today's *Advertiser*: I was simply saying that I understood he had reported that he was somewhat concerned about the way the report had been made and that he did not agree with the general reporting of the situation.

MURRAY RIVER FLOODING

Mr. ARNOLD: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Millhouse: He maintained—

The SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with Standing Order 169, the honourable member for Mitcham is warned. The honourable member for Chaffey.

Mr. ARNOLD: I address my question to the Minister of Education, in the absence of the Minister of Works. Does the flood liaison committee, which has been established by the Government, have power to approve or recommend additional assistance to councils, as a result of the changing flood situation? Last Friday, I inspected the flood bank area in Renmark known as the Baxendale bank and, in discussions with the owners of a nearby property and with members of the council of the Renmark corporation, it seemed at the time that, on the levels given by the Engineering and Water Supply Department, it would be a hopeless task to try to save the bank, and that the payment of some form of compensation (for land lost, loss of production, and the cost of maintaining and keeping dairy cattle) would be far better than trying to save the bank. Since then the Engineering and Water Supply Department has made new predictions of water heights that are considerably lower than the heights the council was expecting at that time. An all-out effort is now being made to save the bank and protect that area. Additional costs will be incurred by the council and the people helping it. Will the committee make further recommendations and approve further expenditure by the council?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The liaison committee can review any matter at any time and make appropriate recommendations, and arrangements have been made for Ministerial approval on an urgent basis of any expenditure that might be incurred as a result of the acceptance of those recommendations. I will ask the committee to investigate the Renmark situation and make sure that, if something can be done, it will be done, consistent with its being a reasonable and feasible financial proposition.

WORKLIFE UNIT

Mr. PAYNE: Does the Minister of Education believe that the South Australian Government's Quality of Worklife Unit, in its visits to schools, is trying to mould and brainwash children into becoming subservient workers of the future? An article signed by Paul Noack, a student teacher at Salisbury College of Advanced Education, appears in the *South Australian Teachers Journal* of Wednesday, September 25, 1974. He is reported as saying:

Indoctrination in South Australian Schools: The Quality of Worklife Unit, headed by millionaire Linden Prowse, is concentrating its efforts on today's children in an attempt to mould them into subservient workers of the future.

In the remainder of the article he claims that he has the full support of the South Australian Colleges of Advanced Education Student Union.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I noticed that article and I asked for a report on its contents.

Mr. Dean Brown: You knew the question was going to be asked.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No, I did not know it was going to be asked. From memory,—

Mr. Dean Brown: Would you—

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I realise that the member for Davenport is not listening.

The SPEAKER: The honourable member for Davenport is out of order. He must refrain from interjecting or he will suffer the consequences.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Quality of Worklife Unit has been involved with only three secondary schools, and then only when it was invited by the head of the school to attend. No attempt was made by that unit to do the things suggested in the article. I have received a detailed report on the matter and I will check it again to see whether any further information can be given the honourable member. The suggestion in the article that the unit is out to subvert the minds of secondary students is wrong. The only occasion on which the unit has gone to any of our schools has been as a result of the initiative being taken by the school concerned and not by the unit.

SUPERPHOSPHATE BOUNTY

Mr. RODDA: In view of the statement made by the Acting Prime Minister (Dr. Cairns) that he disagrees with the decision to discontinue the superphosphate bounty, can the Premier say whether the South Australian Minister of Agriculture will use his undoubted impact on the Agricultural Council to raise this matter at the next council meeting? It will have become apparent to the Premier that, because of the escalation of costs facing primary producers in this State (indeed, in all States) and the down-turn of farm income, there is much concern in the primary producing areas that the producers will face serious difficulties in maintaining a satisfactory standard of production in a reasonable season. The Acting Prime Minister's statement seems to confirm that this state of affairs is facing primary producers in this country, and I should be interested to hear the Premier's attitude toward the abolition of the payment of the superphosphate bounty to producers in this State, bearing in mind the statement by the Acting Prime Minister.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is clear that the superphosphate bounty, extending as it did across the board, at times gave to certain people in the community benefits that certainly were not warranted, having regard to overall priorities. On the other hand, any cases of hardship

and difficulty in the agricultural community must be considered specifically and, after discussing this matter with the Minister of Agriculture, I will bring down a full and considered report for the honourable member.

PRIMARY INDUSTRY

Mr. VENNING: Will the Premier say whether he is doing everything possible within his jurisdiction as Premier of this State, in the light of the Commonwealth Budget, to assist primary industry in South Australia? I draw the Premier's attention to the latest publication of *Farmer and Grazier*, issued in South Australia. The headline to a report on the front page states, "Eat, drink and be merry—for tommorrow—?" and the report goes on to state:

"Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die" seemed to be the philosophy behind the latest Federal Budget, the United Farmers and Graziers State President (John Kerin) said this week.

Therefore, I ask the Premier whether, in view of the Commonwealth Budget and the impact that it will have to the detriment of this State, and also in view of the Premier's forecast that he will have to introduce additional taxes to offset the shortcomings in that Budget, he will try to preserve and even improve the position of primary producers in this State.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This question deals in generalities, giving no specifics whatever. I point out that, in the total money spent within this State, more direct assistance is given to the rural community than is given to any other section of the community. That is markedly the case. No other sector of the community is given the direct assistance and service that is given to primary producers in South Australia.

Mr. Venning: That's a generality.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McAnaney: What about the railways?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Much railway expenditure is for the benefit of the rural community.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Most of your freight is raised in the country.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If I increased railway freights charged to the rural community in South Australia to bring them into line with the freights in Liberal-governed States, I should not think that that would be to the advantage of the rural community here. In fact, we are under attack before the Grants Commission because we have given the rural community in South Australia freight concessions that are unlike those given in the standard States.

Mr. Venning: Grain freights—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If the honourable member can be specific about what he seeks that the Government should do in South Australia, I shall be pleased to tell him whether we can accede to his request. However, if he makes a general statement about some headline in the farmers' newspaper and asks what I will do about it, I can only say that the Government will continue to do as it has done in the past to help the rural community in this State.

HOLDEN HILL INTERSECTION

Mrs. BYRNE: Will the Minister of Transport ascertain the cost of installing the traffic lights provided recently at the intersection of North-East Road and Grand Junction Road, Holden Hill, and also how the cost has been apportioned?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I shall be pleased to get the information for the honourable member.

HOSPITAL FUNDS

Dr. TONKIN: Will the Treasurer say whether the Government has received from the Commonwealth Government an offer of additional funds to upgrade the State's hospital systems, what amount the Commonwealth Government has offered for the current 12 months, and whether the Government intends to accept the money under the conditions attached to the offer? A report in yesterday's press shows that the Commonwealth Government has offered $650 000 000 to assist hospital services, but the amount this year comes down to $28 000 000 for the whole of Australia, not just for South Australia. Presumably, some of that amount will be available for South Australia. The offer has been made conditional on the formation of a Joint Hospital Works Council in each State, comprising representatives from the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. There have been many reports of needs in the institutions at Glenside, Hillcrest, and Northfield, and the finances of our nursing homes are in a parlous condition. Indeed, I heard today that there was a strong possibility that the Walkerville Nursing Home might be forced to close next week because of lack of funds. This State needs these moneys urgently, and they should be made available without strings attached.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Commonwealth Government's offer of about $28 000 000 to assist hospital building in Australia this year was made on the basis of several specific projects in respect of which the Commonwealth Government has recommended that a joint undertaking be engaged in. In regard to that $28 000 000, the difficulty for us in South Australia is that this State has in recent times, under a Labor Government, so markedly increased its hospital expenditure (it was increased by over 300 per cent in four years) that the Commonwealth Government does not suggest an additional new facility within the State such as it has suggested in some Eastern States.

Dr. Tonkin: I'm very pleased to hear it!

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I point out to the honourable member that we had to go into reverse in South Australia because under the Playford Government this State, over a period of 27 years, on a head of population basis regularly spent less on health and hospitals than did any other State in Australia.

Mr. Goldsworthy: And it got more for its money.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If the honourable member wants to make that kind of excuse for the position that South Australia faces, I point out to him that the result was that there were fewer hospital beds in total in proportion to population and fewer trained medical and nursing staff employed in relation to population.

Dr. TONKIN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I am not interested in the Treasurer's reminiscences: I am interested only in the present and the future.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not within my jurisdiction to tell an honourable member how he shall reply to a question. If a question is asked, the person to whom the question is addressed has the right under Standing Orders to reply. It is not within my jurisdiction to say what words shall be used.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The situation was that in total, whether in relation to community hospitals or Government hospitals, the proportion of nursing beds to population and the proportion of trained medical and nursing staff to population was, until a Labor Government came into office in South Australia, the worst in Australia. Consequently, under this Government the money for hospitals has been increased more markedly than has been the case anywhere else in Australia. As a result, the

provision of new general hospitals, the upgrading of general hospitals within South Australia, and the assistance in the non-government hospital area have so enormously increased that the Commonwealth Government does not find in South Australia that people lack hospital services or planning for them in the same way as occurs in the Eastern States. Therefore, the Commonwealth Government does not have a proposition under which it will run jointly with the State a certain new hospital facility, as it does in relation to Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland.

Mr. Mathwin: But the—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will find that Standing Orders apply as far as he is concerned.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Regarding the joint planning of hospital facilities with the Commonwealth, before any announcement by the Commonwealth, the South Australian Government suggested to that Government and sought from it a joint planning activity. I wrote to the Prime Minister suggesting a joint planning activity within the State, a request with which I am sure the Commonwealth Government is pleased to accord. In relation to the several matters to which the honourable member has referred, we have already had specific help from the Commonwealth in providing better facilities at Glenside, Hillcrest, and Northfield. Consequently, we are able to undertake additional hospital expenditure beyond the enormous increase in hospital expenditure for which this Government has been responsible. That is the position in this State at present.

Dr. Tonkin: What about details?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will get specific details for the honourable member.

MONARTO

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Can the Minister of Development and Mines say by what date it is expected that the employment of 2 500 public servants will be transferred from Adelaide to Monarto?

Mr. Gunn: Conscripted!

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Yes, conscripted. On January 18 this year, a newspaper report stated that people would be living at Monarto in 1976. The report quotes the Minister as saying that people would be living there in 1976-77. One would presume that, in making that statement, the Minister was referring to far more people than the few who are living there at present in some farm houses. Moreover, on July 15, 1974, a report on page 1 of the *Advertiser* stated that 4 000 public servants were expected to be transferred to Monarto in 1976-77. Only last week, a public servant was told unofficially (although he was told by an authority on this transfer) that in fact he need not bother about shifting until 1980. Therefore, there is at least a three years to four years discrepancy between that statement and what the Minister has said. Having been at the site last week, I can say that it is apparent that the 1976-77 target will not be met. I wonder whether George Orwell's prediction may not be correct, with the date being in fact 1984.

