

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 12, 1974

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

PETITION: WAIKERIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mr. ARNOLD presented a petition signed by 909 parents and residents of the district of Waikerie stating that there was a real need to upgrade Waikerie Primary School because administration and other facilities were inadequate, and praying that the House of Assembly take action to have the Minister of Education provide a plan for upgrading this school and to ensure that construction proceed urgently.

Petition received and read.

QUESTIONS

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

HISTORICAL BOOKS

In reply to Mr. RODDA (October 16).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Regional histories have been considered by the Arts Grants Advisory Committee, which has recognised the need to encourage authors to record historical data. The Government has now accepted two recommendations of the committee. One applicant is to be granted \$2 500 to write a history of a section of the eastern Adelaide foothills, and the Government is to provide a biennial literature prize of \$3 000 to the author of a South Australian regional history or biography. This prize may be awarded to either a book printed since the last festival or an unpublished manuscript, and the award will be announced during Writers Week of the 1976 festival.

Referring to the honourable member's suggestion for a Government fund subsidising or assisting book publications, it seems doubtful that such a grant could be recouped from the sale of books as he suggests. Obviously, if this were so, commercial publishing houses would have instituted such a proposition. Apparently, many historical books printed by local societies are not considered profitable by commercial publishing houses, and it therefore is doubtful whether grants would be recouped from sale of books as suggested.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

In reply to Mr. BECKER (October 24).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am intrigued by the constant use of the words "Budget mismanagement" whenever reference is made to the Auditor-General's Report. If members care to read that report (and I am sure some have) they will not find the word "mismanagement" used in any comment that the Auditor-General has made on the financial activities of any department or statutory authority. The term has emerged from incorrect press reporting, which I must say is difficult to reconcile with the level of responsible reporting generally associated with our media. Statements of this kind are to be deplored, particularly as they reflect a completely untrue image on the reputations of senior public servants whom I and my colleagues, and indeed most members of the business community, regard as highly efficient and competent people.

Turning now to the facts contained in that report, it is true that the Auditor-General has been critical of the accounting methods employed by some departments that he regards as less than satisfactory in some instances, particularly in regard to estimating. It is evident that expansion of government service and the increasing involvement of the Australian Government has fully taxed both the resources and systems of many departments. This matter has been taken up with the Under Treasurer, Chairman, Public Service Board, and the Auditor-General, and a committee comprising senior officers of each of those departments has been established to:

- (1) Assist departments in the review and development of their financial management systems.
- (2) Provide a consulting service to individual departments in the areas of budgetary control, accounting and financial management systems.

In addition to that action which is now in operation, the Treasury Department last financial year instituted measures which now require departments to regularly report and review actual performance against Budget. This measure has already proved effective and its effectiveness will be further enhanced as the committee's work progresses. This action is considered to be the most appropriate as a first step to overcome the problems raised by the Auditor-General.

PETROL TAX

In reply to Mr. NANKIVELL (October 24).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Officers from the Treasury and State Taxes Departments have had discussions with New South Wales Treasury officers in order to ascertain the problems involved in introducing a business franchise licence arrangement for petroleum products in this State. I am not aware that the Victorian Government intends to introduce similar legislation at this stage.

The Government is aware of the problems that would be experienced if retailers in interstate bordering towns had a competitive advantage in that they could sell petroleum products for less than retailers in this State. This matter is being considered and every attempt will be made to protect the interests of this State's border petroleum outlets.

GLADSTONE GAOL

In reply to Mr. VENNING (October 10).

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Chief Secretary took up with the Director of Correctional Services the matter of housing Prison Department employees now stationed at Gladstone, and was informed that the price of houses at Gladstone is unknown at the moment, and, in particular, it is expected that any prices offered by purchasers would be subject to valuation. Also, it cannot be assumed that all Gladstone officers would be transferred to the metropolitan area where they would be under an obligation to purchase a house. The department has a number of country vacancies where departmental houses are available for rental, and, in fact, we have several houses available for rental on the reserves at Yatala Labour Prison and Adelaide Gaol. The latter houses could be used as transit residences where officers were prepared to come to Adelaide and take some time to decide whether or not they wished to purchase or rent a home.

All staff at Gladstone were quite clearly informed that it was not intended to move anybody immediately, and, in fact, the vacancies at Port Lincoln and Mount Gambier would not even be available until early in 1975. However, they were also informed that some vacancies were immediate, and they could be transferred now if they wish.

BUSH FIRES

In reply to Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (October 29).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Minister of Agriculture is generally satisfied with the publicity given so far to the serious bush fire hazard threatening the State this year. He points out that the recent matter to which the honourable member referred was Fire Prevention Week not Bushfire Prevention Week, and media coverage was accordingly spread over all aspects of fire prevention. The *Sunday Mail* has already devoted a good deal of space to this summer's bushfire potential, and surveys conducted by the Bushfire Research Committee indicate that coverage by the country press and metropolitan radio and television is quite satisfactory for this time of the year. It is also apparent that the level of fire protection on farms is generally higher than in previous years, which indicates that the publicity campaigns and personal experiences of previous years have not been forgotten.

The Minister emphasises that timing is critical in the introduction of any bushfire prevention publicity campaign, and a campaign which is launched when weather conditions are still cool and undergrowth is green is unlikely to have as much impact as when conditions are appropriately hot and dry. Nevertheless, this summer's campaign was launched on Monday, November 4. Fire-warning announcements also commenced on this day, and actions were taken to distribute car stickers and posters throughout the State. New roadside fire prevention signs will be erected, and a new series of "scatters" distributed to radio and television stations by the Bushfire Research Committee, which devises a major part of the campaign each year.

Other matters will be publicised from time to time, and it is expected that the intensity of the coverage by the mass media will increase as the weather becomes hotter. My colleague has again emphasised his grave concern, which is shared by the Government, at the seriousness of the potential fire danger which exists this year; and I take this opportunity to make an earnest plea to the public to recognise the hazardous situation, and to take every precaution from now on to prevent an outbreak of fire, particularly in the Adelaide Hills and country areas.

BOAT SPEEDS

In reply to Mr. OLSON (October 29).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is not intended at present to extend the existing speed limit of 7 knots (nautical miles an hour) north of its present boundary in the Port Adelaide River. Speed regulations will be more thoroughly policed when more Marine and Harbors Department patrol boats are in operation following the promulgation of the Boating Bill at present before Parliament.

PARACOMBE SCHOOL

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (October 24).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: In reply to the questions asked by the honourable member, the following information is submitted: Work on the open drain was completed

during the first week of November; the four broken paving blocks will be replaced by the contractor presently on site; there are no firm plans to install a new septic tank soakage pit at this school. However, existing installations are subject to frequent inspection; the playground has been top dressed; and the erection of a fence at the school residence will be constructed before the commencement of the 1975 school year. However, it will not be possible to complete paths around the residence this financial year.

SUPERPHOSPHATE BOUNTY

In reply to Mr. RODDA (October 22).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Minister of Agriculture states that he has written to the Australian Minister for Agriculture (Senator Wriedt) and to members of the subcommittee in Canberra explaining his views on the present proposals of the Australian Government concerning the removal of the superphosphate bounty. He has also expressed these views publicly, and I sincerely hope that, in the interests of this State's primary producers, my colleague's submissions will be carefully considered when the matter is discussed in Canberra.

MYXOMATOSIS

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (October 22).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Minister of Lands advises that limited releases of the European rabbit flea have been made to enable research officers of the Lands Department to study and assess its potential as an alternative vector to mosquitoes in spreading myxomatosis. The programme is proceeding, but is not yet sufficiently advanced to enable an assessment to be made. However, it should be remembered that the effectiveness of myxomatosis has declined markedly in recent years.

RESERVOIRS

In reply to Mr. McANANEY (October 15).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The future permanent use of cleared land on reservoir reserves is at present under consideration by an interdepartmental committee, which includes representatives of the Engineering and Water Supply, Woods and Forests, and Environment and Conservation Departments. Aspects being considered by the committee are economic use of the land, and the aesthetic appearance. Natural bushland will be left in its present state, except for protective firebreaks where considered necessary. In the meantime, the Engineering and Water Supply Department will control the spread of noxious weeds on the cleared areas by slashing and spraying. Because of the exceptionally wet conditions which have prevailed this spring, this work has been delayed until the present time.

SPELD

In reply to Mr. EVANS (October 24).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The quotation from the letter used in the honourable member's question was misleading when taken out of context. The request in the complete letter was rightly construed by Education Department officers as seeking sufficient funds (assessed at \$500) to meet differences between income and expenditure. Specific Learning Difficulties Association of South Australia will be asked to present a costed programme of educational projects in seeking additional subsidies from the department.

Subsidies from the department to meet managerial costs cannot be justified. It would be inappropriate for an outside agency to have use of Public Service equipment and manpower.

COROMANDEL VALLEY SEWERAGE

In reply to Mr. EVANS (October 17).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Public Buildings Department engineers have examined two possibilities for the disposal of sewage from the Coromandel Valley South Primary School. These are the installation of a pump which would be connected by a main to the treatment works at Coromandel Valley, and the provision by the Engineering and Water Supply Department of a sewerage service to the school to be ready when the school is occupied. The latter is the more acceptable alternative, and would allow houses in the area to be connected to the scheme. The Public Buildings Department has been in consultation with the Engineering and Water Supply Department regarding a sewage service but no decision has been reached as yet.

SCHOOL FIRES

In reply to Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (October 31).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Security in schools is an Australia-wide problem, and the respective State Education Departments are carrying out various measures on a trial basis, the effectiveness of which will be made known to each other after a period of use. In this State, a committee comprising representatives of the Education, Police, and Public Buildings Departments has examined alternatives available. Following a report from the Crime Prevention Squad of the Police Department, in which it was recommended that a position of security officer be created, the Education Department has made a submission to the Public Service Board to create such a position. When appointed this officer will have duties which will include advice on preventive measures to be undertaken at schools (having regard to cost/benefit factors) and monitoring trials of various alarm devices.

MODBURY HEIGHTS LAND

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (October 22).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Education Department does not intend to build a school on either of sections 1586 or 1587. Section 1587 has never been owned by the department. When the Highways Department's intention to construct a freeway through section 1586 was learned by the Education Department, it sold the land in that section to the Highways Department. It is intended that a high school will be built at the appropriate time on section 1598, which was bought to replace section 1586.

FRUIT FLY

In reply to Mr. NANKIVELL (October 22).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Minister of Agriculture states that it is intended to build a permanent office for the use of fruit fly inspectors at the road block at Pinnaroo. The final plans will be completed by the Public Buildings Department early next year when tenders will be called. It is expected that the building will be completed later in 1975.

ADULT EDUCATION

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (October 31).

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is true to say that we have not sufficient funds to enable us to provide all the adult education classes for which there is a demand and which we would like to be able to conduct. The demand for adult education classes and groups is particularly great at Clare, and the centre will not have available to it all the funds it would wish to have. Nevertheless, it will have sufficient finance to enable it to carry out its programmes of the previous year. The adult education workshop is, in fact, a new all-purpose metal workshop being built for the Further Education Department in the grounds of the Peterborough High School. It is expected to be completed and handed over to the department by the Public Buildings Department soon, and classes will then be arranged in it.

HEALTH SERVICES

In reply to Dr. TONKIN (October 15).

The Hon. L. J. KING: The Minister for Social Security of the Australian Government has written to all State Health Ministers indicating that it is the intention of the Australian Government to introduce the provisions of the Health Insurance Act, 1973 (No. 42 of 1974) from July 1, 1975. Schedule 2 of this Act lists the heads of agreement which may be entered into between the States and the Australian Government. The details of these heads of agreement are now being explored and discussed, but no firm commitments have yet been made. Further exchange of information at officer level will be required. The issue of payments to medical practitioners attending hospital patients was discussed at a meeting held in Adelaide on October 29, 1974, between representatives of the Social Security Department, State officers, and representatives of the Australian Medical Association. These discussions were of an exploratory nature only. Further information on these matters is being sought from the Social Security Department by the State Minister of Health.

BUTE POLICE OFFICER

In reply to Mr. RUSSACK (October 24).

The Hon. L. J. KING: A comprehensive survey of the Bute district revealed that, relatively, Bute is not isolated as it is connected by good roads to Kadina and Snowtown. For some time experimental patrolling of the Bute police district has been carried out from Port Wakefield and Snowtown. This has been found to be completely feasible and both these police stations have had their staff supplemented and their vehicles radio equipped to cope with urgent situations. The township of Bute will receive continuous visits by Snowtown police and for this purpose convenient times will be arranged to accommodate routine business generated by the very law abiding population.

ST. AGNES HEALTH CENTRE

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (October 22).

The Hon. L. J. KING: The establishment of a community health centre at St. Agnes is an approved project under the Australian Government's Community Health Programme for 1974-75, and an amount of \$53 475 has been allocated to this project in this financial year. It is contemplated that the St. Agnes Community Health Centre will be built as an extension of the St. Agnes

shopping centre and that the present private medical centre established in the complex will provide the nucleus of the future community health facility. Preliminary plans and cost estimates have been prepared for the extensions by private architects acting on behalf of the owner of the St. Agnes shopping centre. Negotiations between the Hospitals Department and the Director, St. Agnes Shopping Centre Pty. Ltd. are in progress.

In the meantime, an interim committee of management of the St. Agnes Community Health Centre under the chairmanship of Dr. D. Gill, the senior member of the local medical practice, has been established for some months. Membership of the committee includes representation from the appropriate State, Commonwealth, and local government instrumentalities in addition to other community organisations. It has been decided to lease a property adjacent to the St. Agnes shopping centre for use as temporary premises of the Community Health Centre. A community health nurse has been appointed in addition to a full-time social worker. The appointment of a secretary/receptioniste is also planned. It is expected that the premises will be occupied by mid-November.