Mr. Wells: What will the—

The SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with Standing Order 169, I warn the honourable member for Florey.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: At this stage, I cannot be more specific than I was in the reports to which the honourable member has referred. As I understand his question, he has asked me for a date. I cannot give that date, and I cannot really see how it is possible to do so. Does the honourable member want it down to the Sunday, Monday or Tuesday on which the keys to front doors will be handed over? The best I can say to the honourable member at this stage is that the overall Government strategy has not altered from what it was when those statements were made; we will proceed on the basis outlined.

Mr. Dean Brown: Why was a public servant told 1980?

The SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with Standing Order 169, I warn the honourable member for Davenport.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: A committee has been set up by the Government to liaise with the public servants concerned and to maintain close consultation with them. The people affected will know the date before the honourable member knows it.

WORKER PARTICIPATION

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: When does the Premier intend to introduce legislation to force worker participation in industry? The Premier has said that he will do this. It is obvious to everyone that the present scheme is a complete flop. There is opposition to it from the strongest wing in the Labor Party—the trade union wing. At a recent function, the Premier said that the private sector response to the scheme was woeful. As it is apparent to everyone that this scheme will not work, when does the Premier intend to introduce legislation to force the scheme on industry?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is not the case that the scheme is not working. Considerable work has gone on in the private sector. I point out that in talking the other evening I said that there were some cases in the private sector in which much work had been done, and that part of industry was working effectively towards the worker participation programme. What I did the other evening was warn the private sector that, if in fact it was not willing to work voluntarily towards a basis on which we could satisfactorily settle the conflicts in industrial interests and have an effective say by workers in decisions that affected their lives, we would have to contemplate legislation. The honourable member was not present that evening, although the Deputy Leader was present. In the vote of thanks to me at that dinner, I was told by the senior officer of the Institute of Directors that, under the law in this State, directors owed no duty whatever to workers, the public, or even shareholders; they owed a duty only to the notional interests of their own companies. If that is in fact the attitude of directors in South Australia, legislation will have to be introduced in due course to make clear that there is an obligation on the part of directors to shareholders, workers, and the public.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I have had made very clear to me since my speech on Monday evening that most people amongst directors do not agree with the statements of that officer.

Mr. Goldsworthy: How are you getting on with the unions?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Very well, thank you very much.

HOVERCRAFT

Mr. BLACKER: Can the Premier indicate when the results of the feasibility study on the practicalities of a hovercraft service across the northern part of Spencer Gulf will be released? Also, if the feasibility study is favourable, will the Premier and Government consider incorporating the activities of Birdseye Hover Service in the transport

system? The Birdseye Hover Service has had many preliminary investigations and feasibility studies carried out, and I understand that the directors of that service have had preliminary discussions with the Government on a possible hovercraft service across Spencer Gulf. Since then much publicity has been given, and speculation made, about a system to transport workers from Whyalla to the Redcliff site, the establishment of a commuter service between Whyalla, Port Pirie, and the Redcliff site, and a service between Cowell and Wallaroo. A hovercraft system would provide a fast, efficient, and direct method of transporting workers and of fulfilling the requirements of a commuter service.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I know of no full-scale feasibility study on this subject. This matter has been raised by Mrs. Dyer with the Government over some years, but preliminary investigations by the Government did not disclose any probability of a viable service on this basis. I know of no recent studies but, as some may have been made about which I have not heard, I will inquire for the honourable member.

MOTOR VEHICLE INDUSTRY

Mr. GUNN: Can the Premier say what action the Government is taking to ensure that employment at General Motors-Holden's is not further interrupted by unreasonable union activities? The Premier would be aware that G.M.H. has shifted some of its plant to the Leyland factory in Sydney because of industrial action. Because of the down-turn in the motor vehicle industry as a result of the reduction of tariff that has caused many vehicles to be imported and not manufactured in this country and has resulted in this serious situation, I ask what action the South Australian Government is taking?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I know nothing of the kind the honourable member has outlined, and know nothing of G.M.H. transferring plant to Leyland because of industrial activity in South Australia. This has never been suggested to me by the directorship of G.M.H., with whom I have fairly frequent communication. As to the honourable member's general question, all I can say is that it is in line with the sorts of question he asks in this House: he speaks about some unreasonable union activity that he does not specify. The honourable member thinks that any activity by any trade unionist is unreasonable. In those circumstances I do not know what he is speaking about, and I am sure that he does not know, either.

BLINMAN TOILETS

Mr. ALLEN: Will the Attorney-General ask the Minister of Health to treat as urgent the erection of a toilet block in the township of Blinman in the Flinders Range? I have asked questions previously about this matter, but I have been prompted to ask the question today as a result of an article that appeared in this morning's newspaper under the headline, "$2m. Facelift". Last year the Government announced it had set aside a large sum to build toilets in this area, but up to now little progress has been made with the work. Recently, with the Minister of Education, I visited the school in this town, and his attention was drawn to the situation in which effluent was running down the street past the school and into the creek from which a bore supplied the town's water supply. Local citizens have been warned not to drink water from this bore. They are doing their best to cater for tourists in the area, but I remind the Minister that last year 12 000 people visited this area on the October holiday weekend, and it is impossible for local people to provide toilet facilities for the travelling public.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I will obtain a reply for the honourable member.

LEGAL AID

Mr. MATHWIN: Will the Attorney-General take action to provide legal aid for victims and witnesses appearing before the courts, particularly for those involved in personal violence? Also, does the Attorney agree with recent statements of Mr. Justice Sangster that were published last Saturday? A report appearing in Monday's *Advertiser* states:

Mr. Justice Sangster said legal aid was starting to have an effect on the victims and witnesses of crime. There was now a system of legal aid where hardly any defendant or any accused person in a criminal court appeared without his lawyer.

The victims of personal violence, particularly rape, were now subject to close police questioning, close cross-examination before a magistrate or justices court and still closer cross-examination before a judge and jury in the Supreme Court.

Does the Attorney agree with Mr. Justice Sangster's comments on this matter? It is obvious that victims are at a distinct disadvantage, as more emphasis is being placed on giving financial help to accused people.

The Hon. L. J. KING: Witnesses giving evidence in criminal matters have always been closely questioned by counsel appearing in the case: there is nothing new about that. The only thing that has changed is that we now see to it that accused people who cannot afford to pay for legal representation are provided with it under legal aid schemes. The witness in that case is in no different position from that of the witness in a previous case in which the accused could afford to pay counsel. If it were right previously that an accused person could employ counsel to question witnesses, it is right for a poor person to have the same advantage, and the witness in that case is in no worse position from that in which he would have been previously. Any witness in any case is likely to be questioned closely about his observations and evidence: there is nothing wrong with that. As I read the newspaper report, Mr. Justice Sangster did not deprecate that position but welcomed the extension of legal aid and the protection it gave to people who otherwise could not afford this protection. Also, as far as I can judge from the press report, Mr. Justice Sangster did not make any concrete suggestions about what should be done regarding witnesses.

Mr. Mathwin: Can't they get legal aid?

The Hon. L. J. KING: Mr. Justice Sangster did not suggest that, and he would not, because his knowledge of legal procedures would preclude him from making such a suggestion. In criminal cases the prosecution presenting the case is represented by counsel, and the accused person who defends the case is also represented by counsel.

Witnesses do not require separate representation, nor would there be any way in which they could have it. If a witness is called by the Crown, counsel for the Crown looks after that witness, asks him questions to get out his story and, if he is cross-examined, re-examines him if there are any areas where further explanation is needed. That is done by the counsel who calls the witness; the prosecutor questions the witness if called by the Crown but, if the witness is called by the defence, counsel for the accused questions and looks after that witness. There is no occasion for any witness to be represented by counsel, and there is little that counsel can do if he is representing a witness, because all a witness does is give evidence

about what he has seen, heard, and so on. As I read the remarks attributed to Mr. Justice Sangster, there is no suggestion that there should be any question of legal representation of witnesses; in fact, I do not believe that such a proposal would be practical.

RURAL LAND TAX

Mr. RUSSACK: Can the Treasurer say what sum was received in rural land tax in the 1973-74 financial year?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I cannot give the honourable member a figure off the top of my head, but I will get the information for him.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Dr. EASTICK: In view of the dearth of Government business on the Notice Paper, will the Premier allow private members' business to be debated during otherwise normal Government time? It will be recognised that last Tuesday and Wednesday evening the House rose very early, that it did not sit last evening, and that there will be no sitting this evening. As no clear indication has been given that we shall be sitting during the evening next week, and as there is much private members' business to be dealt with, will the Premier assist in allowing private members' business to be dealt with in what would otherwise be Government time?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No.

PLANNING STUDY

Mr. COUMBE: Has the Minister of Transport seen the City of Adelaide Planning Study Report, prepared by the Urban Systems Corporation and published recently, especially that section relating to the suggested road system for North Adelaide? In addition, can the Minister indicate when these proposals are likely to be implemented?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I have seen the report, but I understand it has not yet been adopted by the Adelaide City Council.

At 3.5 p.m., the bells having been rung:

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (POLLS)

Mr. CHAPMAN (Alexandra) obtained leave and introduced a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act, 1934-1973. Read a first time.

Mr. CHAPMAN: I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It is fairly self-explanatory and, in fact, in no way conflicts with, or destroys, any section of the principal Act. It simply provides councils with the opportunity, and gives them the option, at their discretion and by an absolute majority decision, of conducting a ratepayers' poll. The principal Act provides adequate machinery for ratepayers to demand a poll on specific matters, mostly of a monetary nature. For example, section 26 provides for a ratepayers' poll where a change of council status is proposed. Sections 190 to 200 provide for a ratepayers' poll where a change in the assessment system (say, from annual value to land value) is proposed. Sections 226 and 227 provide for a ratepayers' poll when special rates are sought for special purposes. Section 427 provides for ratepayers' polls when councils are seeking consent to borrow. Similarly, in sections 457 and 459, ratepayers' polls may be conducted when councils require consent to lease and/or cultivate park lands and such other public properties.

It is significant to note that in all those sections a poll may be conducted only if demanded by the ratepayers, wherein the requisite number of ratepayers for this purpose shall, in the case of a municipality, be 100, or one-twentieth of the total number of ratepayers on the voters' roll, whichever is the lesser and, in the case of a district, 21 ratepayers is the requisite number. There is absolutely no provision in the Act for a council to conduct a poll of its own volition. There have been many instances in the past, and I believe there will be instances in the future, of councils wishing to obtain the opinion of their ratepayers on matters other than monetary matters, or those specified in the current Act.

Let me briefly cite a few examples where councils have sought in the past to do so but, through lack of this provision, have been denied the authority and the opportunity. In 1945, the Tumby Bay council sought to determine its ratepayers' opinion on whether or not the community should have organised Sunday sport, but it could not do so. In the same year, the Crystal Brook council wished to conduct a poll in order to seek its ratepayers' opinion on whether or not a children's community playground should be used for a proposed swimming pool site, but it was denied the authority or the opportunity to do so. In 1946, the Port Lincoln council wished to conduct a poll to determine the opinion of its ratepayers following a proposal to move its council headquarters from Port Lincoln to a more geographically central position at Cummins and, again, with no provision in the Act, it was prevented from carrying out this optional poll.

There have been and will continue to be occasions when councils are faced with similar situations. In their own interests, and in the collective interests of the district or ward, ratepayers' opinion may need to be sought. In these circumstances, the discretionary powers of the council must be preserved and, in no such circumstances, should the council be subjected to ratepayers' demands; hence the inclusion of a decision by an absolute majority of the council before such a poll shall be conducted. Ratepayer polls of this kind, if sought and conducted in the context outlined, will provide a council with positive, accurate and effective guidance at relatively low cost to its community. I cite the South Coast multi-million dollar tourist complex proposal earlier this year as a classic example of when the investors, residents and respective councils were seeking an effective way to determine ratepayer opinion on that local major social issue. The Bill provides an ideal opportunity for Parliament to demonstrate its confidence in local government generally and to respect especially the requests of responsible councillors who so diligently serve their ratepayers.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 enacts a new provision whereby a council may, at its discretion, conduct a ratepayers' poll in its area or in any ward of its area in order to ascertain an opinion on any matter that affects their interests, and it ensures that, under proposed section 796d, no such poll shall be conducted unless an absolute majority of the council votes in favour of conducting the poll. I commend the Bill to the attention of members.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO secured the adjournment of the debate.

WATER AND SEWERAGE RATES

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): I move:

That, in the opinion of the House of Assembly, the Minister of Works immediately should gazette a lower rate in the dollar for water and sewerage charges as specified under the Waterworks Act, 1932-1974, for reassessed areas which received revised property valuations during 1973-74 and that accounts based on this new rate be issued for

these reassessed areas in respect of the balance of the 1974-75 financial year.

Less than two weeks ago, the Minister of Works announced his so-called promised plan to alleviate the effect of the savage increases in water and sewerage charges. However, he made nothing more than a glib statement that, henceforth, the increases would be discounted every year over five years instead of once every five years. The Minister's announcement in no way alleviates the savage increases now taking place in water and sewerage charges. Previously, I have said in the House that, whereas the consumer price index has increased by just under 100 per cent, in the same period charges for water and sewerage have increased by as much as 403 per cent. In that same period, wages and salaries increased by up to only 163 per cent. This savage increase in water and sewerage charges is the reason why people in Burnside are objecting and why the people in Henley and Grange are also objecting. I am disappointed that the Minister of Environment and Conservation is not in the Chamber now to represent his constituents, but I hope he will support my motion. The Minister's constituents are affected in much the same way as people in Burnside, Stirling, Glenelg, and many other areas throughout the State are affected.

Mr. Millhouse: You've weakened your position by paying your own rates.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: People in those areas have been waiting for the Government to honour its promise of providing some alleviation. The increases are up to at least 100 per cent in my area, and similar or even greater increases have been applied in other areas.

Mr. Millhouse: You've weakened your position by paying your own rates.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: If the member for Mitcham has any regard for pensioners and people on fixed incomes who are trying to pay their rates, he should speak up and support my motion. Although I have not heard him support any motion dealing with water rates, I am looking forward to his support for my motion.

Mr. Millhouse: Why not answer my question?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I have found that, during the last two months, people on fixed incomes, pensioners and superannuants are absolutely unable to pay their current water and sewerage charges. They have suddenly found that, as a result of inflation in other areas, they cannot make ends meet. In addition, the greatest increase has taken place (an increase they did not expect, especially as it is so steep) in respect of water and sewerage charges. People have carefully budgeted for potential increases of between 15 per cent and 20 per cent, which relate closely to the current increase in the consumer price index, but for water and sewerage they are faced with increases of 100 per cent or more. The Government, which takes pride in how it restricts other people's price increases, has the hide and the double standards to increase its water and sewerage charges by 100 per cent. Obviously, no-one who is honest or who has any concern for these people who are trying to eke out a living on fixed incomes would ever take such action.

Mr. Max Brown: The Government has reduced pensioners' water rates.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: It has given a potential rebate of $20.

Mr. Max Brown: And you didn't refer to that.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I accept it; but the interesting thing is that, for these people, that $20 is now totally insignificant.

Mr. Max Brown: What $20?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The $20 a quarter; the rebate is up to $20 a quarter, and for pensioners in my area that is most insignificant in relation to the total sum. I received a letter earlier this week from a lady who is faced with the incredible charge of $165 for water and sewerage. She is one of those people who have been trying to obtain the $80 rebate a year and who also, as a result of this increase, cannot meet the present charges. The Minister has said, "If you have any problems, write to the Engineering and Water Supply Department or come to us and we will solve your problems." Only recently I read out to members a letter from a pensioner, with four children, one child being autistic, who went to the Minister's department and asked for some kind of assistance in paying her account. However, she received the glib reply from the department that, if she was really concerned and found it difficult to pay her account, she could pay it in three-monthly instalments. That is no alleviation.

I am glad the Acting Minister of Works has come back into the Chamber, because it was he who, when this issue first arose in mid-July, promised the people of South Australia a departmental report within three weeks. At no stage did we get that report. That is typical of the Government's attitude to this issue. The Minister of Works subsequently promised the people of South Australia a report within three weeks on water and sewerage charges, and eventually, five weeks later, we received that report. I was present when a deputation waited on the Minister, who gave not a direct undertaking but the impression that he would consider carefully the three requests of the people of Burnside. The first request was for the latest increase to be removed immediately, and that request was perfectly reasonable. We saw the Premier's attitude when he forced doctors to back down from increasing their charges by only 25 per cent to 30 per cent. The Government has not even said it will consider backing down on this issue, and that is why this motion has been moved.

The second, and least significant, request was that such high increases would not be imposed again. That was the only point the Minister conceded. He said that instead of charging the increase in one year it would be spread over five years. That was a slap in the face to those poor people. The third request was for the system of charging for water and sewerage to be altered. Government members like to abuse us for sticking to things of the past, yet their Party has consistently supported water and sewerage rates being tied to the old colonial system which was devised centuries ago in England. Even after tremendous pressure from the people of the State and the news media, the Government is willing in this regard to maintain its colonial ties in the face of the many changes that have occurred.

Mr. Langley: Why didn't you change it when your Party was in Government?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The New South Wales Government was faced with the same problem as that facing the South Australian Government, when land values in that State became greatly inflated last year. Our Government often criticises the New South Wales Government, but that Government, almost instantaneously, reduced the rate in the dollar for those areas that had just been reassessed, and it sent out its water and sewerage accounts based on that new lower rate. People in areas that had been reassessed, whose land value had rocketed because of inflation, did not have to pay much more for their water and sewerage. I am pleased to see the member for Mitchell sitting back and now reflecting on why his own Government did not take similar action.

Mr. Payne: Don't say things you have no knowledge of.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The New South Wales Government is now prepared to take even further action.

Mr. Payne: You talk about the New South Wales Government; have a look at its Budget!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I understand that Government is currently assessing the whole basis of charging for water and sewerage. It was able to solve its problems, appreciating the difficulty they would cause people and ensuring that it would not impose high charges such as those being imposed by our bureaucratic and dictatorial Government. When the Minister of Works made his announcement on September 19, he believed that somehow he would fool the people of South Australia into believing he had granted their request. He certainly has not done so, and the people have not accepted this situation. In fact, some people have said that they are worse off than they were before because there will now be insidious increases continually. They have said that annual increases will be as great as those that previously occurred five-yearly, but that may be going too far. Nevertheless the situation may tend towards that prediction.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I'll bet you didn't tell them they were going too far!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The people concerned know that our present State Government will have to form its own judgment on how it will behave. The motion requires the simplest action by the Minister. When the Minister of Education was Acting Minister of Works, it was obvious that he knew very little about the water rating system. The Waterworks Act provides that the Minister can gazette a rate for water and sewerage charges. The Minister has gazetted a rate of 6¾ per cent for sewerage and 7½ per cent for water, and the motion asks the Minister to gazette lower rates in the dollar for both charges. I suggest a reduction of about 60 per cent to 80 per cent, which I think will still provide a reasonable increase in proportion to the charges that other people are paying. This would then provide an increase of 10 per cent or more for the year, rather than an increase of 100 per cent.

All the Minister need do is gazette the two new rates, to apply from, say, October 2, in respect of those areas that were reassessed during 1973-74. Although the people concerned have had to pay a higher rate for the first quarter, at least they will obtain justice for the remaining three-quarters of the year. There is nothing difficult about that: the Government could decide it today and implement it tomorrow. When I first gave notice of this motion, the Minister said that the Government must get finance from somewhere, and I appreciate that. Probably between $1 000 000 and $2 000 000 is involved.

I do not believe that a small percentage of the people in this State should be taxed out of their homes for the sake of raising $1 000 000 or $2 000 000 for the Government. There are other ways of spreading the load across the entire population. The Government, if it wanted to do so, could increase the rate in the dollar for everyone in the State by a minute amount so that the entire burden for water and sewerage this year would not fall on the people of Burnside, Glenelg, Henley Beach, Stirling, and so on. I hope that the Government will carefully consider this reasonable recommendation. Until now it has not realised the hardship that it has caused to many pensioners and people on fixed and low incomes.

A big fallacy is being spread around deliberately by members opposite that the people of Burnside are wealthy. Perhaps those members will examine some of the houses and consider the incomes on which people are trying to exist. One characteristic of the area is that many people have gone there to retire, and the area contains many home units, flats, and homes for the aged. The Government is trying to impose most of the increase on these people, and members opposite should interview them to find out the fear and dread in which the Government has placed them. It has been frightening to have people come into my office recently and burst into tears because they are being taxed out of their houses and cannot make ends meet. I am not trying to make this a political issue: I am saying that the present system has caused much hardship and that the people to whom I have referred are suffering. Several people have broken down when they have come to my office to explain their problems, and members opposite probably have had the same experience in their districts.

Mr. Duncan: The retired stockbrokers would be crying!

Mr. Langley: Who introduced concessions to pensioners?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I am amazed that the member for Elizabeth has no feeling or concern for people on fixed incomes who are trying to make ends meet. It is all very well for him, a high-income earner with two jobs, to sit back and talk about retired sharebrokers. These people are not retired sharebrokers. Probably, there would be more retired people in my district than in his. I make the plea to the Government to implement this policy as soon as possible. I understand that no new accounts will be sent out until after October 15. Therefore, there is plenty of time, and the Minister easily could delay those accounts for a week or two. It is about time the Government regained its lost social conscience, pushed aside bureaucracy and its strong-arm tactics, and showed more concern for people on fixed incomes.

I hope that members opposite will give this measure the support that it deserves, and the people of these reassessed areas look forward to this entire Parliament showing more concern for their problems and helping them through this period of difficulty.

Mr. MATHWIN (Glenelg): I second the motion with pleasure, because it has much merit. It involves particularly the Districts of Davenport, Glenelg, Fisher and Hanson, and it ought to concern the Minister of Environment and Conservation, whose district is also involved.

Mr. Langley: Has your council increased rates?