BLINMAN TOILETS

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (October 2).

The Hon. L. J. KING: The working party appointed to examine the provision of toilets in outback areas has made considerable progress with regard to Blinman. It is currently negotiating with a private company for the Government to construct toilet facilities on private land in return for maintenance and cleaning to be carried out by that company. This is a radical departure from normal Government operations, but the honourable member would be aware that Blinman has unique problems, not the least of which are the lack of available land, the lack of a labour source, and the disposal of effluent. I have requested the working party to treat the matter as urgent.

DENTAL APPRENTICESHIPS

In reply to Mr. BOUNDY (September 18).

The Hon. L. J. KING: It is not proposed to employ any new apprentices in the Dental Department in 1975 because of the fact that the laboratory facilities are fully extended at the present time in providing for the nine apprentices who are currently employed. It has been the policy of the Royal Adelaide Hospital during the last two or three years

to increase the number of apprentices employed, but the present number cannot be increased until additional dental laboratory facilities become available.

ROAD SIGNS

In reply to Mr. EVANS (October 24).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Street name signs were being erected at the roundabout as part of a large-scale metropolitan programme. They were manufactured on the basis of information contained in a street directory which, it has now been found, is partly outdated. The signs in question were being erected on October 23 by departmental employees under the direction of a leading hand. The leading hand reported to his foreman the same evening that a shopkeeper had abused him over the wording of the sign and that he had replied that he was merely carrying out instructions. Highways Department employees are under instruction to accept directions from authorised personnel only. The matter was reported by the foreman early on October 24, and the incorrect signs were removed on October 25. Correct signs will be erected as soon as they are manufactured.

SWANPORT BRIDGE

In reply to Mr. ARNOLD (October 30).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The approach roads on each side of the bridge are being constructed and will be completed in the next 12 months. Tenders will be called for the foundation work of the bridge towards the end of November, 1974, and it is expected that a contract will be let for this work about the middle of April, 1975. Tenders for the bridge piers and deck should be called in July, 1975, and a contract let in November, 1975, subject, of course, to the availability of funds.

ROAD ACCIDENTS

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (October 16).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Statistics are not available from the computer which would give the number of drivers from the metropolitan area who are involved in accidents in the country. A manual search of the fatal accident files, for the 18-month period from January 1, 1973, to June 30, 1974, gives the following figures. Fatalities involving pedestrians, pedal cyclists and death from natural causes have been excluded.

COUNTRY FATALITIES

(1/1/73-30/6/74)

No. of Accidents	No. of Persons Killed	Address of drivers responsible			Address of drivers involved but not responsible		
		Metro. Adelaide	Non Metro. Area	Inter-state	Metro. Adelaide	Non Metro. Area	Interstate
249	304	68	172	9	28	64	10

Of the 172 non-metropolitan drivers responsible for fatal accidents, 87 were responsible for accidents within 15 km of their home; 75 within 80 km of their home; and 10 at a greater distance than 80 km from their home.

RAIL STANDARDISATION

In reply to Mr. COUMBE (October 24).

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The report by Maunsell & Partners on the Adelaide to Crystal Brook railway gauge standardisation stated:

Railway planning in the area in respect of the standard and broad gauge main line fly-overs will permit the retention of Station Road level crossing, but because of the already high number of conflicts between road and rail traffic and the element of danger involved it is essential that this should not continue on a permanent basis. In view of the present uncertainty over future road planning in the area it is recommended the project should contribute a fixed sum towards whatever solution to the problem is considered the most desirable by the State Government and satisfactory in the interests of the project, the permanent closure of Station Road level crossing being an essential condition. Project contribution assessed at \$350 000 lump sum.

At the time this report was prepared, it was expected that funds would be available to the Highways Department to enable a grade separation to be provided, either on the Hindmarsh Boulevard alignment or on the Park Terrace alignment. It is expected that the railway standardisation will be completed by early 1978. If this time table is achieved, it is unlikely that funds will be available to enable a grade separation to be constructed during the course of the railway standardisation. However, if the standardisation is delayed and additional funds become available to the Highways Department, it may be possible to construct an overpass during the course of the standardisation. No final solution to the problem has been developed at this stage and it may be necessary for the level crossing to remain in operation until funds become available.

HERPETARIUM

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (August 20).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: I am aware that the public desires to see reptiles and nocturnal animals, as evidenced by the number of people who view snakes and other reptiles at Cleland and other display centres in the State, and the number of people who have been interested in the two recent nocturnal animal displays at the Wayville showground. However, I do not believe that it is the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Division to satisfy the public's curiosity to see these animals in cages in a more or less "commercial" setting. These displays are best located in the zoo, in private animal display centres or some similar venue.

However, it is the National Parks and Wildlife Division's role to educate and inform the public in the identification, the life history, habits and habitat of our native animal species. This public education is crucial to wildlife conservation in this State since public co-operation and participation is essential and public appreciation of the techniques of wildlife management is necessary so that it becomes politically possible to carry this management out. To educate the public a wildlife display is necessary to provide specimens for people to become familiar with and to create an attraction to gain people's attention.

This is the role of the Cleland Wildlife Reserve, where animals are displayed in as natural a setting as possible and where nature interpretation facilities can be developed around the animals on view. Unfortunately the display of reptiles in this type of setting on the "walk through" principle is impossible; therefore it is not considered that the development of a herpetology display is appropriate in this area. Such a display is better sited in the zoo or a similar type of intensively developed display area. Since most of Australia's native animals are nocturnal, it is proposed that the viewing hours at Cleland be extended to include night-time viewing while retaining the natural display concept. Subdued lighting and other facilities to cater for night-time viewing by the public, which will not unduly disturb the animals, will be provided. This nocturnal display in a natural setting is considered far more desirable than an artificial "nocturnal house" where animals must be reverse-cycled and kept in artificial conditions with resultant stress on the animals and higher management costs. It will also enable a greater number of animals to be displayed. It is felt that the development of this display, unique in Australia, will attract considerable numbers of people and due to the natural conditions under which the animals are displayed, will provide an ideal setting in which to educate the public about our fauna and wildlife conservation in general.

FISHING REGULATIONS

In reply to Mr. ARNOLD (August 7).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Staff of the Fisheries Department are preparing a submission on the revision of the entire amateur gear registration system, which, when adopted, should ease the problem the honourable member has raised.

RESCUE BOATS

In reply to Mr. BECKER (October 15).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: The Tourism, Recreation and Sport Department has had a number of applications from a variety of sources seeking assistance in the purchase or up-grading of rescue boats. One grant was made by the Government to assist in the purchase of motors for a rescue boat earlier this year. An early investigation by officers of the Tourism, Recreation and Sport Department has shown that rescue operations in South Australia are carried out by a number of organisations which are relatively independent of one another. The Recreation Advisory Council has also considered this matter and has heard from one of its members who has recently returned from overseas where he studied sea rescue. The Recreation Advisory Council has also advised that there is a need for this field to be reviewed in order to ascertain the scope of services presently operating and to make recommendations about Government assistance for improving and rationalising these services in order to gain the maximum benefit for the public. The Tourism, Recreation and Sport Department will co-ordinate this survey soon and will seek the assistance of groups involved in rescue work to carry it out.

BIRDLIFE

In reply to Mr. ALLEN (October 15).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: It is a fact that the past good seasons in the Far North have resulted in prolific breeding, particularly of waterfowl, but also of other birds and animals in the proximity of lakes. As these lakes dry out, many of the birds migrate south to wetlands which remain. Large numbers do, however, die, especially young birds, leaving a small residual population which can survive the severest droughts around permanent waterholes and by gaining moisture from succulent plants and dew. This is nature's way of providing for the preservation of the species and also the improvement of the genetic stock since the natural selection involved when some animals succumb ensures that only the fittest remain. Therefore, it is not considered desirable to artificially support a larger population by hand-watering, since this has repercussions in that it may result in over-feeding in an area already susceptible to environmental pressure due to drought. Nor is it desirable to transfer young birds to lakes further south, since these water bodies will already be subject to great pressure due to the natural inward migration of birds fleeing the drying north. Nature should be allowed to take its course.

SICK FAUNA

In reply to Mrs. BYRNE (October 16).

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: There is no doubt that from an humanitarian viewpoint the suggestion of a centre to care for sick or injured animals is laudable. Nevertheless, the efforts of the National Parks and Wildlife Division of the Environment and Conservation Department must continue to be directed towards conserving native fauna species as a whole, which is dependent primarily on the preservation of natural habitats. So much work needs to be done in this regard, both in managing reserves under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, and in public education and law enforcement with the objective of preserving

natural habitats and thereby native fauna on private land, that it is undesirable to divert scarce resources to this type of project. To set up such a clinic would be rather like sacrificing a forest to save a few trees. Experience has shown that the recovery rate of injured animals is less than about 30 per cent and for sick animals less than 10 per cent or 20 per cent. Furthermore, it is usually difficult to relocate recovered injured animals to the wild where they can contribute to the preservation of the species.

The present rescue permit system allows people to legally keep and rehabilitate animals which they find injured and this system is working well at present. Rangers in both Adelaide and country areas frequently offer advice to people seeking help on how to care for sick and injured animals and in fact personalised care by the person who rescues the animal, acting on the advice of a ranger, is probably more effective than the care that could be given to many animals in a clinic. Rangers are encouraged to offer this advice (but not to take injured or sick animals) and will continue to do so as a means of promoting public concern for native fauna.

MINE ACIDITY

In reply to Mr. McANANEY (October 22).

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: When Amdel was commissioned by the Mines Department to report on acid water pollution of Dawesley Creek, the use of lime as a neutraliser was naturally one of the first methods to be considered. However, it would be undesirable to neutralise the waters and allow the yellow-brown precipitate to foul the creek. The storage capacity of the tailings dam is limited and the precipitate would soon tax that capacity to the limit. The investigations of Amdel demonstrated that lime slurries would result in change of pH to 6 whereas a pH of 8 would be required to precipitate all the heavy metals. A neutralisation process would necessitate storage silos, measuring and mixing apparatus, settling ponds and sludge pumps. The studies of Amdel were also extended to include other remedies, including evaporation. Discussions have been held between officers of the Mines Department, Amdel, and Mr. Pascoe and it is now proposed to conduct an on-site trial, utilising lime in a 4.5 Ml storage dam, in December.

LAND AGENT

In reply to Mr. DUNCAN (October 31).

The Hon. L. J. KING: The Land and Business Agents Board is taking the necessary action to hold an inquiry into this matter under section 78 of the Land and Business Agents Act.

PETRO-CHEMICAL PLANT

Mr. GUNN (on notice):

1. Is the Minister aware of any petro-chemical plants similar to the plant intended to be built at Redcliff which are—

- (a) already operating in Australia;
- (b) being planned; or
- (c) operating near Australia?

2. Is the Minister also aware of any serious pollution problems caused by any of the existing plants established in other parts of the world?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The replies are as follows:

1. I have been informed that 27 plants are operating in Australia, using processes that are similar or identical to ones proposed for Redcliff. It would probably be appropriate to say that the combination of plants in the I.C.I. Botany factory would be the most similar (although not in size) to the one intended for Redcliff.

2. Caustic soda/chlorine, ethylene dichloride, ethylene and polythene manufacture is not generally considered to be a pollution problem world-wide, and I do not know of any existing overseas plants with serious pollution problems where precautions of the type intended for Redcliff have been taken.

Mr. BOUNDY (on notice):

1. What is the increase in cost a week of the Redcliff petro-chemical infra-structure to either the State or Commonwealth Governments in relation to—

- (a) the loading jetty;
- (b) pipelines; and
- (c) housing?

2. At what cost figure does the Redcliff project become uneconomic to the consortium, and to the Government?

3. Is the provision of a national natural gas pipeline grid system essential to the viability of the Redcliff plant?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. At similar rates of inflation as were experienced this year, the cost increases a week to either the State or the Commonwealth would be about:

- (a) \$25 000 for the loading jetty,
- (b) \$150 000 for the pipelines,
- (c) \$40 000 housing for Redcliff employees.

2. Costs of infra-structure and other capital investment are not the only factors on which the viability of the project depends. At this time agreement on prices for raw materials has not been reached, and the consortium has not concluded its feasibility studies. It is, therefore, quite impossible to give an answer to this question now.

3. It is essential for the project that the Sydney gas line be completed and that a liquids line from the Cooper Basin to Redcliff and a gas spur from the existing Moomba-Adelaide line be constructed. A back-up supply from the Mereenie and Palm Valley field would extend the life of the Redcliff plant.

COAL DEPOSITS

Mr. GUNN (on notice): Has consideration been given to the possibility of developing petrol or other fuels from our large deposits of coal?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The coal deposits, which are available in quantities sufficient to warrant investigation for use as an alternative fuel source, are the Lake Phillipson coal field and the deposits of the Inkerman-Balaklava area. The Inkerman-Balaklava area is at present being investigated by the Electricity Trust of South Australia. The Mines Department is awaiting the outcome of investigations into utilisation of the more extensive brown coal deposits of Victoria, and is maintaining a close liaison with Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Coal Research Laboratories to be kept informed on latest overseas technology. It is believed that the only commercial oil-from-coal process operating in the world today is the SASOL process in South Africa. This plant, which has been in continuous production since 1955, was designed to produce 203 200 tonnes a year of motor spirit and diesel fuel from 1 828 800 tonnes of coal. The cost of production of synthetic liquid fuels has not been disclosed, but the capital cost of the installation was about 70 000 000 Rand. As this matter comes within the terms of reference of the State Energy Committee, this method of fuel production will be examined in the course of the study.