Mr. MATHWIN: I do not know what on earth the member for Unley is talking about and, if he wants to try to protect residents of his district, I suggest that he make a speech rather than try to distract me, because I want to represent the people in my district. We all know that these water rates affect the many people on fixed incomes who live in my district. These people face colossal increases, ranging from 100 per cent to 200 per cent and more. It is all very well for the Government to say that one of the great benefits that it has given has been by way of assistance to pensioners or people on low incomes. I suppose the Government will say that another benefit has been given by allowing people to pay water rates quarterly. However, the Government knows that it is taxing people out of existence. People who live in units have no chance of using their water quota. They are paying for something which they will never get and which the Government cannot supply to them. Let the member for Unley, who asks questions about reservoir holdings, deny that.

Mr. Langley: What's the—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Unley is out of order.

Mr. MATHWIN: The member for Unley probably will ask, at his next Caucus meeting, that people be allowed to

pay their water and sewerage rates weekly. The hardships and problems the Government is causing must be seen to be believed, and the people cannot face up to them. The Minister of Works has stated that the Government will not reduce water rates. However, he has increased the rate in districts held by Liberal members, and has selected the Districts of Davenport, Glenelg, and Hanson. In these areas, the rate will not be reduced.

Members interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask honourable members to maintain some decorum in this debate. In addition, I ask the honourable member for Glenelg to direct his remarks to the Chair and not to honourable members opposite.

Mr. MATHWIN: I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

LAND TAX

Mr. RUSSACK (Gouger): I move:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Land Tax Act, 1936-1974, should be immediately amended to provide for lower rates in the dollar for properties in reassessed areas which assessment was determined during 1973-74, and which is to form the basis for computation of land tax in the 1974-75 financial year.

It has been said that in any argument one must first convince oneself. I assure honourable members that I am convinced about my motion. The more I hear about people being placed in situations of hardship because of drastically increased land valuations, the more I am convinced. In speaking to the previous motion, the members for Davenport and Glenelg were dealing with high valuations in their districts. However, I am possibly most concerned in my motion with valuations on unimproved rural land. I have persistently followed the course of asking the Government to amend the Land Tax Act to lower the scale of charges to compensate for the high increase in valuations. On July 25 this year, I asked a question about new valuations on unimproved land. On August 6, I asked the Minister of Works to consider reducing the rate so that property owners would have a fairer go. On September 10 and 17, I sought a reply to my question. However, to this date I have not been told whether the Government will consider altering the scale of land tax.

Therefore, I believe that it is appropriate to introduce this motion, which I consider all fair-minded members will support. In surveying the areas affected by this tax, I have found that in the Riverton council area property owners have been notified of a new valuation this year, with valuations being increased on average by 100 per cent to 150 per cent. Later valuations in the Bute council area and the Clinton council area have resulted in increases of 250 per cent to 300 per cent. For example, on a property valued at about $30 000 the tax would be at a flat rate of $120 plus 8c for each $10 between $30 000 and $40 000. On properties valued at about $90 000 the flat rate of tax is increased from $120 to $900, and the rate of 8c for each additional $10 is increased to 20c for each additional $10. Therefore, if a valuation is increased by about 250 per cent to 300 per cent, the tax is increased by about 700 per cent to 900 per cent. Such increases are unreasonable, leading to the situation in which people cannot afford to pay them. I have always understood that taxes can be justified only when taxpayers are able to pay them. In many areas, we are reaching the stage where taxpayers are unable to meet these payments.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Increases of 900 per cent are ridiculous.

Mr. RUSSACK: Yes, and there is no direct return in services to people who pay these taxes. In the Riverton council area, I can cite examples of property values increased from $20 370 to $49 470; from $26 060 to $63 200; and from $42 640 to $98 200. Those increases are staggering. In the Bute council area, the unimproved value on one property of 1 300 hectares is $169 920.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Is there a gold mine on it?

Mr. RUSSACK: Not exactly. The productivity of this property is not in line with its valuation. After rural rebate, the tax will be $2 717·44. On checking this case with the Land Tax Division, I found that the calculation was correct. I will relate a brief history of this case, giving some of the details told to me today over the telephone by the property owner. Now 61 years of age, he was a shearer for 30 years. He started with no capital and worked for 15s. a week, and has worked night and day assisted by a devoted wife and family. His wife helped him into the early hours of the morning during seeding. He told me today that he has never been so depressed in trying to pay his expenses. Why is it that a man who has worked hard throughout his life to improve himself and provide for his family is confronted today with such impositions, and why should he be worried at the age of 61 years about how he will meet his expenses?

There is an extreme difference between the philosophies of political Parties. One concerns Socialism under which a person is directed and owned by those in Government and told what to do: there is another philosophy in which a person is entitled to improve his status in life with the dignity of personal enterprise and to succeed, as this man has done. I am proud to say that I belong to the Liberal Party, because it espouses the philosophy that the person who strives and has the ability, potential, drive, and initiative to be successful should have the right to do so, as long as his actions do not encroach on the freedom of others. I read the following line from the policy speech of the Liberal Party for the 1973 election, concerning land tax:

We will eliminate rural land tax on land used for agricultural purposes.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That was the policy the public rejected.

Mr. RUSSACK: They may have rejected it in 1973, but I suggest that the next election will be most interesting, and I am sure that it will not be rejected then, particularly if the Government continues with its present policies on this matter. Not only is rural land being hit: the effect is being felt across the board. The Government calls many people workers, but it then suggests that there are other people called farmers and business men. Everyone works who exercises his personal energy, but some work for longer hours than others. In 1971, a situation prevailed that was similar to the one existing today, and the Labor Government of the day was confronted with those circumstances. The then Premier, the same person who is Premier today, is reported in *Hansard* of August 12, 1971, as saying:

Since the making of the 1970 assessment, the Government has viewed with growing concern the steady decline in the value of primary-producing land. Since that date it has also become clear that the sales on which the assessment was based did not, in fact, fully reflect the drop which had already occurred in the profitability of rural production. It has been estimated that rural land sales over the past 12 months reveal an average drop in value of about 20 per cent. The unfortunate result is that, under the Act as it now stands, the 1971-1972 land tax must be based on an assessment which, in effect, now grossly overvalues much of the primary-producing land. Not only land tax but also water rates would be unreasonably high

in respect of the primary producer, as the Commissioner of Waterworks calculates his rates on the basis of the quinquennial land tax assessment. The Government is of the opinion that such a situation is unreasonable and places an unfair burden on the primary producer.

In 1971, productivity had been reduced and the value of land had also been reduced. The same situation applies today. Stock prices are much reduced and many difficulties are encountered in cereal growing. As the Premier said, valuation affects not only land tax but also water rates and similar matters. In referring to land tax, I have ignored other ancillary charges. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 21. Page 605.)

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I fully support this measure. It has been said in the community that organised live hare coursing is not cruel to the hare or to the hounds, but I do not accept that statement. Where a hare is coursed or hunted by dogs, there must be cruelty. As a young man living on a farm, I hunted hares and other animals with hounds. They had been coursing dogs and some had been brought from other States, but I have no doubt now that there had been great cruelty, probably greater than in circumstances in which the hare is given a chance to escape through a hole in the fence or by some other way. I have no doubt that cruelty to the animals still exists. We all know that a hare can be chased until it is completely exhausted and that it will collapse and die of shock: it does not have to be touched by the hound. I know people who have been associated with hares and hounds in this sport, whether organised or conducted in a home paddock, who know that the hare will die of shock without being caught. I have seen it happen, and no-one can deny that that is cruelty. At least it results in the early death of the hare.

In this modern day and age, to suggest that we as a society should support a method of hunting one animal with another animal to offer an opportunity to wager (which is the main purpose of the sport), I believe is totally unacceptable. I do not believe that anyone concerned with stopping cruelty to animals could support the sport. It has been suggested that the dogs could be muzzled. I believe the member for Ross Smith made the point that it would be interesting to know whether the hare knew the dog was muzzled or not. I do not know whether the hare should stop and look at the dog to see whether it is muzzled, whether notes should be given to the hare, or whether the hare should be fitted with a transistor radio. Whether or not a dog is muzzled, it will still tend to bruise, buffet and harm the hare. Once a hare is caught other dogs like to enjoy the kill and they, too, are likely to injure, buffet, and harm the hare.

If there was a reason for supporting the sport, for allowing it to continue as a betting medium, its continuance might be considered, but I would not support such a move, although other people might. Mechanical lures are used by people who wish to train and race dogs. If people want open coursing perhaps they could develop a mechanical lure. It would be expensive but it would allow people to continue to gamble in this area. This sport is not conducted for the benefit of the dogs. It is of no benefit to the dog or to the hare. It is conducted for the few people who believe that, by placing a bet, they might be richer after a race than they were a few moments before it. That is the sole purpose of conducting the sport. I cannot justify cruelty to animals for that purpose. My opinion is that society would reject this form of sport if it witnessed a coursing event where there was no kill. Indeed, if the general public had witnessed a few coursing events, the measure introduced by the member for Ross Smith would have been introduced many years ago.

Mr. Keneally: And would have been supported, too.

Mr. EVANS: Yes. I believe the measure will be supported because members have a responsibility to the animals in our community as well as to human beings. If they put the desires of some people to wager on this sport before the welfare and health of animals, I believe they lack the intelligence expected of them by the community and show no feeling for the protection of animals. I congratulate the member for Ross Smith on introducing the Bill and hope that a majority of members (I know there may be strong opponents to the Bill) will support the measure, that it will go through the Upper House, and that we shall see a move made to take away the opportunity to be cruel to animals. Recently, we provided T.A.B. betting and bookmaking on dog racing using mechanical lures. So, people involved in that sport got what they asked for and we are now asking them to make a small sacrifice for the sake of the hare and the hound.

Mr. ALLEN (Frome): I support the second reading of the Bill in the hope that it will be amended in Committee. In the event of its not being amended, I intend to oppose the Bill on its third reading. This Bill will repeal section 7 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1936-1973. Section 7 of that Act provides:

Nothing contained in this Act shall apply to, or make unlawful, the hunting or coursing of hares which have not been liberated in a mutilated or injured state in order to facilitate their capture or destruction.

The marginal note to section 7 states that the Act is not to apply to hunting or coursing of hares. If section 7 is repealed, the hare will be virtually protected in South Australia. At least that is my interpretation; however, I will leave it to the legal fraternity to determine whether I am right or wrong. It is my interpretation that it will be illegal for anyone to shoot or even to chase a hare. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* defines "hunt" as follows:

To chase or go in quest of for prey or sport; to seek or pursue game; to search for, to pursue; to go out in pursuit of game; to search.

That means that to hunt a hare from its squat and to go after it on foot would be breaking the law. By repealing section 7 we are virtually making the hare a protected animal in South Australia. That would be unfortunate, because there are certain areas of the State where the hare, at certain times, causes damage to forests, young trees, and crops. In fact, I believe the measure would be detrimental to the rural industry generally.

I wish to make clear from the outset that I am not opposed to live hare coursing provided that all steps are taken to ensure that the hare does not suffer unduly. I claim to be sufficiently well versed in this subject because, in my earlier years, I was very much connected with open coursing which, by the way, has been abolished. In that field I held most positions (president, secretary, slip steward and beat controller) and saw much coursing at close quarters.