Mr. GUNN (on notice): Has the Government any plans to develop the coal fields situated at Lake Phillipson?

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The Government has followed with keen interest the exploration activities of

Utah Development Company with regard to coal search in the Lake Phillipson area. At the request of the Government, the company has initiated studies that will assess the feasibility of mine-site electric power generation and of hydrogenation. The availability of water supplies is being assessed in conjunction with these investigations.

FILM CORPORATION

Dr. EASTICK (on notice):

1. Has the South Australian Film Corporation contracted to purchase a computer and, if so, from what source and at what cost?
2. If no contract has been let, has there been any general commitment to install such a unit?
3. What is the purpose of such a facility?
4. If there is a need for this facility, is the cost warranted within the corporation rather than making use of a central unit?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. The South Australian Film Corporation has ordered a PDP11 mini-computer configuration from Digital Equipment Australia Pty. Ltd. at a cost of \$60 838.
2. Not applicable—covered by 1 above.
3. The principle purpose of the equipment is to increase the efficiency of the corporation's film library operations. The library holds 11 137 prints of 7 039 films. In 1973-74, it received 144 000 requests for prints, but could meet only 71 972 of these because the prints required were already in use or were not in stock. About 85 per cent of all requests were from educational bodies. The use of films for informational and teaching purposes is increasing rapidly throughout the world, and it is evident that this development is occurring in South Australia as elsewhere. Recording of library holdings, requests from borrowers, print movements, preparation and amending of catalogues, and analysis of most-used subjects, changes in user preferences, unfilled orders and other such information is done manually at present. As with any such labour-intensive operations, manual recording is expensive in salaries and slow in compiling, up-dating, analysing, and providing the large volume of information involved in library management.

For the library to reduce the proportion of unfilled or delayed orders, and cope with growing demand for its services, it could increase staff and obtain more multiple prints of constantly increasing numbers of films. This would sharply increase its overhead costs, however, and leave less of its funds available for purchase of prints of new films, thus reducing its value to educators and other users. The computer equipment will dramatically reduce the time taken to process orders and control print movements. This in turn will allow quicker turn-round of prints, reduce operating costs through improved productivity, and provide faster services to library users. The computer equipment will be used also to record, analyse and report on other aspects of the corporation's film production and distribution activities, and will replace manual accounting processes. In these ways it will help to improve the corporation's general business efficiency whilst averting staff increases that might otherwise be necessary.

4. The highly specialised needs of the film library were examined in close collaboration with the Director of the State A.D.P. Centre. All sensible alternatives for application of computer systems were studied and it was concluded that purchase of a mini-computer for the corporation's use was the most economically appropriate course to follow. Similar studies at other film libraries in Australia and abroad have produced similar conclusions, and

resulted in a world-wide trend to computer-supported film libraries. Public tenders were called through the State Supply and Tender Board before the PDP11 equipment was selected. It is compatible with the State A.D.P. main-frame computer, and can be used in conjunction with it. Other computers from the same supplier are in use by State Government departments and authorities.

KERSBROOK FOREST

Dr. EASTICK (on notice):

1. What is the extent of Government forests in the Kersbrook area?
2. Is it intended to increase plantings in the area?
3. In particular what is the programme for section 374, hundred of Para Wirra?
4. Is it intended to purchase additional land for forest purposes in this area and, if any negotiations are proceeding, which particular sections are being considered?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The replies are as follows:

1. The Kersbrook subdistrict of the Mount Crawford forest contains 4 897 ha.
2. Yes.
3. A small part of section 374 will be cleared of fire-scarred pines and replanted. The balance will revert to natural scrub.
4. If suitable land becomes available and prices are reasonable, further purchases may be made. No purchase of land is under consideration at present.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Dr. EASTICK (on notice):

1. What are the personnel of each of the following advisory bodies: South Australian Road Safety Council, Law Reform Committee, Building Act Advisory Committee, Dairy Produce Board, Crayfish Industry Advisory Committee, Weeds Advisory Committee, Wheat Delivery Quotas Committee, Aboriginal Migration Committee, Child Care Centres Committee, Prisons Industries Committee, Industrial Research Institute, Residential Child Care Committee, Community Welfare Grants Committee, Extractive Industries Committee, Redevelopment Committee, Long Distance Rail Committee, Development Standards Committee, Fruit Fly Compensation Committee, Underground Waters Advisory Committee, Recreational Areas Committee, Well Drillers Examination Committee, Environmental Protection Council, Clean Air Committee, Advisory Committee pursuant to Food and Drugs Act, Advisory Panel for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children, Plumbing Advisory Board, Sanitary Plumbing Examining Board, Advisory Committee for Improvement of Dairying, Advisory Committee on Soil Conservation, Murray Mallee Soil Conservation Board, Murray Plains Conservation Board, Advisory Panel for Blind and Partially Sighted Children, Investment Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee on Aid to Independent Schools, Schools Loans Advisory Committee, Bushfires Advisory Committee, Bushfire Research Committee, Grape Industry Advisory Committee?
2. What is the purpose and/or terms of reference of each body?
3. Have any changes of membership been effected in the last six months, and, if so, what changes?
4. For what reason has any member been replaced during this period?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:
1 to 4.

Board	Members	Changes in Membership within last six months	Purpose and/or Terms of Reference
South Australian Road Safety Council	Boykett, B. H. (C) Laslett, A. K. Pavia, J. G. Golding (Mrs.) Smith Davey, A. N. G. Guerin, R. J. Kearney, B. J. Carmichael, R. J. Nyland, J. J. Theel, R. E. Beard, D.	<i>Vice</i> McClure D. D. resigned for personal reasons	To effectively promote road safety in South Australia and for the proper control of funds made available by the Government for this purpose.
Law Reform Committee	Mr. Justice Zelling, H. E. (C) Cox, B. R. Keeler, J. F. Griffin, K. T. Boland, D. W.	<i>Vice</i> Matheson, R. G., at request of Law Society	Investigate law reform matters referred to it by the Attorney-General and also to initiate its own investigations. Full terms of reference contained in <i>Government Gazette</i> of September 19, 1968.
Building Act Advisory Committee	Hart, S. B. (C) Ralph, S. Phillips, W. A. Dr. Brooks, D. S. van der Pennen, H. M. C. J. Boros, P. G.	No changes	Building Act, 1970-1971, section 62.
Dairy Produce Board	Itzerott, A. G. F. Green, M. N. Higbed, D. J. Barker, R. K. J. Mair, N. C. Dow, D. M. Van Hoof, E. J.	No change	Dairy Produce Act, 1934-1956—sect. 9, 12, 15a, 15b.
Rock Lobster Industry Advisory Committee	Olsen, A. M. Rumbelow, G. T. Guy, R. M. Perryman, V. K. Wilkins, T. O. Whittle, A. T. Harvey, P. M. Miller, D. M.	No change	Inquire into and report to the Minister upon any matter referred to it by the Minister in relation to the rock lobster fisheries in South Australian waters and any water adjacent thereto. Advise the Minister relating to the management, control, protection, regulation and development of those rock lobster fisheries and make such recommendations as it thinks fit.
Weeds Advisory Committee	Barrow, P. McK (C) Groth, M. J. Humphrys, R. W. Oliver, C. K. Scholz, D. O. Sneyd, J. H.	No change	Weeds Act, 1956-1969—sect. 7.
Wheat Delivery Quotas Advisory Committee	Roocke, E. C. (C) Loveday, E. L. Buckley, E. D. Crosby, R. S. Byrne, J. P. Shannon, J. M. Miller, C. G. Groth, M. J. Ashman, K. R. Cole, F. A. McAuliffe, J. D.	No change	Wheat Delivery Quotas Act, 1969-1973—sect. 16.
Aboriginal Migration Committee	—	—	Defunct
Child Care Centres Committee	—	—	Defunct
Prisons Industries Committee	Dean, H. S. (C) Adam, A. J. Cassidy, F. Whiteway, G. Palmer, P. H.	<i>Vice</i> King, C. A. (P.S.B. representative) promoted	Initially—to investigate the organisation and operation of prison industry organisation. Retained as an advisory committee to Director of Correctional Services to carry out further investigation into a workshop complex at Yatala.

Board	Members	Changes in Membership within last six months	Purpose and/or Terms of Reference
Industrial Research Institute	Dr. Melville, J. (C) Scriven, M. Dr. Scrafton, D. Sved, G. Prof. Brennan, M. Dr. Evans, S. I. Hartley, F. Parkin, L. Jones, E. Fargher, P. Dr. Northcote, R. Searcy, R. Green, F. R. Shelton, J. P.	Rothhauser, C., resigned personal reasons. Hay, F. D., resigned personal reasons	Promote and co-ordinate industrial research activities in S.A. Inform research organisations of research needs of S.A. industry. Advise S.A. industrial organisations of the capabilities, services and findings of research organisations. Recommend to the Govt. revision of Govt. research facilities. Award fellowship in specific and general industrial research affecting S.A.
Residential Child Care Committee	Bruff, G. C. (C) Holland, T. T. Stevens, K. Prior, G. Ward, B. P. Vacant— <i>vice</i> death of Dr. B. Meyler		Recommend to the Minister ways in which a co-ordinated system of residential child care should be established so that the individual needs of each child can be met.
Community Welfare Grants Committee	Judge Marshall (C) Daly, J. Morrisey, D. Mutton, H. J. C. Rawnsley, J. L. Conlon, K. Bandt, A. Court, M.	No change	Report to the Minister of Community Welfare on applications for grants by social welfare organisations—make recommendations as to payments check that projects for which grants are made are satisfactorily completed.
Extractive Industries Committee	Speechley, D. A. (C) Bowey, H. L. Minogue, J. P. Hiern, M. N. Knight, M. J. Inglis, G. R.	<i>Vice</i> Simons, T. P., at request of Hwys. Dept. <i>Vice</i> Armstrong, A. T.	(i) To advise with respect to the suitability of land for extractive industry, having due regard to all planning considerations. (ii) Advise as to the areas of land which should be defined in development plans, and in regulations pursuant to the implementation thereof for extractive industry. (iii) To conduct surveys for the purpose of: (a) ascertaining what deposits of sand, gravel, stone or shell exist, and (b) assessing the quality and quantity of materials in any such deposit and to report the findings—make recommendations when applicable.
Redevelopment Committee	Speechley, D. A. (C) Prof. Jensen, R. A. Voyzey, W. Court, M. O'Reilly, M. L. Knapman, C. Turner, B. A. C.	No change	Advise the State Planning Authority on whether any part of a planning area should be redeveloped either comprehensively or otherwise in order to rectify existing conditions of bad or unsatisfactory layout or unhealthy or obsolete development and the methods and procedures to be followed to ensure such development.
Long Distance Trail Committee	Bonython, C. W. (C) Simpson, A. E. Hart, S. B. Caldicott, R. C.	No change	Advise on all matters relating to the planning, establishment, maintenance and preservation of the character of a long distance walking and riding trail broadly following a route from Cape Jervis to the Northern Flinders.
Development Standards Committee	Speechley, D. A. (C) Allen, G. Chappel, J. S. Comport, A. L. Harris, J. Barnett-Hewitt, C. Lambert, D.	Additional new member	To advise the State Planning Authority as to the most appropriate type, methods and standards of control over land and buildings which should be incorporated in planning regulations having regard to: (1) Other related legislation. (2) Submissions on behalf of local government. (3) Need for uniformity in zoning regulations.

Board	Members	Changes in Membership within last six months	Purpose and/or Terms of Reference
Fruit Fly Compensation Committee	Harniman, W. R. (C) Miller, T. C. Ragless, G. B.	No change	Fruit Fly (Compensation) Act, 1947-1974—sect. 5 and 7.
Underground Waters Advisory Committee	Shannon, R. G. Perry, J. H. Boukout, W. R. D. Fuller, C. O. Beare, J. P. Barkley, D. W. Clarke, R. E. Hassam, O. D. Hood, M. J. Barker, R. K. Bowey, H. L. Gordon, W. J. Badman, R. H. Enright, P. R. Woare, J. B.	<i>Vice</i> Lewis, K. W., promoted <i>Vice</i> Whitten, G. F., extended sick leave	Underground Waters Preservation Act, 1969—sect. 27.
			North Adelaide Plains
			South-East
Recreational Areas Committee	Branson, C. W. (C) Bowey, H. L. Caldicott, R. C. Collett, K. J. Taylor, B. J.	Additional member	To advise the State Planning Authority on the manner in which particular reserves of the authority should be developed and managed.
Well Drillers Examination Committee	Stanley, D. J. (C) Priess, L. J. Smith, A. E. Moore, A. J. Shepherd, R.	<i>Vice</i> Minogue, J. P. <i>Vice</i> Stanley, D. J., made Chairman	Underground Waters Preservation Act, 1969—sect. 38 and 39.
Environmental Protection Council	Inglis, W. H. (C) Bakewell, R. D. E. Woodruff P. S. Lewis, K. Schroder, E. W. Cocks, C. H. Jordan, D. O. Rebues, P.	<i>Vice</i> Beaney, H. L. <i>Vice</i> Morgan, F. D., resigned	Environmental Protection Council Act, 1972—sect. 14.
Advisory Committee pursuant to Food and Drugs Act	Dr. Woodruff, P. S. (C) Dr. Dwyer, J. M. Dr. Steele, T. W. Prof. de la Lande, I. S. Marlow, A. D. R. Barrow, P. M. Dixon, R. E. A. Philcox, A. C. Hayter, B. W.	<i>Vice</i> Dr. K. Anderson, deceased	To recommend all regulations under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act; these relate to food and drug standard, packaging, labelling, pesticide residues, hygiene and other related matters.
Clean Air Committee	Dr. Woodruff, P. S. (C) Dr. Wilson, K. J. Smith, A. J. Broughton, R. W. Prof. Carver, J. H. Shorter, L. N. Giles, R. J. Symons, E. J. Hosking, D. E. Burnside, J. P. Wells, D. J.	No changes	To carry out investigations into problems of air pollution and other impurities and report to the Minister, and to advise and make recommendations to the Minister regarding regulations under sect. 94b of the Health Act.
Advisory Panel for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children	Wood, A. E. (C) Reilly, R. N. Barclay, C. Scales, E. C. Barkham, L. F. Bogner, C. T. Ewart, C. M.	No change	To advise the Minister on all matters concerning the co-ordination of services and facilities for deaf and hard of hearing children and to offer advice and guidance to parents of deaf and hard of hearing children concerning the education training and placement of children with a hearing loss.