The hare was introduced into Australia from England in the early days of settlement, together with the rabbit and fox (both declared vermin in South Australia at present). Several birds, which have been declared vermin, were

introduced from the old country: namely, sparrows, starlings, and blackbirds. The hare, after being introduced, settled in quickly and, by 1892, in the Martindale-Mintaro area, a 2·48 dog stake was held over two days. That necessitated the coursing of 92 hares. Anyone connected with coursing knows that to course 92 hares one really needs 180 hares because the hares sometimes get too close to a fence or creek, making it impossible to course. Similar stakes were conducted regularly in this area.

The hare population remained about the same until the early 1940's, when myxomatosis was introduced into South Australia to combat the rabbit plagues. I am convinced that myxomatosis had a detrimental effect on the State's hare population because, in the early 1940's, we used to run a 16-dog stake on my property. To run such a stake it is necessary to course 15 hares, for which 30 hares need to be found. We could run such a stake on my property, whereas in 1968 only one hare remained on my entire property. I am convinced that this drastic reduction in the hare population was the result of myxomatosis. In his second reading explanation of the Bill, the member for Ross Smith said:

Many of us believe that nothing exists today to justify the continuation of a so-called sport that inflicts unnecessary pain or suffering on any animal merely for the gratification of society . . .

Therefore, he implied that at one time it was justified. He also said that, among those who support coursing, are people who perhaps have inherited an interest in it from their fathers. True, some people interested in coursing have inherited their liking for the sport from their fathers, and it has been carried on through the generations. However, we are now living in a different age. I do not agree with some statements made by the member for Fisher, because the coursing fraternity has over the years always tried, where possible, to consider the hare and not cause it undue suffering. The sport has improved so much that now it is a completely revitalised sport.

Later in his second reading explanation, the member for Ross Smith referred to a report to the Secretary of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals from its staff inspector, following a coursing meeting at Murray Bridge held on June 22. Most of the arguments advanced by the member for Ross Smith were based on this report. In his report, the staff inspector said:

I observed the running of the heats from the mound near the bookmakers' stand, and each time the hare was caught during the elimination heats it seemed to have been killed within a matter of a few seconds after it had been caught.

That is correct: anyone involved in coursing knows that, when a coursing dog catches a hare, the death of the hare is almost instantaneous because, in the process of catching, the dog usually catches the hare by the hind quarters first, and immediately takes a second grab and bites the hare over the shoulders or just behind the shoulders. The dog's teeth go right through the hare's ribs into the heart section, causing instant death. I agree with the staff inspector's statement that the hare appeared to be dead in a matter of a few seconds. In his report, he also said:

The dead hares had been carried from the coursing area and placed on the ground near a gate leading from the arena . . . The dogs quickly caught the hare during the final heat. I could hear the hare squealing as both dogs held it. The handlers of the dogs ran out on to the area and caught the dogs, and retrieved the hare from the dogs. One of the handlers carried the hare from the arena and placed it on the ground outside the gate, at the same time informing me that it was still alive.

I do not believe that statement, because anyone experienced in coursing knows that it is virtually impossible for two dogs to catch a hare and for the handler to take the hare from the dogs and carry it down while it is still alive. If the hare on this occasion was still alive, it was the handler's fault. Most people connected with coursing know that, if the hare shows any sign of life, the handler immediately puts the hare out of its misery by taking hold of its back legs with his left hand, and by putting his right hand around the hare, and twisting the head to an angle of 90 degrees, giving the head a slight push, thus breaking the hare's neck. Most people destroy animals this way, and most people interested in coursing would immediately put the hare out of its misery. I do not believe that the handler would carry a live hare off the course, and put it down in a heap, and say that it was still alive. In his report, the staff inspector also said:

Whilst I was examining the dead bodies, I was approached by a spectator who told me that he had seen a hare, which had earlier been caught by the dogs, apparently recover sufficiently to get up and run off into open country. It would be impossible to assess this animal's injuries or chance of survival.

I do not doubt the staff inspector when he says that someone told him that, but I doubt the word of the spectator who told him that, because it is virtually impossible for a hare to get up and run away after being placed on a heap for so long, although rabbits do this, because they are tough: they recover and run away. In his second reading explanation, the member for Ross Smith also said:

That leads me to a conversation I had some time ago with the gentleman associated with coursing in this State whom I know best and for whom I have a high personal regard. He told me that the hares really enjoyed the chase; that if they got ahead it was nothing for them to stop and wait for the hounds to catch up a bit, and that it was really a fun-and-games arrangement between the hare and the hounds. I must say that this was too much for me to accept, and our conversation terminated on that note.

That is partly true, because anyone who has studied the habits of hares knows that, when a hare is flushed from the squat or let out on an enclosure, it has a thumping gait. From birth, it has to survive the attacks of foxes, cats, and wedge-tail eagles. Unlike the rabbit and the fox, which have the ability to run into a burrow when danger threatens, the hare must rely wholly and solely on camouflage and speed. A full-grown hare must survive over the years to reach this stage in life. When flushed from the squat, the hare does not sense danger: it is inclined to skip about until the course is on and, when it realises that its life is endangered, it puts its ears down and runs for its life. Any inexperienced person might believe that the hare was playing games with the dogs. However, that is not so, because it is the hare's habit to act in that way. There is some truth in the statement made by the member for Ross Smith, but it is not entirely correct. Later, the honourable member quoted from a report in the *National Times* of June 17, as follows:

It is a paradox that South Australia, which has some claim to being the most civilised State in Australia, should be the only State to permit Australia's most barbaric sport.

That is incorrect, because open coursing is still permitted in Victoria. Furthermore, regarding his calling coursing Australia's most barbaric sport, may I tell the honourable member that hunting of foxes, with hounds, is much more barbaric than coursing. As many as 12 hounds are let loose on a fox, with the hunters following after the hounds until the fox is caught, and it is mutiliated far more than a

hare is mutilated in coursing. Regarding horse-racing, only about a month ago I saw on television that the video-tape of the race had been cut at the finish because a horse had broken its leg just after passing the winning post. The horse had been whipped most of the way down the straight. What if someone from the Eastern States put up $5 000 to abolish horse-racing in this State? There would be a real hullaballoo, because horse-racing is one of South Australia's leading industries. Why single out the few coursing enthusiasts we have here who really enjoy the sport while at the same time we allow hunting with hounds and horse-racing to continue? The member for Ross Smith went on to say:

I understand that in the Committee stages of this Bill there might be an attempt made to render it less effective by suggesting that amendments such as the muzzling of dogs or matters of that nature be used as an alternative to my amending Bill. Let me make it perfectly clear that, whilst I do not wish to pre-judge the Committee stages of the Bill, any such amendments would be absolutely unacceptable. Indeed, it would probably cause great cruelty to a dog if it were muzzled; it would not lessen the cruelty to the hare by the buffeting it would receive from the muzzled dog . . .

As he is a man with country experience, I am sure the member for Ross Smith knows that sheep dogs are muzzled for the whole of their working lives if they are inclined to bite sheep. So, if it is considered cruel to muzzle a coursing dog, why is the muzzling of sheep dogs permitted? We must be consistent. The member for Fisher told us of the danger arising from the muzzling of dogs, but I have been told that dogs are muzzled in trials and, when a muzzled dog touches a hare, the hare leaves it for dead. It has been said that quite often it is not a matter of the hare not being fast enough: it is a matter of misjudgment, because he leaves his turn too late and, once a hare is touched with the muzzle, the dog does not get near the hare again. So, I cannot agree with the honourable member on this point. The report by a staff inspector cited by the member for Ross Smith referred to a plumpton coursing meeting at Murray Bridge. The N.C.A. has abandoned plumpton coursing. N.C.A. members agree that the meeting was a bad one: it was a cold day; the hares had been boxed; there had been plenty of feed in the paddock; the hares, which were fat and healthy, were not trained; and several hares were killed that day. Plumpton coursing has now been banned altogether in this State, the same as open coursing. The only coursing now conducted in this State is open enclosure coursing. In open enclosure coursing the hares are reared all year in a paddock; on the morning of the meeting, they are driven into a paddock of lucerne; they are driven out one at a time; and they are then driven up a hill. By this time the hare is warm and, when the dogs are slipped, the hare has covered 400 metres and there are very few chances of a kill.

The only coursing meetings now held in this State are at Mintaro, Kenderleigh, Pinnaroo, Hartley, and Strathdownie, and the plumpton course at Mount Gambier is being converted to open enclosure coursing. In the last 75 courses at Mintaro, there has not been a kill. At Kenderleigh 89 courses were held before there was a kill, and there has been only one kill in 120 courses. Twelve years ago, Mr. Madigan of Pinnaroo started to protect the hares with a view to conducting open enclosure coursing. Mr. Charles Harvey, of Hartley, spent many hours at night protecting hares from spotlighters on his property. I suggest people interested in the protection of hares should look into the activities of the spotlighter, because the spotlighter often injures the hare, which, although it may get away, becomes fly-blown in a couple of days. There is nothing more pathetic than to see a hare die from the effects of being fly-blown or from the effects of myxomatosis. That is far more cruel than the kill of a hare by a coursing dog.

All members were invited to attend a meeting held recently at Mintaro, but unfortunately very few members accepted the invitation. I attended because I had not seen this type of coursing before. Being given every privilege, I inspected the course from the judge's box and from the paddocks, and I am sure the club had nothing to hide. I am perfectly convinced that in the event of dogs being muzzled the hares will have nothing to worry about with open enclosure coursing. I am sure this small industry will be able to continue in this State.

Earlier, I said that in the trials young dogs are now muzzled, and the N.C.A. is prepared to muzzle dogs at its meetings as well. If this practice is adopted, points will not be allocated for a kill. The N.C.A. is prepared to co-operate in every way possible with the R.S.P.C.A. so that the sport can continue. I think that the N.C.A. has gone as far as it can possibly go in an attempt to see the sport survive. If this Bill is carried, of course, the sport will die altogether. The member for Fisher has said that in speed coursing in this State there is a lure for the dogs to chase. That is correct, but it is a matter of sheer speed, whereas with coursing it is not only a matter of speed but also a matter of the ability of the dog to recover after the hare turns and the dogs have to turn to follow the hare. It then depends on the ability of the dog to recover after the turn. There is a distinct difference between speed coursing and open enclosure coursing. People interested in coursing are not interested in horse-racing or football: they are animal lovers, because anyone who would put so many hours into the handling and the training of dogs must certainly have a liking for a dog. They are interested in animals generally and they do not wish to see the hare knocked about any more than anyone else does.