Board	Members	Changes in Membership within last six months	Purpose and/or Terms of Reference
Plumbing Advisory Board	Steele, L. R. (C) Rankin, R. A. Hollis, R. J. Hossack, L. J. Giles, R. J.	<i>Vice Tucker,</i> F. A. G., overseas	Sewerage Act, 1929-1974—regulation 7.
Sanitary Plumbing Examining Board	Steele, L. R. Rankin, R. A. Hollis, R. J. Giles, R. J. Hossack, L. J.	<i>Vice Tucker,</i> F. A. G., overseas	Sewerage Act, 1929-1974—regulations 5, 6.
Advisory Committee for Improvement of Dairying	Irving, M. R. (C) Itzerott, A. G. F. Evans, E. M. A. Lambert, G. R. Dalton, C. A. G. Canac, R. J. Robinson, D. T. M. Dierner, M. Karber, V. L.	No changes	Non-statutory: to advise the Minister of Agriculture on matters relating to the dairying industry of the State and to make recommendations that will increase the output of dairy products.
Advisory Committee on Soil Conservation	Barrow, P. McK. (C) Richards, J. A. McTaggart, M. I. O'Shaugnessy, J. S. Barley, K. P. J. Petras, H. W. Thomas, J.	No changes	Soil Conservation Act, 1939-1965—sect. 6.
Murray Mallee Soil Conservation Board	Meissner, J. A. (C) Hage, E. W. Schubert, J. B. Fullston, D. J. Drogemuller, M. J. Blackett, G. C. Wall, G. M.	No changes	Soil Conservation Act, 1939-1965—sect. 6.
Advisory Panel for Blind and Partially Sighted Children	Lascock, E. D. (C) Giles, J. Glasson, H. Barkham, L. F. Ewart, G. M. Penn, M. Wicks, N. S. P.	<i>Vice Hewton, P.,</i> promoted	Make decisions on the appropriate educational placement for visually handicapped children. Provide a counselling and guidance service to parents.
Investment Advisory Committee	Defunct—replaced by Superannuation Investment Trust		
Advisory Committee on Aid to Independent Schools	Rev. Cook, R. A. (C) Pratt, C. Medlin, D. Vacant Neuling, J. Donaldson, E. Hunkin, M. P. McDonald, J. Hosking, P. D.	<i>Vice Flentje,</i> deceased <i>Vice Cain, M.,</i> resigned	Recommendations on the distribution of special grants to independent schools, on a needs basis.
School Loans Advisory Committee	Daw, A. B. S. (C) Wood, A. E. Forbes, W. Stock, M. C. Pearson, M. G. Maddern, J.	No change	Education Act, 1972—sect. 85, 86.
Bushfire Advisory Committee	Bednall, B. H. (C) Rymill, R. R. Orr, R. D. Geddes, C. O. Sinclair, R. B. S. Angus, R. F. H. Harry, J. S. Kerr, F. C. Walkerden, R. D.	No change	Bushfires Act, 1960-1972—sect. 13.

Board	Members	Changes in Membership within last six months	Purpose and/or Terms of Reference
Bushfire Research Committee	Dr. Melville, J. (C) Bednall, B. H. McArthur, A. J. Hogan, J. McAuliffe, J. D. Thomas, J. Riggs, E. H. V.	No change	Non-statutory: investigate the economic use of land having regard to the danger of fires and to recommend suitable methods of production that will minimise the danger to human beings and damage to livestock and property.
Grape Industry Advisory Committee	Hardy, D. J. (C) Kennedy, D. H. Perry, D. G. Heward, J. Preece, A. D. Angove, T. W. C. Seppelt, K. J. Hunt-Cook, T. A. Schiller, R. B. Tiller, R. W. Johnson, E. Webber, R. T. J. Clegget, M. Wilkinson, A. N. Kimber, I. M. Hunt, C. A. G.	<i>Vice</i> George, S., (resigned from Agriculture Department)	Non-statutory: (1) Winemakers' needs as regards quality, quantity and varieties of wine grapes. (2) Consider the relationship between production and sale of dried wine and table grapes. (3) Estimate quantities of the various varieties to be produced. (4) Develop the demand for types and varieties and consider the problem of over-production. (5) Advise the industry on future planting policies.

HENLEY RAIL SERVICE

Dr. TONKIN (on notice):

1. What was the result of the survey conducted into the future of the Henley and Grange railway line, which the Minister stated, in reply to a question without notice, to be in hand on August 18, 1971?

2. Will details of the survey, and any recommendations, be made public and, if so, when?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: A total of 1 036 replies was received from 2 500 questionnaires distributed during the survey and, of the replies, 750 were in favour of a new railway on a new route. Although these figures did not justify the immediate construction of the railway, they did warrant the retention of the land.

BUSES

Dr. TONKIN (on notice):

1. What was the result of the investigation into the possible reintroduction of trolley buses, referred to in this House by the Minister on August 31, 1971?

2. Has any consideration been given to the introduction of electrically powered buses for Adelaide's public transport system and, if so, what have been the results of such consideration?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The replies are as follows:

1. The investigation showed that the running of trolley buses was not feasible because of economic factors and performance limitations involved.

2. Consideration has been given to the use of battery-powered electric buses on the Bee-line service. The Australian Government has been asked to accept it as a research and planning project in urban public transport. If approved, buses will be purchased and the study undertaken.

UNDERGROUND RAILWAY

Dr. TONKIN (on notice):

1. Does the Government still intend to proceed with the proposed Adelaide underground railway and, if so, when?

2. What escalation in costs is it estimated has occurred since the project was first suggested in the report of the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study?

Changes in Membership within last six months

Purpose and/or Terms of Reference

Vice George, S.,
(resigned from Agriculture Department)

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The replies are as follows:

1. The Government still intends to proceed with the proposed central city underground. The date of construction is continually under review, and will be subject to availability of funds for the project, as part of the Australian Government's urban public transport improvement programme.

2. The proposal now being looked at is different from that intended in the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation Study; it is therefore not possible to compare costs and benefits.

MAIN NORTH ROAD

Mr. COUNBE (on notice):

1. What plans has the Highways Department for improving the traffic conditions on the Main North Road, adjacent to the Target shopping centre at Nailsworth?

2. Is it intended to install pedestrian crossing lights at this location and, if so, when will this be done?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Funds have been allocated for the widening of Main North Road between Third Avenue and Enfield Avenue, Enfield, commencing during the present financial year. However, because of the time required to relocate Postmaster-General's and other services, it is expected that actual roadworks will not be started until about August, 1975. Thereafter, the works will take about six months to complete. A median strip will be installed with openings designed to provide for safe traffic movements to and from the Target shopping centre, and this installation will enable pedestrians to cross the road in greater safety.

The Highways Department, in conjunction with Prospect and Enfield councils, is now conducting a study to determine the need for a pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Target shopping centre. If such a crossing is justified, the date of installation will depend upon the availability of funds, the supply of the electronic equipment, and the availability of skilled labour.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. BECKER (on notice):

1. What proposals have been received by the State Government to establish small car manufacturing plants?

2. Which companies are involved and what are the type and size of vehicles?

3. What effect will any new manufacturing plants have on the local car industry?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. The State Government has not received any proposals concerning the establishment of new manufacturing plants to produce light cars.

2. A reply to question No. 1 is therefore unnecessary.

3. The establishment of new plants that created additional capacity, where excess capacity already exists in the local industry, would reduce the scope for the existing industry to obtain economies of scale. The South Australian Government is therefore opposed to the admission of new vehicle manufacturers where this would involve duplication of existing production facilities.

ARTS

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (on notice): Which performing arts are to receive South Australian Government grants this year and how much is each to receive?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The following grants are proposed for the performing arts for the financial year 1974-75:

	\$
Adelaide Highland Games	3 000
Arts Council of South Australia	128 634
Theatre 62	85 000
New Opera (S.A.)	85 200
S.A. Theatre Company	466 000
A.B.C. Symphony Orchestra	65 000
Festival of Arts	102 000
Australian Dance Theatre	120 000
N.Z. Symphony Orchestra	3 500
Carclew Arts Centre	17 700
Brass Ensemble (August, 1974)	3 003
Eisteddfod (August, 1974)	3 000
B. Hann (Graphic artists)	2 050
NIDA and ABS scholarships	2 400
Australian Opera and Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust	70 000
Adelaide Film Festival	15 000
S.A. Bands Association	7 300
School Bands Competition	1 500
Richard Meale Fellowship	19 185
Grants for new applicants	92 000
Regional arts centres	51 500
Unallocated reserve	64 018
	\$1 406 990

Some changes may become necessary within the totals provided as an individual recipient's circumstances change.

STATUTORY BODIES

Dr. EASTICK (on notice):

1. How can a member of the Leader of the Opposition's staff be expected to know why a member of a statutory body has been replaced, as suggested in the reply to my question on October 29, 1974?

2. For what reason has any person resigned from a statutory body in the last 12 months?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The replies are as follows:

1. The names of persons appointed to statutory bodies are published in the *Government Gazette*. I see no objection to a member of the staff of the Leader of the Opposition contacting the department concerned and asking the reason for the new appointment.

2. Most people who resign from statutory bodies state that they are doing so for personal reasons. The matter is not pursued further. In cases where more specific reasons are given, the Government would deem it improper to make those reasons public without the express approval of the individuals concerned. If the Leader has a specific case in mind, he should ask accordingly.

THEBARTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

Dr. EASTICK (on notice):

1. What changes in the funds position for the intended Thebarton Community Centre have there been since October 1, 1974?

2. Has the present critical and still deteriorating economic situation substantially reduced the possibility of these funds being made available in the foreseeable future?

3. When does the Minister expect to have definite advice from the Australian Government that funds will or will not be forthcoming?

4. Have contingency plans been prepared for construction of a new Thebarton High School without community centre facilities, in the circumstances that the Australian Government does not provide funds for the latter, and what houses will be acquired and demolished under such contingency plans?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The replies are as follows:

1. None.

2. Any deterioration in economic conditions should improve the chance of Australian Government assistance.

3. By the end of November.

4. No.

GOVERNMENT OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Mr. BECKER (on notice):

1. What, and where is, office accommodation held by the Government that is not yet occupied?

2. What is the total cost to date of rent, cleaning, sundry charges for preparation and stamping of leases in connection with such accommodation?

3. What is the approximate date of occupancy of the abovementioned accommodation?

4. What is the reason for the delay in occupying the accommodation held?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The replies are as follows:

1. and 3.

Building	Estimated Occupation
Q.B.E., King William Street, floors 6-7-8.	Progressive occupation has commenced—expected final occupation March, 1975, by Public Actuary.
Mercantile Mutual Building, Pirie Street, part 5th floor.	February, 1975.
45 Grenfell Street, floors 7-8-9.	Progressive from November 9, 1974.
New G.R.E. building	Floor 6 occupied, floors 2-5 progressively from November, 1974, to January, 1975.
Commercial Union Building, Pirie Street, 3rd floor.	December, 1974.
45 Grenfell Street, part 17th floor.	February, 1975.

Building	Estimated Occupation
Commercial Union Building, Pirie Street, part 2nd floor.	November, 1974.
National Bank, Rundle Street, part 1st floor.	December, 1974.
Old G.R.E. Building, Grenfell Street, 8th floor.	Progressive from November, 1974.
Elizabeth (Motor Vehicles Branch Office).	December, 1974.
Stirling (Community Welfare District Office).	December, 1974.
Glenelg.	December, 1974.
Gladstone.	March, 1975.
Victor Harbor.	January, 1975.

2. \$273 660.

4. The delay between the time of gaining possession by the commencement of the lease and actual occupation is occasioned by planning and execution of work required to enable the accommodation to be fitted for its intended use. In every case it is necessary for some or all of the following to be undertaken during the time periods in question:

- (a) Consultation with client departments concerning office layouts;
- (b) Design and execution of partitioning work;
- (c) Lighting;
- (d) Engineering variations;
- (e) Obtaining necessary approvals from the landlord and/or the City of Adelaide Development Committee;
- (f) Provision of furniture, equipment, and telephones.

PRICES

Mr. COUMBE (on notice):

1. How many applications for price increases are before the South Australian Commissioner for Prices and Consumer Affairs?

2. What items are covered by each of these applications, and in each case what is the amount of increase sought?

The Hon. L. J. KING: The replies are as follows:

1. 16.

2. To disclose particulars of applications before any decisions are made could lead to harmful and undesirable speculation in and stockpiling of the items concerned. The Government will not be a party to producing such anti-social results.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: REDCLIFF INDENTURE BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Following the publication of the report by the Commission of Inquiry on the environmental aspects of the Redcliff project, negotiations have been held between the South Australian Government and the Redcliff chemical consortium in relation to environmental matters, as well as several other matters pertaining to the indenture. Although these have been considerably progressed, they have not been concluded. As the provisions of the indenture and the enabling legislation are still being made final, it will not be possible to introduce legislation today. However, it is expected that the remaining matters will be dealt with this week.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: SWIMMING POOL CONSTRUCTION

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD (Minister of Development and Mines): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: For some time the Government has been concerned about the activities of people involved in the construction of swimming pools. From reports that have reached me, either directly or through representations made to other members, it seems that the construction of swimming pools is carried out by people who fall into two main groups.

In the first group are those people who may have a substantial-size business enterprise and who have a public reputation to uphold in ensuring that the work is carried out on time and that it is up to a reasonable standard. However, there does appear to be a second group of what has been termed fly-by-nighters, who come into the industry only on a part-time basis at times of peak demand, often working only at weekends. The standard of work carried out by this group often leaves much to be desired.

The Swimming Pools Association of South Australia has approached the Government, asking that control measures be instituted to ensure that the public obtains adequate standards of workmanship in any swimming pools that are constructed. The association has tried to ensure that this happens, by developing a registration process of their own, under which swimming pool contractors lodge a bond with the association to cover contractual defaults. The association also undertakes to ensure that any member will rectify any defects in workmanship. However, the problem with such a voluntary system is that the contractors who are turning out poor standard work do not belong to the association and therefore are not covered by either the bonding system or the faulty work rectification rules.

Consequently, it has been decided to institute a system of compulsory licensing based on one that normally applies to the builders of above-ground constructions. This will require amendments to the Builders Licensing Act, but, due to the legislative programme now facing Parliament, it will be impossible to introduce these amendments before Christmas. However, I can assure honourable members that this matter will be expedited as much as possible, and I hope to be able to introduce them early in the new year.

In the meantime, I urge all members of the public to be very careful in their selection of swimming pool contractors. They should take great care in ascertaining the *bona fides* of the contractors and whether they are in the industry on a full-time basis or just working as a side-line in this field. Whilst some of the latter may be adequate workmen, members of the public should be aware that there is no control over the standard of practice that they adopt in the construction. As a general rule, it seems that it would be in the interests of the public to ensure during the coming months that any swimming pools they have constructed are built by members of the Swimming Pools Association of South Australia, because of its bonding and standard of work rules. To date, the Swimming Pools Association has not had to use its bonding scheme to safeguard a member of the public. This emphasises the standard of its members in carrying out contracts.

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION: MINISTER OF
EDUCATION

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable him to move the following motion without notice:

That, in view of the findings of the Royal Commission on the Suspension of a High School Student, the Minister of Education (Hon. Hugh Richard Hudson) no longer has the confidence of the public of South Australia and is therefore no longer fit to remain the person to hold the office of Minister of Education in South Australia, and that this House accordingly call on him forthwith to resign.

Motion carried.

Dr. EASTICK: I move:

That, in view of the findings of the Royal Commission on the Suspension of a High School Student, the Minister of Education (Hon. Hugh Richard Hudson) no longer has the confidence of the public of South Australia and is therefore no longer fit to remain the person to hold the office of Minister of Education in South Australia, and that this House accordingly call on him forthwith to resign.

I thank members for accepting the situation that was so clearly spelt out by the Premier on July 24 this year (at page 35 of *Hansard*), when he indicated that, on occasions when there was an issue that required the consideration of the House for the censure of activities of a Minister of the Government, time would be made available. That time is now. We have a situation where, as a result of a despicable and questionable action of the Minister of Education, a headmaster and his staff have been put on trial and had to take the witness stand to be cross-examined in relation to the actions taken by the headmaster according to the rules and regulations handed down by the Director-General of Education.

I refer to a letter which appears in the report of the Royal Commissioner and which was tabled by the Minister this afternoon. The letter, set out in Appendix B of the report, is from the Director-General of Education (Mr. A. W. Jones) and dated August 1970. The letter is an extract from the *Education Gazette* of September 1, 1970. I will not read the whole letter, but will refer to passages that I believe are pertinent to this issue. Under the heading "Freedom and authority in schools", the Director-General sent the following memorandum to heads of departmental schools:

I have been asked to define more clearly what is meant by the freedom you and your staff have been exhorted to use in the schools. I shall be grateful if you will make the contents of this memorandum known to your staff. Let me say at the outset that you as head of your school, by delegated authority from the Minister and the Director-General, are in undisputed control of your school.

"In undisputed control of your school", yet we have the situation where the Minister and the Premier involved themselves in behind-the-scenes discussions in Parliament House at a time immediately preceding a possible double dissolution of the Parliament. They were trying to destroy the direction given by the Director-General and the suggestion of undisputed control of a school that had been laid down by the Director-General. Obviously, the Director-General's letter was issued with the approval of the Minister: no action has been taken to alter one word of the directive. The Director-General's letter continues:

Within the broad framework of the Education Act, the general curriculum advised by the curriculum boards and approved by me as Director-General of Education, and the general policy set by the Director of your division and communicated to you by circular, you have the widest liberty to vary courses, to alter the time table, to decide the organisation of the school and government within the school, to experiment with teaching methods, assessment of student achievement and in extra-curricular activities.

I will miss several paragraphs and continue as follows:

In exercising your authority and freedom to run your school as you think fit, of necessity you must have the backing of your staff. Without their support and participation and their adequate preparation, any departures from tradition will have little chance of success.

Clearly, in the evidence in the document that has been made available to every member, Mr. Reuben Goldsworthy certainly had the backing of his staff when he took the action he deemed necessary for the good government of his school and in the best interests of the forward educational benefits of the rest of the students at the school. He had the backing then, and he has it now: more than that, he has the backing of the South Australian Institute of Teachers, of every other headmaster, and of most of the people in the community who completely deplore the actions of the Minister, the Premier, and any other Government member in accord with their actions, in order to interfere with the school's internal activities.

Why was it done? Was it motivated because it seemed to be the "in" thing to do? Was it something that would gain the Minister support in the community by showing, as he claimed in various ways, that he had nothing to fear and that there was nothing anyone need fear? Alternatively, was it done for political gain? There is considerable evidence in the document that it was done for pure political gain. I have already said that, at the time of the first meeting in June, 1973, when the Minister and the Premier had the family in rooms at Parliament House, Mr. Willcox was a candidate for the Legislative Council. But more than that, if one refers to page 150 of the report, one finds an intrusion by the Minister that he feared the consequences before the State Labor Council. Page 150 states:

The Minister also expressed concern with reaction within the Labor Party. "The message that I was trying to get across was that I could run into serious difficulty at a Labor Party State Council meeting, in finding myself defending a point of view which stated (1) the action in calling the police was not justified in those circumstances, (2) that the suspension was justified and that we should support it, and that in view of the people that were involved in that case and the emotion that is inevitably aroused once the police come into a situation like that, I wasn't sure that if I was confronted with a motion at a State council meeting of the Party or a conference, given three minutes, that I could get the kind of results out of that determination of that resolution that I wanted."

Obviously, it was done for political purposes. The report continues (and this is something to the disgrace of the Minister):

The Minister mentioned the Headmaster's brother (Mr. Roger Goldsworthy, Member of the House of Assembly for the district of Kavel, and a member of the Opposition); "... but only in that context of the difficulty that I might run into in an emotionally charged situation within the Labor Party of obtaining agreement that the suspension was completely justified when that suspension was carried out by the brother of a Liberal M.P. and enough people were emotionally charged on the issue—that might have made the determination of the question, say, by the State Council of the Labor Party, much more difficult from the point of view that I was wanting to establish."

I make one point clear regarding my colleague the member for Kavel and his brother: his brother did not communicate with the honourable member during the entire duration of the events outlined in the report, regarding the events, his authority, or the difficulties he was having with the Minister. To introduce the honourable member's name into the report and the documents before the Royal Commission shows again a complete lack of nous and proves that the Minister tried to make political capital out of the situation in order to save his own skin. The

reaction in the community to the wanton expenditure of money on this inquiry is a reaction that the Government will rue for a long time. The public has not accepted the political context of the situation. This is obvious from the content of contributions made to talk-back sessions this morning, from telephone calls made to members of the Opposition, and in other tangible ways. Many aspects of this document could be highlighted but I do not want to exhaust the evidence available. However, I will mention one or two matters contained in the report. At pages 160 and 161, the report states:

However, the Minister's personal involvement to the extent of having the suspended student looked after by his wife for those two days and the Minister's undertaking to act as a go-between should there be further difficulty at the school,—

again, the Minister was seeking to destroy the autonomy of the Headmaster of Woodville High School which had been conveyed to him, as it had been to other headmasters, in a document from the Director-General in August 1970—predictably, in my view, would make people in the department hesitant to act firmly with the Willcoxes in any future encounters.

Obviously, any other headmaster confronted by a parent or any other member of a student's family could find himself in the same position: the mat would be pulled from under his feet by the Minister, who would say one thing and do another. The report continues:

Further factors were the Minister's decisions not to uphold the Headmaster's recommendations for exclusion and to reduce the suspension by one day, without consultation with the Headmaster.

A Ministerial direction was given without first discussing the situation with the Headmaster, who was the key person in that incident so far as the department was concerned. I say that the Headmaster was the key person so far as the department was concerned even though I know members opposite will say that the girl was the key person. General conclusions appear on pages 175 to 177, as follows:

In the circumstances, with the Minister of Education becoming so personally involved and reducing the suspension—and implicitly not approving the Headmaster's recommendation for exclusion—it would be naive to think, given the political affiliations, that the Minister's intervention would not have a significant influence on the future thoughts and actions of departmental officers. Indeed, as to events in 1974, the then Acting Director of Secondary Education (Mr. Forbes) stated in evidence, "In view of what happened the previous year, I felt that this had to be handled at the highest quarters and I couldn't, for example, take up my normal function of advising a Headmaster because the previous time it reached up to the Ministerial and Premier rank, so it wasn't for me to interfere with that type of authority."

That was Ministerial intrusion into an area of administration that was clearly defined in a document as being the province of the administrators. Ministers have often indicated that they will not intrude into areas which do not come directly under Ministerial control. The report continues:

Further, the Headmaster "... in undisputed control of the school, by delegated authority from the Minister and the Director-General" would be justified in thinking, as a result of the June, 1973, events, that his authority had been eroded when his decisions were effectively changed by the Minister without prior consultation with him. The Minister knew the risks involved in his personal intervention in 1973; he was prepared to take them.

History repeated itself in May/June, 1974—the Headmaster's justifiable suspension of Jacquelynn Willcox for repeated insolence and persistent disobedience; the overwhelming support by the staff for the Headmaster; and the defiance of the suspension again by parent and daughter. The child was left at school and the father went to see the Director-General of Education. The Director-General's

concern, it appeared, was solely for the education of the child. I agree that it ought to have the paramount concern but I think the Director-General, from previous experience, should by this stage in 1974 have recognised that Mr. and Mrs. Willcox and Jacquelynn were inseparably united in any confrontation with the school; that together they constituted a trinity of trouble-makers, with a predilection for a scene rather than a solution. I believe that greater consideration should have been given to the untenable situation in which the Headmaster and staff had been placed.

The Minister, and all members opposite who took part in deciding that a Royal Commission should be held into this affair, were parties to putting the Headmaster and staff on trial. The report continues:

The Director-General considered that the Headmaster had acted reasonably in suspending Jacquelynn—and, of course, quite lawfully. I believe that at his interview with Mr. Willcox on June 3, 1974, the Director-General should have clearly shown his support for the Headmaster.

That statement should be considered in connection with the document that had gone out over the signature of the person to whom the report refers. The report continues:

Concessions had been made—

concessions made for political gain—

to the Willcoxes over a period of twelve months and, in the instant case, the Headmaster had bent over backwards to get the Willcoxes to co-operate. It was the time for a showdown—for the Willcoxes to be stood up to, for Mr. Goldsworthy to be stood up for.

Who should have been expected to stand up for the Headmaster more than the Director-General and the Minister, both of whom were aware of the many difficulties involved in the situation? Yet, at a time when they were called on to give the type of support that they had preached about and issued circulars about, they were found wanting: they walked away from their responsibility. Later, the report states:

I wish to offer, with respect, a few comments on the setting up of the Royal Commission. It appears from the Minister's evidence that the action of the Headmaster in calling the police to enforce the suspension of Jacquelynn Willcox was a compelling reason in deciding to appoint this Royal Commission. Whatever triggered off the decision, it seems perfectly clear from the terms of the Commission that the central issue of the open inquiry was to decide whether or not the Headmaster was justified in suspending Jacquelynn Willcox from Woodville High School on May 31, 1974. It was known before the Commission was appointed that the suspension was supported by the Minister of Education, the Director-General of Education, the Deputy Director-General of Education, the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers and the President of the High Schools Headmasters and Headmistresses Association, the Woodville High School staff, and the Woodville High School Council.

As the report states, it was known before the Commission was appointed that the suspension was supported by the people to whom the report refers. The report continues.

The Headmaster certainly sought no inquiry to clear his name; he was quite happy to live with his decisions—and, I assume, with his conscience.

Knowing the character of the gentleman concerned (he is one of a family of teachers who have served the department in South Australia for many years), I can agree with what the Commissioner states. The report continues:

The Director-General said in evidence, "I wanted the departmental inquiry, and not this one—I can assure you, I didn't want this one."

As the Director-General had been party to all that had taken place and as he had been in a position in which he had had an opportunity to give support to a Headmaster in his time of need, obviously the words there attributed to the Director-General are very pertinent. He said that he did not want this form of inquiry; he was pushed into it,

as everyone else was pushed into it. Nothing will ever change my mind or the minds of Opposition members that there was a political motive behind the appointment of this Royal Commission. The report continues:

The only pressure for the open inquiry, that I am aware of, came from the Willcoxes and their fellow demonstrators, who lobbied the Minister *en masse* in the Education Department offices; and it appears that this invasion advocacy was not without its influence in the eventual appointment of the Royal Commission.