Open enclosure coursing commenced at Mintaro 10 years ago. The land has been lent to the coursing club by Mrs. Mortlock of Martindale who regularly attends a meeting once every year. The land, comprising about 30 hectares, is well fenced but unfortunately fences do not keep out foxes, cats and wedge-tail eagles. Crops are grown on the land and they have a self-feed of oats in the corner of the paddock to feed the hares all year round. The fences are regularly patrolled on a roster by members of the committee. Some hares breed in these paddocks but cats and eagles are the biggest problem. The hare is given 130 m start at the commencement of a course and they course over a 430 m course, which is slightly uphill because an uphill course always favours the hare when it is being chased. The dogs are taken to the enclosure in a utility before they are slipped and, contrary to reports we read from time to time, it is impossible for any hare to be coursed twice on the one day. Much has been made of the fact that hares are coursed twice in the one day, but with open enclosure coursing, which is the only type of coursing conducted in South Australia today, it is impossible for a hare to be coursed twice in the one day.

Coursing enthusiasts do not like to see the hares killed and they do everything possible to avoid their being killed. In trials the dogs are muzzled in order to save the hares. Unfortunately, it is too late now for all members to inspect this type of coursing because the coursing season has finished. As representatives of the community, we are called upon to give a balanced judgment on issues of this nature and I believe that before we cast a decisive vote on this Bill we should see for ourselves what goes on. I honestly

think that open enclosure coursing, with the dogs muzzled, could be the answer for those people who are concerned about cruelty to the hare.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): The member for Frome has covered the history of coursing. Although I have no interest in coursing, I know what has happened in my district regarding the conservation of hares. Strathalbyn has been the base for Waterloo Cup coursing, and the hares have been particularly preserved within an area of about five square kilometres. People in the area have stayed up all night to keep the spotlight shooters out, and the hares have thrived there much more than has been the case in surrounding areas. With increased use of motor cars, I have seen dead hares on the road, and they have also been killed by mowers in the lucerne on which they have lived.

Gradually, the hares disappeared from the area and coursing could not be continued there. Except for two hares I saw at Adelaide Airport about a fortnight ago, I have not seen a hare for a long time. They are also not in areas where they used to be thick and where people who wanted to engage in coursing were conserving them. An enclosed area comprising about 32 hectares has been provided and lucerne and other good food is available. Mr. Harvey is a conservationist of the highest order. He even allows kangaroos to run in crops, and he gets a permit to destroy them only when they are causing extreme damage. But for Mr. Harvey, there would not be nearly half as many mallee hens as there are now in the Mallee.

I do not believe in taking a hare out of its natural surroundings, boxing it, and then using it at a race. I do not agree with many reports that I have read in newspapers. Lies have been told, and I have seen a photograph of a dog hung up on barbed wire, when there was no barbed wire on the property. Some of the photographs seem to have been concocted. In that way, a wrong impression has been given to people who do not know the sport, and false claims have been made. Plumpton coursing must be eliminated, because in that coursing the hares are boxed up and then let go on a natural course.

If the five or six courses operating are closed down, hares will be a rarity, other than in the outback, where they can live under good conditions and with a slim chance of being killed. If 100 hares were taken out of their coursing enclosure and let run in open paddocks, there would not be 10 left within a year. On behalf of conservationists, I make a plea for the preservation of the hare. We should use common sense in regard to a coursing system in which there is little danger to the hare. If we want to preserve the hare in good situations, we will let open coursing continue in the paddocks. Regarding the muzzling of dogs, I have seen many dogs chase hares. In fact, when I first went to my property 40 years ago, it was infested with foxes and dogs that used to chase hares. That was cruel. I have seen a sheep dog go off at an angle of 45 degrees and catch the hare when it turned. If a person tries to touch a hare when it is turning, the hare will run off.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: How often have you touched a hare when it was turning?

Mr. McANANEY: About 35 years ago I was walking through a thick crop and almost put my foot on a hare. He jumped to get over the crop, and I caught him with my hand. When he kicked, I let him go, and he moved off more quickly than I could. I also hold the world record for catching a rabbit in a trap.

The SPEAKER: Order! To which Bill is the honourable member speaking?

Mr. McANANEY: I am referring to the catching of vermin.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the honourable member had better come back to the Bill.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Tell us about the rabbit.

Mr. McANANEY: While setting a rabbit trap in a hole about 1 m square and about 3 m deep I had just taken my hand from underneath the flap when a dog stirred up a rabbit, and I caught the rabbit within half a second. I consider that that would be a world record.

The SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member discussing the Bill?

Mr. McANANEY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I strongly oppose this Bill. Open coursing under the conditions to which I have referred is not cruel to the hare. It will be possible to conserve hares and give them a greater life expectancy in paddocks rather than in the open. I suggest that all members use good judgment and not be carried away. I respect the good intentions of members, but I suspect that they will harm the hare population if they go ahead.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I oppose the legislation. Mintaro, in my district, has had coursing for many years and, since I have represented the district, I have gone there and I know something of the position there. Coursing provides a pastime for many people not only in the metropolitan area but also in country areas. For this reason, I believe the Bill should be defeated. The member for Frome, who has had long and wide experience in coursing, has given members details of the sport. He has said that he will support the second reading of the Bill, hoping that it will be amended in Committee.

I have been invited to Mintaro, where I have seen coursing for myself. I consider that in that case everything possible is done to protect the hare. When I was there, hares were driven across paddocks into an area where they were retained in safety. They were brought from this area as required. At Mintaro, I saw no cruelty at all. I am concerned that so many people have signed petitions supporting this legislation when I do not believe many of them know about coursing at all.

Mr. Wells: That applies in other cases.

Mr. VENNING: Invariably petitions are not explained to people, with people signing them simply to get rid of the person who has brought the petition. In the metropolitan area, I believe many people signed petitions without knowing the first thing about coursing. I support the way coursing is conducted. In my area, at Mintaro a healthy club is well conducted. It would be a jolly shame if coursing there were prohibited. Therefore, I oppose the Bill, hoping that members will use their good judgment in also opposing it.

Mrs. BYRNE (Tea Tree Gully): In supporting the Bill, I congratulate the member for Ross Smith on having introduced it. I realise that previous efforts by the R.S.P.C.A. to ban the sport (if that term can be used for coursing) have failed. Probably the main reason for that failure is that hares cannot speak for themselves and do not have a vote. The member for Rocky River says that he cannot see why coursing should be banned, as it is a pastime enjoyed by some people. However, I point out that there are thousands of other pastimes in which people can engage and which are certainly not as cruel as live hare coursing. The member for Frome said that recently a newspaper photograph showed a fallen horse at a horse-racing event. As the horse's leg was broken, the horse was later destroyed. I regret that such an incident should have occurred. However, I point out that in such a case it was not intended that the horse would be killed when it was entered in the

event; unfortunately, accidents occur. However, in the case of hares, the object of the sport is sometimes to kill the hares, as on some occasions more points are awarded if this happens.

Mr. McAnaney: You're wrong there.

Mrs. BYRNE: That is my information. If the position has been changed recently, the fact is that it was as I have stated until a short time ago. The member for Rocky River said that many people who signed petitions did not know what they were signing. I point out that more than 80 000 people have signed petitions supporting this legislation. The petitions were organised by the R.S.P.C.A., with the full support of the Animal Welfare League. Most people that I know who got people to sign these petitions explained to the people what the petition meant. I had one of the petitions, and in some cases people refused to sign it. This shows that they were given a full explanation. In fact, some people said that they would not sign it because they did not understand it.

The member for Frome has outlined the types of coursing that take place. I wish to refer in greater detail to the three forms of coursing live hares and with dogs that are conducted in South Australia. First, there is coursing of the hare in the wild state. In this case, dogs are urged to pursue and kill a hare in open country. No form of restraint is placed on the hare, so that this is a casual type of coursing. Secondly, open coursing takes place in a large fenced paddock known as the coursing ground. One side of the fence is pierced with escape holes through which the hare, but not the dog, can escape. In the paddock, the hares live in a semi-wild state. Although they do not depend on man for survival, their food is often supplemented by the owner of the coursing ground. Hares cannot truly be described as being in the wild or free state in these circumstances, as they are confined in the coursing ground by a hare-proof fence. When a coursing meeting takes place, the coursing ground is entered by the judge, who is usually mounted, and a slipper, who controls two greyhounds on a leash. This party walks around the ground until a hare is put up. Once the slipper is sure that both dogs have seen the hare, the dogs are released. The average start a hare receives is about 50 metres to 75 metres. The dogs pursue the hare and are awarded points for their speed and agility, and for making a kill.

Mr. Becker: No, that's not right.

Mrs. BYRNE: That is my information, and I have it on good authority, so I am sure it is right, or at least it was. Bets are placed on each dog's performance. The average time the hare is pursued can be estimated at about 60 seconds. The hare, when pursued, generally makes for an escape hole in the coursing ground fence. There is no doubt that the hares know that they may escape the dogs in this way.

The third type of coursing is plumpton coursing. This has been referred to by the member for Heysen and takes place in a smaller area. The captive state of the hares is easier to adjudge, as they are driven along a race to the position where they are released for the dogs to pursue. The dogs are held by a slipper at one end and the hare is released in front of the dogs. The dogs are held until the slipper is sure that they have seen the hare. The system of judging is the same as that used in open coursing. If anything, it would seem that the hare stands the least chance of escape in this form of coursing, but the rules provide that no hare may be used more than twice at any one meeting.

I understand that there are about 35 coursing meetings, both open and plumpton, held in this State each year. We all know that the controlling body of this so-called sport is the National Coursing Association of South Australia, which also controls greyhound racing. The member for Frome referred to section 7 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which provides:

Nothing contained in this Act shall apply to, or make unlawful, the hunting or coursing of hares which have not been liberated in a mutilated or injured state in order to facilitate their destruction.

The member for Frome said that, if this section were removed, it would virtually mean that hares would become protected in this State. The member for Heysen suggested that hares were becoming rare and, if this is so, for conservation reasons hares should be protected. However, people could shoot or exterminate them in other ways. South Australia is the only Australian State in which the sport is specifically allowed, and I see no reason why this should be so. I consider this to be a cruel sport that should not be allowed to continue. It causes unnecessary stress to be inflicted on the hare whilst it is being pursued by a greyhound. When the hare is caught by a greyhound, despite the kill generally being fairly swift, much pain can be suffered by the hare. The member for Frome pointed out what happened to some hares, but I will not give the gory details, except that the necks of the hares are wrung, and I consider that a gruesome aspect of this sport. I have to admit that few hares are killed at each coursing meeting held early in the season. The season is from May to September, and the number of hares killed increases towards the end of that period. At the start of the season hares are fit but the dogs are inexperienced. However, towards the end of the season the dogs are more experienced and the hares are becoming slower because they are tired. Also, it is the breeding season and female hares are often carrying young. The chasing of these hares is one of the most repugnant aspects of this so-called sport.

Mr. Becker: That's rubbish!