Perhaps the Minister will say whether or not that belief of the Commissioner is correct. On page 177, this section of the report concludes as follows:

I raise doubts, respectful doubts, as to the wisdom, in such circumstances, of deciding to hold an open inquiry principally to establish whether the Headmaster was justified in suspending the girl. The Minister of the Crown, who agreed to hold the open inquiry, considered not only that the suspension was justified but that he, himself, "would have done it earlier". There was not a scrap of evidence to suggest that the Headmaster was not justified in suspending the girl. In the absence, therefore, of such evidence, and in the light of the cogent and authoritative support which had been accorded the Headmaster, it seems to me to be wrong in principle that he should then be called upon to account for his actions publicly in front of a Royal Commission, and for his personal and professional reputation to be subjected to verbal assault. With the greatest respect, I submit that, in origin, the present Royal Commission was ill-conceived.

I believe that many people in the community hold a view similar to that held by the Commissioner, who has said he believes in the professional and personal repute of this Headmaster, who has been an asset to the Education Department over a long time. In putting forward this motion seriously, Opposition members are determined to get a result on it by way of a vote in this House. The report of the Royal Commission contains evidence (and other evidence came forward at the time of these incidents) of the Minister's intrusion. There is evidence of his intrusion on other occasions. I refer to the real intention behind the document sent out by the Director-General in August, 1970. In case the Minister is wondering what else I might be adverting to, I refer him to circumstances at Angle Park and to other instances.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Angle Park?

Dr. EASTICK: Yes, out Gepps Cross and Blair Athol way.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: What about it?

Dr. EASTICK: There was involvement with staff.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: What about Angle Park?

Dr. EASTICK: The position is that there is a clear need to take the action called for in my motion. In due course, I look forward to the support of all members for this motion.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I second the motion, which is one of the most serious types of motion that can be moved in this or any other House of Parliament. The motion censures the Government and particularly the Minister of Education for the conduct of his affairs as they relate to his portfolio. We are attacking the Minister's handling of his portfolio. As the motion has nothing to do with his personal character, I do not wish to indulge in that matter. The motion states that the Minister "no longer has the confidence of the public of South Australia and is therefore no longer fit to remain the person to hold the office of Minister of Education in South Australia, and that this House accordingly call on him forthwith to resign". I repeat that this is one of the most serious charges that can be made in this place, and it has not been made lightly. The Leader of the Opposition has dealt with many

facets of the Royal Commissioner's report. There are two main aspects of this matter to consider. We must synthesise the whole report, the actions that have been taken, and the comments that have been made. I suggest that there has been a Ministerial involvement and that the present Minister has made decisions that have not at all times been in the best interests of his high office of Minister of Education. Certainly, in my opinion, they have not been in the best interests of his department.

Because the question involves political matters and their effect on the Minister, or what he believes would reflect on him, I suggest that, as a result of that aspect alone (and I will deal with this matter in more detail soon), the Minister has not the confidence of this House or of the people of South Australia. I suggest strongly that the people of South Australia will be extremely concerned and worried when they see the full context of this report and how it affects particularly the Minister, his decisions, his administration of his department, and the effects from a political angle on his high office. I say frankly that I consider the Minister has sullied the repute in which his office should be held.

In addition, I consider that the Minister has acted incorrectly, and in an extremely hasty and most inept way in appointing the Royal Commission. In other words, he has fallen down on the job that he was appointed to do as Minister of Education, and I consider that, in this regard, he has not carried out the duties expected of him in that portfolio. I will not refer to all the matters to which the Leader has referred. However, I have made the first point regarding political involvement, and I want to quote from page 160 of the Royal Commission report, where the Commission refers to the involvement of the Minister of Education in 1973. That part of the report states:

However, the Minister's personal involvement—

and that is what we are talking about—

to the extent of having the suspended student looked after by his wife for those two days and the Minister's undertaking to act as a go-between should there be further difficulty at the school predictably, in my view, would make people in the department hesitant to act firmly with the Willcoxes in any future encounters.

These are solid words by the Commissioner. That part of the report continues:

Further factors were the Minister's decision not to uphold the Headmaster's recommendations for exclusion and to reduce the suspension by one day, without consultation with the Headmaster.

Therefore, we see the Minister's personal involvement with the family concerned. When we go on, we see comments about the Minister's discussion and the use of police. The Royal Commissioner, of course, at one stage queries why the calling of the police was not made a specific term of reference for his inquiry and report. It seems significant to wonder why this was not included, because a big section of the report deals with the police. I quote now from page 173 of the report, where the Commissioner states:

The Minister of Education revealed, in evidence, that he was concerned about public reaction and also Party political considerations—

that has come from a Minister of Education who is charged with the impartial administration of a portfolio dealing with children of this State of all denominations, political affiliations, or what have you—

arising from the calling of the police to remove a student from school in a civil as opposed to a criminal type situation. The Headmaster was of the opinion that the public reaction would have been in his favour; the Minister expressed a contrary view, and, of course, there is no way of measuring what the reaction might have been.

I consider that here the Commissioner was being fair. I ask any member of this House whether he would agree with that and whether he does not think that the Minister would be able to expect what the reaction might be from a political angle. The report continues:

Political considerations are, of course, of concern to any Minister; but they cannot be expected to be a factor to be taken into account by a Headmaster in exercising his judgment in this matter.

I consider that that point in the report is extremely pertinent. Here we have the Minister exercising political judgments rather than upholding an impartial view taken by a well respected Headmaster who has served in the department for many years and has had the support not only of his district and of the members of his school staff but also of other headmasters and members of the South Australian Institute of Teachers. Having dealt with that aspect (and one could refer to many matters in the report), I wish to quote from page 175. I am dealing specifically with the Minister's involvement, because this is how the motion is directed. Page 175 contains this general conclusion:

The Minister of Education, with the Premier, discussed the problem with Mr. and Mrs. Willcox at Parliament House.

I pause there to ask whether any member of this House recalls a student at any time having been brought into this place and specific aspects of his or her schooling having been discussed by the Minister of Education and the Premier of the State.

Mr. Venning: Never ever.

Mr. COUNBE: Where are we getting to in this State, under the administration of the present Minister of Education? If this has happened, what will happen next week, or next year? The report also states:

At the time, Mr. Willcox was an endorsed A.L.P. candidate for the next Legislative Council election.

Of course, that has nothing to do with the matter: it is merely coincidental! That part of the report also states:

It appears that the Headmaster's recommendation for the girl's exclusion from Woodville High School had not been brought to the attention of the Minister. In any event, the upshot of the June, 1973, meeting was that the Minister reduced the Headmaster's suspension of the girl from three days to two days—

Why was that done?

Mr. Dean Brown: For political reasons.

Mr. COUNBE: I refer also to another significant quotation. The report states:

... the Minister arranged for his wife to look after the girl during her two-day suspension so that Mrs. Willcox would not have to stop home from work and lose pay.

The Minister could have been motivated by the highest ethical reasons in this regard. He may have been philanthropic, but I seriously put it to members that such is not the function of a Minister of the Crown.

Mr. Venning: Or of his wife.

Mr. COUNBE: We are dealing in this matter with one child out of many hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren in this State. What will be done if the same thing happens next week? Will the Minister's wife be lumbered with, and have to look after, another girl? I suggest that that is beyond the realms of the Minister's responsibility in his portfolio.

Mr. Venning: Or his wife's.

Mr. COUNBE: The Commissioner continues:

In the circumstances, with the Minister of Education becoming so personally involved and reducing the suspension—and implicitly not approving the Headmaster's recommendation for exclusion—it would be naive to think, given the political affiliations, that the Minister's intervention

would not have a significant influence on the future thoughts and actions of departmental officers.

Here again, reference is made by an impartial Royal Commissioner to the Minister's involvement, particularly his political affiliations as far as his Ministerial action is concerned. The last phrase to which I referred led to the matter that was referred to by the Leader regarding evidence given by Mr. Forbes (then Acting Director of Secondary Education). Of course, members of the Minister's staff and his officers would be affected by the Minister's activity when he intervened in such a direct way.

The Minister's portfolio (or, for that matter, any Minister's portfolio) demands in South Australia or anywhere else the highest possible ethics in the way it is administered. I believe the Minister has fallen down in this respect and should resign. The Minister should remember that the report will be here forever and that he will have to live with it on his conscience for the rest of his life. At page 177, the Commissioner states:

I raise doubts, respectful doubts, as to the wisdom, in such circumstances, of deciding to hold an open inquiry principally to establish whether the Headmaster was justified in suspending the girl.

He was referring to Jacquelynne Willcox. He continues:

The Minister of the Crown, who agreed to hold the open inquiry, considered not only that the suspension was justified but that he himself "would have done it earlier." There was not a scrap of evidence to suggest that the Headmaster was not justified in suspending the girl. In the absence, therefore, of such evidence, and in the light of the cogent and authoritative support which had been accorded the Headmaster, it seems to me to be wrong in principle that he should then be called upon to account for his actions publicly in front of a Royal Commission, and for his personal and professional reputation to be subjected to verbal assault.

This is the position in which the Headmaster, a respected member of the teaching profession, was placed, not at his request, but he was put in an awkward position where he had to defend his own reputation because of action taken by his Minister. The Royal Commissioner concludes by saying:

With the greatest respect, I submit that, in origin, the present Royal Commission was ill-conceived.

In other words, the Commissioner is saying that the Commission should never have been held, that the problem should have been solved either at the Director-General's level or at Ministerial level, not at an open inquiry, a Royal Commission, at the taxpayers' expense. That is the gravamen of the argument. We have several Royal Commissions proceeding at present and you, Sir, I, and the other taxpayers of this State are paying for them. What we come back to is that an incident, which has been blown up out of all proportion, occurred at a school and the Minister, in exercising the responsibilities of his portfolio, indulged in two things. He considered his political affiliations or the effects of his decisions in a political way; that aspect stands on its own. The other aspect, which is serious, relates to whether the Minister was acting properly, whether he was skilful, or whether he was administratively correct in his handling of the whole matter. I believe that he was inept and that he was therefore at fault in the administration of his portfolio, that he should no longer be responsible for administering one of the most important portfolios in the South Australian Cabinet, and that he should not have the responsibility of educating the children of generations to come. As a result of this motion, however, he will not be in a position for long to affect the education of children of future generations.

The motion calls on the Minister to resign but, on behalf of the Opposition, I do not only call on him to resign: I demand that he resign.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Education): I hate to disappoint members of the Opposition by not resigning, but I know they would be foolish not to seize an opportunity to try to make political capital out of serious problems that have confronted the administration of the Education Department in relation to the Willcox family. It is worth noting that the situation that gave rise to events at Woodville High School was completely unprecedented; it was the first such experience that anyone in the Education Department, either at school level or at departmental level, or that I as Minister had ever had to deal with: it related to an outright confrontation between the parents of a child and the child on the one hand and the school on the other. There were no previous situations to guide us in the way the situation should be handled.

Dr. Eastick: Did you try common sense?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I listened to the Leader in silence.

Dr. Eastick: Not entirely.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: If the Leader does not wish to give me the right of reply without interjecting, that is all right, and he may continue to behave in that way because that is his prerogative. However, on occasions when accusations are made against someone, that person should have the right to reply in a reasonable way. I have always taken the view (and I still do) that, when one is first faced with a confrontation of this nature, an attempt should be made to achieve some kind of solution. That attempt was made. For a while, that attempt worked (and I will discuss that matter in detail later) but, ultimately, it did not work. The Royal Commission was held and we now have, I believe, accepted a firm policy that the girl in question will have to go to another school. She is only 13 years of age, and what happens at this other school is of some concern because, unless the Willcox family alters its behaviour, the same situation is likely to recur.

Dr. Tonkin: It's even more likely.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes, the development of the situation through outright confrontation and, finally, the handing down and implementing of a Draconian decision in this way may well lead to the girl's becoming more difficult than she was to begin with. I suggest to members that any attempt along the lines of getting a family out of the frame of mind of confrontation and opposition to a school policy, and into the frame of mind of being willing to extend that minimum degree of co-operation necessary to make any school function was justified initially and is still justified. Even with hindsight, I do not believe that my actions in 1973 would have been any different. I was, through knowing Mr. and Mrs. Willcox, in a unique position possibly to influence their behaviour. That evidence is clear before the Commission but, unfortunately, it is not always interpreted correctly. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear before the Commission, by all who gave evidence on this point, that, in dealing with the Willcoxes, the Premier and I insisted on having the suspension enforced and accepted.

That is the position, and that was the only time that a suspension against Jacquelynne Willcox was ever enforced. No-one else had ever been able to do it. The enforcement of the suspension in 1973 occurred after two days when the girl had been suspended by the Headmaster and had been accompanied back to the school by her mother, both the mother and the girl refusing to accept that the

girl should leave. Before the meeting at Parliament House ever took place, I made clear to the Premier that it was necessary to obtain a break-through in that confrontation situation, to remove the difficulty that then existed, and to have the suspension enforced. However, it was not a possible solution, whatever we might have thought of the suspension and whatever might have been argued were the extenuating circumstances, not to enforce the suspension.

Much has been made of the point that I was supposed to have reduced the suspension ordered by the Headmaster and not to have accepted a recommendation for expulsion. The Commissioner knew quite well, because the evidence was given and is quoted in the report, that, prior to that Tuesday evening at Parliament House, no recommendation for exclusion from Woodville High School had been put to me. In fact, I first heard about it when I lunched with Mr. Reuben Goldsworthy on the Thursday of that week but, by that time, an agreement had been reached with the Willcoxes. It would not have been a reasonable proposition, after the meeting with Mr. Goldsworthy on the Thursday, to have turned to the Willcoxes and said, "Despite the previous agreement that has been reached with you, I am now going to turn around and expel your child from the school." That is not a reasonable proposition, and the Commissioner should have known that it was not a reasonable proposition, yet he repeats it in several places in his report.