Mrs. BYRNE: Like many other members, I have received letters about this matter from people who support the legislation introduced by the member for Ross Smith. Some people have implied that some reports are based not on fact but on hysteria. However, I refer to a report in the *Sunday Mail* of July 21 this year quoting comments from Mr. L. M. Thomas (Chairman of Zoology at Adelaide University) and Professor W. V. MacFarlane (Professor of Physiology at Waite Agricultural Research Institute), whose statements I am sure would be accepted as being based on fact and not on hysteria. The newspaper report states:

In its natural state, the hare can sense a walking dog at 100 m; barking, at 300 m. The dog is stucturally made for higher speed. It is more intelligent. The hare knows it is running for its life. From evidence available, the feeling states of animals are pretty much the same as the feeling states of man. For instance, when hares muzzle one another they have the same feelings humans do when they "pet". And when the hare ran yesterday—

The report includes a photograph of an unfortunate hare shown in the mouth of a greyhound, and the caption states:

The end for one of the hares as a greyhound walks along with it firmly in his mouth.

The newspaper report continues:

I can assure you steroid hormones were running from its adrenal glands—as they do in us. Adrenalin was pouring into the blood stream—as it does in us—and there were secretions from the thyroid—as there are in us. The limbs were trembling, and the pupils were dilated—that was terror.

I am sure that, if members who oppose this legislation were in an arena with a lion chasing them, they would experience

the same feelings, but also the lion would eat them in the same way as the greyhound eats the hare it has caught. For the reasons I have outlined, I support the legislation because I consider that this so-called sport is cruel and should not be allowed to continue.

Mr. PAYNE secured the adjournment of the debate.

STATUTES AMENDMENT (MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC) BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from August 14. Page 471.)

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport): Introduced by the Leader of the Opposition on August 14, this Bill seeks to do three things: first, to introduce P plates into South Australia; secondly, to alter markedly the allocation of demerit points; and thirdly, to decrease the present speed limit past school omnibuses, school crossings, and roadworks from 30 kilometres an hour to 25 km/h. I intend to deal with the three matters but, before doing so, I must refer briefly to the points made by the Leader in his second reading explanation. Moreover, I must express the view that, in my opinion, had he delivered the speech that was prepared initially he would have served the cause of road safety better than regrettably deciding to bring the question of Party politics into the serious question of road safety. I have always attempted (and I will continue to do so) to try to deal with the question of road safety on the basis of a humane and unbiased political viewpoint.

Mr. Becker: Would you—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The member for Hanson should not interject, because his action in bringing Party politics into a matter in 1973 was an absolute disgrace to any human being.

Mr. Becker: You didn't like it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Becker: You set your dogs on me, didn't you, but it didn't do you any good. Don't worry about that issue.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The honourable member knows what I am talking about, because he went out to try to blame me, as Minister, when he knew how many young people were in the car. He should have known the alcoholic condition of those people. What he did was an utter disgrace.

Mr. Becker: I didn't run to the press: they came to me.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The press suddenly went down to see the honourable member because he was the big-time man. In his second reading explanation, the Leader of the Opposition said that, in the area of road safety, this Government had an abysmal record of inactivity and lack of concern for the welfare of all the people who use the roads. However, he knows that is untrue. Moreover, he knows it is a grave reflection on the Road Safety Council, on the Road Traffic Board, and on the Police Department, which all do a splendid job. To reflect on those organisations, to me, is a great pity. I want to say, as I have said so often in the past, that I am proud of the work done by the Road Safety Council over the years and the work it is still doing. I regret, as it does, too, that we do not have a better record to show as the result of its work.

I am willing to acknowledge that some people, in ignorance, could say that the council's work activities are not achieving very much. In fact, the council is doing a tremendous job involving dedicated people. The House might be interested to learn of the activities of the council in 1973-74. During that year the council's field officers made 261 visits to schools for the purpose of lecturing students in class (totalling 41 099 children); addressed 12 youth groups and 77 adult groups; conducted 32 courses for nurses in training; attended 15 displays that required manning; conducted 36 courses under the driver improvement programme for the 16 years to 25 years age group (1 643 people attended); lectured at 14 motor cycle courses; participated in nine seminars, teacher in-service or training programmes; lectured at 20 Royal Australian Air Force and Army courses on defensive driving; made 35 television and radio appearances; and conducted children's courses for two weeks at the Millicent child safety centre. That makes a total of 9 368, which I believe is a tremendous record.

Mr. Mathwin: Are you going to support the Leader's Bill?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I know that the member for Glenelg hates the Road Safety Council's activities; he always tries to stir up matters against the council.

Mr. Mathwin: That's a ridiculous statement.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: But I will always stand up and defend the council.

Mr. Mathwin: That's ridiculous.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The only thing ridiculous about that is the member making the interjections. I will now deal with the point made by the Leader when he said that the right to drive a motor vehicle is a privilege, because I completely agree with him. In late 1971 and early 1972, under my signature, every licensed driver in South Australia received a note headed "You are privileged. You are one of the many fortunate South Australians who enjoy the privilege of holding a licence." So, in 1974, the Leader is now telling us what I told every driver two years ago. The Leader also said:

> This Bill is a practical step towards the reduction of an ever-increasing horror of road carnage. My Party has consistently pressed the Government for immediate, sane and sensible efforts in this direction.

I hope the Leader will tell me what are the points that his Party expressed which have not been given effect to, which have not been given full and proper consideration, or in respect of which a sound reason has not been produced to show the inadvisability of adopting a measure. I want to say to the Leader and to all members (I said it to the member for Hanson only about four or five weeks ago) that, if any member of this House has a constructive suggestion to put forward in the interests of road safety, it will be properly considered.

Mr. Mathwin: How about dropping the speed limit over school crossings?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the member for Glenelg will contain himself for a while he may learn something.

Mr. Venning: That's a terrible comment.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the member for Rocky River had been listening when I started to speak he would have heard me say I would deal with the three matters contained in the Bill. I am about to do just that. I now turn to those points. First, I will deal with the question of probationary licences, which the Leader sought to introduce. As I have said before, he did this on the basis that the Government had been inactive in its initiatives. However, he will be interested, I am sure, to know that, in November, 1973, almost a year ago, and 10 months before the Leader introduced his Bill, I appointed a committee to investigate the desirability of introducing a probationary licence scheme. I did that not for the purposes of political expediency but because I wanted the matter properly researched. I asked the Registrar of Motor Vehicles, the General Manager of the Royal Automobile Association, and Chief Superintendent Laslett (Officer-in-Charge of the South Australian Police

Force Traffic Division) to constitute themselves as a committee to study this whole question. I do not know where anyone would get three more competent people than these. These people were basically the committee that studied the probationary licence scheme in 1967 and, at that time, the then Walsh Labor Government decided to introduce the points demerit scheme. That Government, which considered the probationary plates scheme and the points demerit scheme, decided, after being advised, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to introduce the two schemes simultaneously. It decided to introduce the points demerit scheme and later to review the probationary plates scheme.

It was on that score that I appointed this committee about a year ago and asked for its advice. I have received the committee's advice and, without reading the whole of its report, I think it fair simply to give a brief run-down of the position in other States. New South Wales told us that no available information revealed anything to promote an argument in favour of the introduction of probationary plates in South Australia. Victoria had virtually a similar kind of attitude. In fact, I could say the same of all of the States. The Australian Road Research Board investigated this matter, and its Director (Mr. Glynn) told us that there was no convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of probationary licences.

The final point I make relates to the position in New Zealand. Although it was not strictly within its terms of reference, the committee believed it important to report on the New Zealand position. A report tabled in the New Zealand Parliament states:

The Ministry of Transport submitted evidence indicating that the regulations have had little or no effect on the accident rate for probationary drivers.

The long and short of the whole situation is that no evidence exists to support the contention that the P plate system was having any effect on the incidence of road accidents: in fact, evidence shows that, because of the varying speed limits applying to the general road user compared to the person holding P plates, a dangerous situation has been created by having these varying speeds. I simply summarise by giving members the conclusions the committee reached:

The committee feels that, unless more definite evidence and statistical information becomes available or an in-depth study conducted into various methods employed over a wider field (which would be a time-consuming project), it is unlikely that we could arrive at any more useful or definite conclusions.

The committee's conclusion was that it could not recommend that a P plate licence system be adopted in South Australia or that any such action would significantly contribute to the promotion of road safety. I cannot discard advice of that kind from the Registrar, the Chief Superintendent of the South Australian Police Force Traffic Division, and the General Manager of the R.A.A., because it is sound and conclusive advice. The committee's report continues:

However, since South Australia is the only State without a probationary scheme of some kind, the Government may consider it desirable to introduce one as a matter of policy.

The Government does not think that, simply because we are the one outsider, that is sufficient reason for us to have a scheme which these men have said would not be of any use. Of course, the whole value of the P plate system is to place a restriction on those people who, in their first year of driving, are involved in accidents. Yet, if one studies the statistics of road traffic accidents in South Australia for the year 1973 (produced by the Road Traffic Board), one finds that the drivers responsible for the largest number of those accidents were those drivers who had been driving for between six years and 10 years: that is the weak spot. If the high unknown figure of about 30 per cent is reasonably spread over the whole field, there is fairly conclusive evidence to show that it is the drivers in the six-year to 10-year group who are the largest group involved in road accidents. The P plate system will not have any effect on them.

Dr. Eastick: There's more in it than that.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Of course there is. I am not saying that we should simply base the whole of the argument on that situation. I am pointing to the fact that here is yet another indication that we will not solve the problem of road safety simply by considering one area.

Dr. Eastick: They lose their licence after six to 10 years and they must go back to the P plate subsequently.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Perhaps they do, but the evidence to hand at present does not support the Leader's contention. I have had this matter studied by people who are fairly expert in this field and, frankly, I am unwilling to depart from their recommendations.

I turn now to the points demerit scheme. Again, for a Government that has done nothing, I state that, on April 9, 1973, I appointed a committee to study the operation of the scheme, with special reference to the matter of courts in appropriate cases awarding fewer points than the number provided as a maximum number by the scheme, and whether the Act should permit courts to suspend drivers in cases where an appeal is lodged against suspension under the system. Mr. G. C. Strutton (Registrar of Motor Vehicles), as Chairman, Mr. R. H. Waters (representing the Royal Automobile Association), Mr. M. F. Gray (Assistant Crown Solicitor), and Mr. L. D. Brown (Senior Inspector of the Police Department) were members of that committee. They were not asked to look specifically at the point the Leader has raised. They were asked to look at the operation of the scheme in a general way but with special reference to courts. They made no reference at all in their report to me about points.

I asked the Chairman whether they had paid attention to the suggestion of the Leader that there ought to be a change, and he told me that they had looked at the whole scheme generally but that they had not paid much attention to that aspect. Accordingly, I asked him whether he would look at the points scheme suggested by the Leader. Mr. Strutton discussed the suggestions with the Leader in an attempt to find out what he was seeking to do and why he was seeking to do it. It was not possible to call a meeting of the committee, as Mr. Waters was overseas. I believe the question should not be discussed by the committee without Mr. Waters being present, because he represents the views of the motoring public of South Australia.

Mr. Strutton, having considered the points raised by the Leader, has discussed the matter with him so that the views the Leader put in his second reading explanation would not be misconstrued. However, the Registrar has been able to find no justification for an increase in the number of points, nor have I. However, I can see that the Leader's provision upsets the previously established relationship with the points one to the other and, remembering that that relationship was something introduced on the recommendation of experts, thrashed out by a Select Committee of this House, and finally agreed upon, I think we ought to look very carefully before we start fiddling around with it.

In some cases there is no increase in the number of points; in others a 100 per cent increase; in others an 80 per cent increase; and in some cases a 50 per cent increase. Why should there be a restructuring of this kind? Why have the consistencies previously applying been changed? For instance, a person found guilty of exceeding a speed limit while driving past a school bus or playground, approaching within 30 m of a school crossing, or driving between signs on road works, incurs a penalty of three points. They all attract a penalty of three points, but the Leader suggests that they should attract six points, except in the case of the offence of speeding past a school bus, when the number will be five. I do not follow the logic of that sort of rearrangement. If it is right now (and I consider it is) that the offence of speeding past a school or playground should be dealt with as at present, surely that also should apply in the case of passing a stationary school bus.

Next, I must stress that no provision is made for existing points. If the number at which a person lost his licence was 18 and that person already had accumulated nine points, he would be well on the way. He would need only one more offence involving three points before he lost his licence under the present system. However, under the Leader's scheme, he would have nine points to go before he reached the 18 points.

Dr. Eastick: You'd better continue reading the report.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I have done that. I am trying to make the point that the Leader has not justified the change. He has created all sorts of inconsistency and has made no provision for dealing with the present position. He has not provided for a person who may have accumulated 12 points, because suddenly the maximum would become 18 points, and I ask whether a person would get his licence back in those circumstances.

Such questions are unanswered and neither the Registrar of Motor Vehicles nor I can see any justification for changing the present table, remembering that it is clearly consistent with what applies in other States. If we were to change, surely the same thing should apply there. I regret to tell the Leader that I am not willing to agree to the change regarding points demerit.

The third matter dealt with by the Leader's Bill relates to the speed limit past schools. I have announced the Government's policy on this matter and I will move a contingent motion. Subject to the legislation passing the second reading, I will seek to correct one matter that the Leader forgot, namely, the changing of the 30 km/h limit so that we will have a limit of 25 km/h consistently.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I have listened carefully to the Minister, and I hope that he has not opposed some provisions merely because the Opposition put them in the Bill. I do not believe that he has done that, so I will ignore some of his introductory comments. The Minister has asked for concrete and proper suggestions from this side; indeed, he said he would welcome them. The Leader has made such suggestions. As I have examined the Bill and have been involved in preparing some provisions, I know that it is a sincere attempt to promote safety on the road, in particular, and the improvement of driving generally.

The people would welcome proper proposals to overcome the horrible carnage on the roads. It is world wide and some of us have unfortunately been involved in it more than have others. Having made his request, the Minister could have been a little more generous in accepting some of the proposals in the Bill. Perhaps we should be thankful for small mercies, since the Minister has accepted the suggestion in relation to the speed at which motorists may lawfully travel past schools.

I have seen P plates operating. The Bill provides for them in an effort to see that the standard of driving of people who are learning to drive is improved, and also to cover the case of people who have their licences suspended. The Minister referred to some statistics of which I think we were aware. I agree that the youngest drivers are not always necessarily the largest group involved in accidents. However, presumably the largest group involved in accidents will also be the group with the highest number of licence suspensions. Therefore, they would be the ones to be affected by the P plate proposal if it were adopted. Surely that would be a step in the right direction.

The Minister referred to expert advice he had received, but I point out that any worthwhile proposition that will save even one life should be considered, as all lives are precious and worth saving. I forecast that, even if the Minister does not accept our proposal now, it will not be many years before South Australia has a P plate system operating. I believe that only good can come from such a system, and I am sure it could do no harm. This is a reasonable suggestion put forward in the interests of road safety. The whole basis of our proposal to change the number of demerit points from 12 to 18 was to achieve a more realistic spread over the various offences. However, I emphasise that it was not the Opposition's view that there should be a watering down of penalties, or of the deterrent effect of the points demerit system on possible offenders. It seemed to us that there were anomalies in the scale of one point to 12 points. We believe that our approach is a more realistic approach. This legislation is a sincere effort to improve road safety: a few moments ago the Minister said he would welcome suggestions from the Opposition or anyone else in this regard. I believe the Bill merits the approval and approbation of the House.

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I know that by speaking now I am preventing other members from taking part in this debate but, from the Minister's attitude (made known to me in advance), it has become apparent that, if we are to obtain the advantages of altering the speed limit past schools and other aspects the Minister seeks to introduce, it is important that these benefits be provided immediately, even if we have to deal with other parts of this legislation later. The Minister seems to have indicated that my pronouncements denigrated the activities of the Road Safety Council, the Road Traffic Board, and the Police Force, but that is a complete sham. We do not accept that situation: we have never adopted that attitude. We have consistently tried to increase the opportunities for these organisations to help in the attack on the road toll, and we sincerely believed, when I introduced this measure, that it would have a significant effect in reducing the road toll. The Minister has quoted from several documents given to him by expert committees: I appreciate the information contained therein, and I ask the Minister for the chance to see those records.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: I shall be pleased to do that.

Dr. EASTICK: Obviously, we are both considering this subject in depth and seeking a solution that will benefit the motoring community of this State. I thank the Minister for allowing Mr. Strutton to discuss with me certain aspects of this Bill. Our discussion was fruitful, and some statistical information made available to me by the Registrar was most interesting. As the Minister said, an apparent defect in the Bill was quickly highlighted. No provision has been made for a transitional phase in respect of demerit points. It was not entirely overlooked: it was certainly not in the final draft that went forward. In relation to

demerit points, we sought to upset the existing relativity because we believed, and still believe, that grave anomalies existed. For instance, we believe it is entirely wrong that professional semi-trailer drivers should be taken off the road after committing four offences of exceeding the speed limit, because those semi-trailers would then be let loose on the highway in control of non-professional drivers and would create a greater hazard.

That topic could be debated loud and long, so I will not pursue it further. We also believe that five demerit points, in relation to a person who has, by culpably negligent driving, caused the death of another person is unrealistic compared to the three demerit points given to a person who exceeds the speed limit in a semi-trailer. I still believe that, in the total of demerit points, there is area for renegotiation. The Minister also suggested that, by virtue of not having a transitional phase, we were going to place on the person with nine demerit points the likelihood that he would be removed from the road after another offence. I interjected during the Minister's speech and asked him to read further the report of my discussion with Mr. Strutton, because it highlights the fact that we believe all the demerit points that had already been amassed should have been upgraded by a multiplication by 1½, taking the figure to the next highest demerit point rather than taking it down. The nine points referred to by the Minister would give a half a demerit point: it would have gone up to 14, not to 13 points. The person with six demerit points would go up to nine points, relative to the new scale.

Even if I have only identified the thinking that was basic in the whole points demerit issue, I believe I have given the House the opportunity to rethink the whole matter. The Minister also referred to the lack of effort made by Opposition members over a period to improve road safety. Initially the Minister asked what challenges we had made.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: What have you put up that we have rejected?

Dr. EASTICK: We have called for more driving centres, because we believe that the Oaklands centre, although commendable, is inadequate.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: That matter was contained in the Premier's policy speech during the last election. The Government promised to establish a centre at Elizabeth, north of Adelaide.

Dr. EASTICK: The Elizabeth Lions Club has collected money for that purpose. One centre of this type in South Australia is obviously inadequate, so it comes back to the problem of finance. We supported that move and called for attention in that direction.

The Hon. G. T. Virgo: We appreciate that.

Dr. EASTICK: Last session, the member for Bragg moved on August 15, 1973:

That, in the opinion of this House, an intensive campaign focused on accident prevention should be conducted throughout the community, with particular emphasis on education, and with the facilities made available to enable people who have been drinking to relate personal alcohol intake to individual blood alcohol level, and to be advised and warned against driving if a level above the legal limit is indicated.

That motion was amended by the Minister, on September 26, 1973, as follows:

To strike out all the words after "House" and insert "the South Australian Government's Road Safety Council is to be highly commended for its excellent work in focusing attention on all aspects of road safety through education and publicity campaigns. In particular, the council is to be commended for its initiative in taking steps to publicise the relationship between alcohol intake and blood-alcohol levels."

The amended motion was supported, but it did not go as far as the motion moved by the member for Bragg. Regarding speed limits, the member for Hanson was responsible for seeking, by amendment, to reduce the speed past schools to 25 km/h. So that we may go farther along the way with regard to speed past schools, I close with those few words on the subject, not by way of challenge or of attack on the Minister, but simply to indicate that, with the detail that has become available, and with the information we will receive from reports to be made available by the Minister, in the next session of Parliament we will have another opportunity to consider the points demerit system and the P plate scheme.

I do not believe that, merely because we are the only State without the P plate system, we should necessarily rest on our laurels. The great improvement in the road accident statistics in New South Wales, although they are by no means satisfactory, has in great part been associated with measures taken by the New South Wales Government, including, I believe from the information available to me, the P plate scheme. In referring to the report, the Minister said that it was not decisive in this matter; it merely indicated three people's view. However, to study the position more fully might provide a different answer. If we can only stimulate the Government to a course of action of taking the inquiry further, we will have achieved some merit from the Bill now before us.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport) moved:

That it be an instruction to the Committee of the whole House on the Bill that it have power to consider a new clause relating to safety helmets.

Motion carried.

In Committee.

Clause 1—"Short title."

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Transport): I understand that clauses 4 to 26 are all associated with either the P plate system or the points demerit scheme. The Government is not disposed to change either of these. I move:

To strike out all words after "the" and insert "Road Traffic Act Amendment Act (No. 3), 1974".

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): Because of the time and the fact that the measure will benefit road traffic in South Australia, I will not divide the Committee on this matter, although I would have done so otherwise. I am disappointed at the Government's attitude and will vote against the amendment.

Amendment carried.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO moved to insert the following new subclauses:

(2) The Road Traffic Act, 1961-1974, is hereinafter referred to as "the principal Act".

(3) The principal Act, as amended by this Act, may be cited as the "Road Traffic Act, 1961-1974".

Amendment carried; clause as amended passed.

Clause 2 passed.

Clause 3—"Arrangement of Act."

Dr. EASTICK: It would be in the interests of the final Bill if this clause were not proceeded with.

Clause negatived.

Clause 4—"Short titles."

Dr. EASTICK: Again, I point out that it would be in the best interests of the final legislation if members voted against clauses 4 to 26.

Clause negatived.

Clauses 5 to 27 negatived.

Clause 28 passed.

New clause 29—"Safety helmets."

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO moved to insert the following new clause:

29. Section 162c of the principal Act is amended by striking out from subsection (1) the passage "30 kilometres" and inserting in lieu thereof the passage "25 kilometres".

New clause inserted.

Title.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO moved:

To strike out "the Motor Vehicles Act, 1959-1973; and".

Amendment carried; title as amended passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

EVIDENCE (AFFIDAVITS) ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MEETINGS)

The Legislative Council intimated that it had refused to grant a conference.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.4 p.m. the House adjourned until Thursday, October 3, at 2 p.m.