Mr. Coumbe: Are you reflecting on a Royal Commissioner?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am disputing the Commissioner's criticisms of me and am making my own comments on those criticisms; surely I am fully entitled to do that. No Commission's report is sacrosanct and not to be criticised in any circumstances. Opposition members apparently expect that I should lie down and take these criticisms that have been levelled at me, without replying to them. Is that what they believe is democracy—having no right of reply? The Commissioner knew (because I gave it in evidence and it was accepted) that that recommendation had not been put to me. In fact, prior to the appointment of the Royal Commission, no recommendation for exclusion from Woodville High School had ever been put to me by the Director-General of Education or any other senior departmental officer. Yet, I am reported in the report as having rejected the recommendation. That is an unfair and unjust accusation.

I am also alleged to have reduced the suspension from three days to two days: that, too, is an unfair and unjust accusation, about which I was not questioned in evidence before the Commission. Page 36 of the report sets out a letter written by the Headmaster (Mr. Reuben Goldsworthy) to the Willcoxes on June 22, 1973, as follows:

This is to inform you that your daughter, Jacquelynne, has been suspended from attendance at school until further notice for insolence and persistent disobedience.

The letter does not indicate the length of time of the suspension. The next piece of evidence relates to a report written to the department on June 25, 1973 (the Monday prior to the Tuesday evening meeting at Parliament House), regarding the recommendation for the exclusion of the student. In that report, Mr. Goldsworthy recommended that the girl Jacquelynne be excluded permanently from attendance at this school. That piece of evidence never reached me prior to the meeting at Parliament House, as I said in evidence before the Commission, and was never acted on by departmental officers. No recommendation was made to me on that point. At no stage in the second report to the department is the matter of two or three days suspension referred to.

My understanding was that, at the time of the Parliament House meeting, the suspension was to be for two days. I did not know then (and I was not questioned on this point by the Commission, but I should have been if I was going to be criticised on it) that the Headmaster had added another day, bearing in mind what he said of the sit-in at the school. I became aware of that, together with his recommendation for exclusion, as I have said, when I lunched with Mr. Goldsworthy on the following Thursday. This is when he told me of those recommendations and said that he was disappointed his recommendation for three days had been reduced. At that stage there was no point in worrying about it any further, and I did not worry about it at that time, because the situation was that an agreement had been reached on two days, which was what I had understood on the Tuesday evening to be the recommendation of the school. At page 45 the Commissioner states:

At the time the Minister initiated this meeting with the Willcoxes, he had only the general background of the events that led up to the suspension of Jacquelynne.

It was only the general background of the events that occurred subsequently to the suspension. In those circumstances one would think that, if the Commissioner was to criticise me severely in the report for allegedly having reduced the suspension of three days that I had apparently known about to two days, I would have been questioned about that matter before the Commission. I was not. The matter that I was questioned about, namely, the exclusion, I replied to as I stated here in Parliament. The only recognition of this fact in the report is a statement in the general conclusions (and I could find it, if honourable members wished me to) that the Minister implicitly rejected the Headmaster's recommendation for exclusion (not outright, but implicitly). In other words, the Minister had taken an action that superseded the recommendation for exclusion before knowing the Headmaster's recommendation on that matter. If that is not an unfair and unjust way of putting a point, I do not know what is. Agreement had been reached before I knew about the recommendation, and that is recognised by the Commissioner in his statement that I had implicitly rejected the recommendation for exclusion. In other words, the agreement on the Tuesday evening implied the rejection of a recommendation for exclusion that I was to hear about on the Thursday.

Mr. Coumbe: You are not doing too well.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I will leave it for those other than Opposition members to say whether I am doing well or not. I should think that Opposition members' views would not be those of unbiased witnesses in this matter. Whilst referring to this matter, I was pleased that the Leader of the Opposition got through his speech without bringing my wife into it, and I did not think that I would have to say anything about that at this stage. I did not expect that a person like the Deputy Leader would bring my wife into the argument.

Mr. Coumbe: Only what is reported.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Where is the statement in the report about the Minister's wife being lumbered?

Mr. Coumbe: That is mine.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No doubt this matter will come up again, and I wish to make other points clear. First, conflicting evidence was given to the Commission by Mrs. Willcox and by Mr. Willcox as to precisely what happened at Parliament House during the meeting on Tuesday evening. The evidence of Mrs. Willcox suggested that it was a relatively light-hearted incident, whereas the

evidence of Mr. Willcox suggested that it was a serious matter and that a serious discussion was held that extended over a considerable period. My evidence on that point was in accord with that given by Mr. Willcox and against that given by Mrs. Willcox, but in the report it is the evidence of Mrs. Willcox only that is referred to. In Mr. Mullighan's cross-examination, he went to great lengths with both Mr. Willcox and me to demonstrate the nature of the meeting at Parliament House, but the evidence of Mr. Willcox was not quoted, although that of Mrs. Willcox was quoted. I should have thought, because of the contrary evidence given, that the evidence of Mrs. Willcox would be rejected, but it was that evidence that led the Commissioner, at page 53, to make the following gratuitous remark:

Be that as it may, the upshot of the meeting between the Premier, the Minister of Education, and Mr. and Mrs. Willcox was that Jacquelynne Willcox was suspended from school for two days; the suspension she accepted under protest, the two days she spent "having fun".

That statement about "having fun" could only have come in evidence from one of the Willcoxes: it did not come from anyone else, and it did not come from my wife, who was not called to give evidence. I suggest to members that that statement by the Commissioner is gratuitous, to say the least, particularly because my wife was not called to give evidence at all. She is somewhat concerned about this matter and has authorised me to make a statement. I have it here in her handwriting, as well as typed copies of the statement, which is as follows:

1. Comments on the two days Jacquelynne spent with me in 1973 are included in the report and yet I was not called to give evidence before the Commission—this seems unfair, if a complete picture were desired.

2. The only time a suspension of Jacquelynne was enforced was in mid-1973 when she spent two days with me. I was not forced or coerced—

she does not say "lumbered"—

to agree to this, but did it in the hope that it would enable Woodville High School and Jacquelynne to return to a more normal relationship after the suspension—and it worked for a while at least. We did various things together, including a visit to Parliament at a time when there was a possibility of a double dissolution, and also a visit to the Pioneer Village Museum. It was called "having fun" in the report, but it was the sort of "fun" that most schools incorporate in their educational programmes. I considered that I had a responsibility not to allow the time away from school to be frittered away.

3. At that time I found Jacquelynne intelligent and articulate—not rude or belligerent. I have not had any personal contact with Jacqui since those two days.

That is my wife's statement about this matter, and on my behalf and on her behalf I must say that I resent very much the statement by the Commissioner in his report. Before I refer to the question whether the suspension in 1973 worked at all, let me deal with another matter which in the report deals with me unjustly and unfairly: that is, the question of my allegedly offering to act as a go-between, which is put in evidence in the report at an earlier stage but which in the conclusions is taken out of context in a way that I consider to be quite improper. I think the initial reference to this matter is on pages 48 and 49 in a part of the evidence I gave when being examined by Mr. Mullighan, as follows:

Mr. MULLIGHAN: Did you form a view, in the course of this meeting, as to the attitude of Mr. and Mrs. Willcox to Mr. Goldsworthy?—Yes, I formed the view that there was some feeling of hostility.

That was one of the reasons why I was the first to suggest that the Willcoxes should consider another school. The evidence continues:

Without going into the question of whether or not that was justified, did you, because of that view that you'd

formed, make a suggestion about how further problems should be dealt with?—Yes.

What was the suggestion?—I suggested (1) that they should avoid correspondence because in the past that hadn't seemed to produce results; and they did offer that, if I could be of assistance to act as a go-between, they would be prepared to act that way.

If we read the letters written by Mr. Willcox—

Mr. Coumbe: To you?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No; if we read the letters he wrote to the school, to Mr. Goldsworthy or to the Deputy Headmistress, or if we read any other letter, even including the one he wrote to me, we realise that this gentleman writes a very rude, aggressive and provocative letter, and each time Mr. Willcox was involved in correspondence the result was largely unproductive because of the nature of his letter. The point I made with the Willcoxes during the evening meeting at Parliament House was that to start further trouble with the school through the nature of the correspondence they were submitting was a futile way of proceeding. On that occasion, I told the Willcoxes not to do that but to go and see them personally at the school; or, if they did not feel capable of doing that because they felt hostile, they should come and see me about it. I said they should at least avoid provocation that would result from those letters. That was the nature of my offer to act as go-between. The Willcoxes did not attempt to use me as a go-between in any way, although they contacted me once before the end of 1973, but that was in relation to Elizabeth Elliott, Mrs. Willcox's sister, to try to persuade her to continue with her Leaving year at school, and it had nothing to do with Jacquelyne. There was no further contact with me regarding Jacquelyne until the member for Bragg asked a question in this House, I think as a consequence of an approach made by Mrs. Willcox. The Willcoxes never took up my offer.

Mr. Goldsworthy: The go-between offer?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes. The Commissioner's conclusions on that point are suspect for that reason.

Mr. Coumbe: Why are you disputing the findings of the Commissioner?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: They are there to be disputed if I think they are incorrect. I still have a right to express an opinion in this House. The honourable member may not like it, but I have a right to express an opinion, and I am making use of that right.

Mr. Dean Brown: You have no confidence in the Commissioner; is that right?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Mr. Speaker, may I continue? Whilst my statement about not writing letters did not have all the effect I wanted it to have, it did have the effect that Mr. Willcox did not write any further letters to the school for the remainder of 1973. Apart from one incident at the school, which was largely resolved on the spot the same day, between Jacquelyne and Mr. Goldsworthy, no further incident took place at Woodville High School in 1973. The school reports on Jacquelyne for the end of the third term of 1973 are quoted in the Commissioner's report and show that she was doing track O work in all subjects apart from music, home science and art. Her gradings were A's in social studies and music; B's in English, maths and art; C's in French, history and science; and a D, which is unsatisfactory, in home science. Her attitude was satisfactory in all subjects except music and art, where it was said to be outstanding, and her attitude was unsatisfactory in home science. Her co-operation within the school was said to be satisfactory. Her class teacher's comments were as follows:

Jacqui has shown abundant energy this year which she could have better directed towards her studies, and a flair for self-expression occasionally unguided. She is alert and confident and with a little self-discipline can earn a bright future.

The comment by the Headmaster at that stage, six months after the girl's two-day sojourn, was "very promising". The internal evidence of the report suggests that at least for 1973 the action I had taken in the middle of that year had worked partially. Unfortunately, it did not continue to work, because in February or March, 1974, Mr. Willcox started writing letters again. On page 63 there is an indication of the solicitous attitude of the Headmaster. I have always taken the view that the Willcoxes' attitude and hostility towards Mr. Goldsworthy were quite unjustified. I quote from page 63 of the report, as follows:

After this incident, Mrs. Veldhuis asked Mr. Goldsworthy whether he thought it was wise for her to visit the Willcox family. He thought it might be profitable provided that she knew and understood the delicacy of the situation, and that the approach would need to be made properly. About a week after the schoolyard incident, Mrs. Veldhuis visited the Willcoxes and saw the whole family. "It was totally informal and completely friendly and we sat on the floor and ate home-made bread."

Nevertheless, I point out that the school itself was making an attempt to get that degree of co-operation from the Willcoxes necessary for such a school to function efficiently, and I believe that attempt needed to be made. That was the purpose of overcoming the difficulty that occurred in June, 1973, when Mrs. Willcox sat-in on the school; that was the purpose for getting the suspension enforced, even though it was enforced in a peculiar and not-to-be-repeated fashion. I believe that, in the traditions of the Education Department, as well as on general grounds, it was necessary for an attempt to be made to try to get the Willcoxes at least on side to the extent that the school could function effectively and efficiently. That attempt seemed to have worked for the remainder of 1973, as my wife points out. I believe it worked at that time, and I think others concerned with the problem believed that the situation was working. Unfortunately, it broke down in 1974.

Mr. Coumbe: You haven't told us yet when you intend to resign.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I told you from the beginning what would happen about that. As the honourable member knows well, I said that the Opposition was trying to make some political capital.

Mr. Coumbe: You haven't answered the question.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The answer is that I am not going to resign. I now wish to turn to the question of setting up the Royal Commission. Using the same tone as the Commissioner has used in his comments, I say, with respect, that I consider (and I think that this can be sustained) it improper for a Royal Commissioner to comment on the terms of reference and the setting up of a Commission in the way that the Commissioner has done on this occasion.

Mr. Millhouse: Why?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: For the very good reason that no evidence of any type is normally given to a Royal Commission on the nature of the terms of reference or on the reasons for establishing it. If no evidence or argument is produced before the Commission on those matters, it would be the normal practice for nearly all Royal Commissioners not to comment on whether or not the terms of reference were suitable or on the desirability or otherwise of establishing a Commission. I believe it was improper for the Commissioner to make these

comments for the reason that the case was not argued before him. The various contending points of view were simply not put to him. If they had been put, it might well be that he would not have reached the decision he reached.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You should have a Commission into the Royal Commissioner!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I think it should be possible, if criticisms are made of my actions, for me to be able to give some reply. I understand that this is still a democratic country and that this is a democratic Parliament; I am exercising my democratic right in relation to this matter. Let me make clear that, had Mr. Goldsworthy not agreed to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission, there would not have been any Commission.

Mr. Goldsworthy: He had no option.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes, he did.

Mr. Goldsworthy: No effective option.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am sorry to contradict what the honourable member says, but he did have an effective option. To demonstrate this further, I will refer to comments of the Director-General. I make clear that I reject any criticism of the Director-General in the matter. If criticisms are to be made at all on account of his conduct, they are to be directed at me. The Director-General's comments about Mr. Goldsworthy are as follows:

Mr. Goldsworthy at no time prior to the meeting in your office conveyed to me that he did not want the inquiry and even then he was referring to the one by the Ombudsman. In fact, at one stage he said to me that he hoped the Willcoxes would go to the press or the courts to get the matter out into the open.

Because he expressed to me an opinion similar, I believe that Mr. Goldsworthy believed it was important to get the matter out into the open so that the support of public opinion could be obtained with regard to the Willcoxes. This is important; this was one of the reasons that concerned me in establishing the Commission. Until such time as there was sufficient public support for the suspension and the need to implement the regulations, and until it was recognised that there was real public support for the position of the school *vis-a-vis* the Willcoxes, the situation would have remained difficult, no matter what we tried to do.

Although Mr. Goldsworthy naturally would have preferred not to have to go through the ordeal of the Commission, I believe that at the same time he felt there was some advantage in having the matter brought into the open. I discussed the terms of reference with the Headmaster of Woodville High School. One suggestion for a change that he wanted to make was implemented in the terms of reference. My recollection is that I gave the Royal Commissioner an opportunity to comment on the terms of reference before they were actually finalised. However, I cannot recall whether he made any comment.

Mr. Coumbe: Before?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Before the Governor issued his commission. It would be normal to discuss terms of reference with the person who was to undertake the inquiry. In view of that, I repeat that it was improper for the Commissioner to make the comments he made about the Commission's being ill conceived. If he felt that way about it, perhaps he should have refused to undertake the job in the first place.

Mr. Chapman: You said that a member of your family had been cited in the report but not called on to give evidence. What about the situation of the member for Kavel?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I was not the one who put his name in evidence before the Royal Commission. It was put before the Commission in statements by the Headmaster or someone else. My recollection is that it was in the Headmaster's statement, but I can have that checked if members require it. My recollection is that it was also in the statement of the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers. I did not raise this before the Royal Commission on the first occasion.

Mr. Chapman: You raised it today.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I raised it today only in reply to the Leader, who attacked me about it.

Mr. Chapman: I'm raising it now—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister of Education has the floor. I ask the honourable member for Alexandra to refrain from interjecting. If the honourable member wishes to speak in this debate, he may do so later.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: There is ample evidence to show that the relationship between me as Minister and the Headmaster of Woodville High School has always been frank and friendly. I have never kept anything back from Mr. Reuben Goldsworthy in any discussions I have had with him. I have always assumed that he was a person of integrity and honour. At no stage have I ever acted in a way with Mr. Reuben Goldsworthy that would suggest that I feared he might say something to his brother, the member for Kavel. Let me make that absolutely clear. There is evidence in the report of the Royal Commission to show this. At page 56, Mr. Goldsworthy is reported to have answered a question as follows:

... but dealing directly with the Minister I felt that he was being perfectly frank with me, which I appreciated ... I was impressed with his candour and the fact that he'd honestly attempted to negotiate with the Willcoxes and to conciliate the situation.

That referred to 1973, and that is what the Headmaster had to say about the incident in that year. He was referring in that piece of evidence to the meeting that I had had with him at lunch on the Thursday after the Tuesday evening meeting at Parliament House.

Mr. Millhouse: Why don't you start at page 55, the page before, and read what he said there?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am aware of his other comments on that matter. He has expressed them to me.

Mr. Millhouse: They're here, too.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I draw the attention of the honourable member for Mitcham to the request I made to the honourable member for Alexandra a few moments ago. The honourable member for Mitcham will have his opportunity to speak in the debate as the next speaker on the list.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: There is other evidence in the report to show that our relationship always has been frank and friendly. If Mr. Goldsworthy had something to say to me, he said it, and if I had something to say to him, I said it. No account has ever been taken in our relationship of the fact that I was Minister and he was Headmaster so far as our conversations were concerned. I consider that in our conversations we have not held things back from one another, and those conversations have occurred in many different places and at different times, because he is a gentleman with whom I have been acquainted for a long time. Therefore, the situation of my implying in any way that the Headmaster of Woodville High School had any sort of improper dealing with his brother in Parliament or that he could not be trusted so far as his brother in Parliament was concerned was quite false and without foundation.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You didn't—

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Let me make my point, and perhaps then the honourable member will understand it better and will not be so upset about it. The only point I was concerned to make was that the Willcoxes had a continuing hostility to the Headmaster of Woodville High School that still exists today. It has never abated: indeed, if anything, it has grown stronger, and I consider that that hostility has, in part, something to do not only with his being Headmaster but also with his brother's being a Liberal Member of Parliament and, therefore, opposed politically to the Willcoxes: with that hostility, there was no doubt that an attempt would have been made to identify the Headmaster of Woodville High School with the Liberal Party if any issue had come up within the Labor Party at that time.

That was the entire context in which I mentioned this matter, namely, that I would be in a difficult position if the issue had come up in that form, because my position had been stated clearly all along, namely, that I was completely in support of the 1974 suspension and considered that it was completely correct, but I did not support the Headmaster's action in calling the police when he called them. The question of calling the police always is one that is charged with emotion, but I think it worth noting that, whenever the police are used in any situation, they must operate in a way that ensures that they win; and, therefore, if police action is required, there is always the possibility of excessive force being used and of charges being made about police brutality. On this occasion, charges about police brutality were made in public and in the press, before any Commission was appointed.

Mr. Goldsworthy: That's fairly normal.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is. There was no justification for those charges, but they were made. This situation leads the senior police officers to say that they would like to be consulted about certain situations before they get into them, because, if there is going to be any damage to the opinion that the people have of the police, the senior officers want to have some say in how that damage occurs. There is no suggestion that, should any breach of the peace occur or be suspected in a school, the Headmaster has not the right to call the police immediately. However, in relation to the civil type of situation, it has been our view (and it has been stated by me, the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, and other people) that we should be consulted before the police are called. I found afterwards that that also was the view of the police in relation to situations of this civil kind. I hold to that view. Let me make clear that I never intended to criticise the Headmaster particularly for calling the police.

I wanted to disagree with him and ensure that in future policies were adopted to enable a greater circumspection to arise in relation to actions in calling the police, but I did not want him to be criticised particularly for it, because it is extremely difficult for anyone to say what he would or would not have done under pressure and, doubtless, in varying situations everyone associated with the Willcox affair was under pressure. That was one reason why the calling of the police was not included as a specific term of reference. I consider that effectively it was part of the terms of reference, but it was not a specific part. It seems it was part of term of reference No. 1, which states:

The events which occurred at Woodville High School in relation to the suspension of Jacquelynne Willcox on May 31, 1974.

I suggest that, if members care to think about the matter, they may appreciate that the terms of reference were not

worded in a way that sought to damage the Headmaster or any other professional person in the Education Department. I considered it likely that the Headmaster would be excused for his action but would have been criticised to some extent for calling the police. That was not the case so far as the Commissioner was concerned, but it did lead to an unusual situation that is worthy of some comment.

Mr. Rodda: How would you discipline the school?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: We can go into this in more detail. I have stated that there are situations in which a Headmaster must call the police instantly, and there is always the last-resort situation in which a person may have no alternative but to call the police. However, the situation that arose here when the police were called was not, in my judgment, a last-resort situation, and I consider that in these circumstances the least that should have been done was for the Director-General to be contacted. I will quote the Director-General on this matter. He said:

The Commissioner said that I should have conveyed to Mr. Willcox that I supported Mr. Goldsworthy. I contend that in that 1½ hours torrid interview I unmistakably showed that I supported Mr. Goldsworthy in insisting on the suspension (if not to the letter), getting the imposition done and the undertaking written—

that was the undertaking to obey school rules—

as well as my statement about reasonableness of school rules at Woodville High School.

May I say for the Director-General that, regardless of whether it was an advisable policy, his purpose in that departmental inquiry was to try to get a firm recommendation regarding the transfer of Jacquelynne Willcox from Woodville High School to another school. That was the objective towards which the Director-General of Education was working. It is unjust that he should be criticised in the way he has been criticised.

Mr. Coumbe: I think you're trying to talk your way out of the whole charge.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The honourable member can think what he likes and I can express my view; that is what I am doing.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: One or two sensible interjections have been made, but we should not have to put up with the type of garbage in which the member for Rocky River indulges. The Director-General's statement continues:

The Commissioner approved of Mr. Goldsworthy calling the police and not notifying me, even when the evidence showed that you, the Deputies, Mr. Close and I all disapproved of it. Mr. Goldsworthy can make unilateral decisions and not inform me but I cannot make one unless I have consulted Mr. Goldsworthy even though it was within seconds of reaching the compromise that I telephoned Mr. Goldsworthy and explained it to him. The calling of the police—

and this is the Director-General talking—

I learnt of from Mr. Willcox. The photo-copy from the 1958 *Gazette* of not calling the police without contacting the Director-General of Education was not mentioned in the report, even though this was taken by hand to the Commissioner at his request on the last afternoon of the hearings.

I have that photostat copy with me today. Headed "Police action in school matters", it states:

It sometimes happens that the head of a school feels that the police should investigate a matter which has arisen at the school and in which pupils may be involved. Before any such request is made to the police, the head of the school should notify the Director of Education about the matter, if possible by telephone.

Mr. Goldsworthy: That relates to an investigation.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes; but I will not get up and say that, in the kind of situation which existed on that Tuesday morning and with which Mr. Goldsworthy was faced, I am critical of him for what he did. He was faced with a pressure situation that had been going on for a long time: it was an unprecedented situation. All I am saying is that it is my view that the department should be consulted before the police are called in civil-type situations. Moreover, it is my view that the Police Department believes it should be consulted before it is used for this type of situation. I do not wish to have anyone's head on a platter, and that is why the matter was not included specifically in the terms of reference of the Royal Commission.

I turn now to the Minister's role as far as the Education Department is concerned and the accusation that I intervened. What would any member do, as Minister of Education, if complaints were made by parents (as they are) to the Minister? If a complaint is made that a person has been maltreated in some way it is my approach in many instances (depending on the nature of the complaint) to ask the person concerned if he has been in touch with the headmaster of the school and whether the problem could not be solved by that means rather than by involving the department. Often we hear nothing more about the complaint. Furthermore, we receive fewer complaints these days than we received in the past. However, there are certain situations in which members opposite would agree that Ministerial intervention was required.

If a charge were made that a child had been struck over the ear and suffered a burst eardrum or if a child were put in a garbage tin as a punishment, I am sure that members opposite would agree that Ministerial intervention was required in those matters. What is at issue is not Ministerial intervention, because a Minister is accountable to Parliament. It is not a matter for the department or the Director-General to delegate all authority to schools and then to say to a headmaster, "We shall wipe our hands of it because that authority has been delegated for all time and it is no concern of ours." That is not the way the delegation of authority works, and it is not the appropriate way to interpret the Director-General's idea of freedom of authority in schools. This is the situation that applies: authority that is delegated by one officer to another officer can always be withdrawn and questions can always be asked about the way the delegated authority is used. That would apply to a headmaster delegating authority to one of his staff. Delegation of authority cannot remove accountability, and in a democratic system the Minister and the Education Department are accountable to Parliament.

Dr. Tonkin: They should also back up members of their staff.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: And we did. I point out again that the only time a suspension of Jacquelynne Willcox was enforced was when I had it enforced, admittedly in an unusual way. That was the only time any disciplinary action was ever enforced against the Willcoxes.

Mr. Goldsworthy. The police were used on another occasion.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That was another occasion. To suggest that I did not support the Headmaster on that occasion is untrue. There will always be situations in which the Minister's accountability to Parliament and the professional responsibility or ethical responsibility of a headmaster or the professional person can be in conflict. There will always be the possibility of a situation where the way professional people in schools believe they should act could be in conflict with the public view of the matter.

That is why the Minister is accountable to Parliament and that is why, in a conflict situation, the Minister's accountability must prevail over the professional responsibility of educators. Certainly, the Minister is subject to public opinion and public criticism for what he does, but to suggest, as the Leader and Deputy Leader have suggested, that there is no case in any circumstances for Ministerial intervention, is ridiculous. If that were carried to the extreme, Parliament would wipe its hands of what occurred at schools and would take no action, even though it provided much money for what was done at the schools.

Mr. Payne: You might be asked to resign again.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: No doubt I shall be. If a matter can be resolved in a school situation, it should be resolved without the department's coming into it. There are certain policy matters and certain other matters that are incapable of resolution in the school situation where conflict exists and where, if complaints are made, the department and the Minister must intervene. I suggest that the situation in 1973 at Woodville High School was one of those situations. After all, the school had spent two days with the girl objecting to a suspension and the mother sitting in. If that was not a situation that required some sort of intervention, I do not know what it was. It must be stated, however, that while I, as Minister, and the Government support the exercise of professional responsibility of educators and support to the fullest possible extent the development of professionalism in our educational system (and it has developed), there is at the same time always the possibility that the delegation of authority must be reversed and there is always the possibility of accountability to Parliament through the department and the Minister. That cannot be avoided and, of course, the protection that arises is that that accountability to Parliament always takes place in the public gaze and is subject to public criticism; so, the professional can always get back if he can get enough public support for his point of view. If the reverse situation applied (namely, that Parliament could never intervene), there could be no possible redress for what went on in schools and we, as a Parliament, would have to accept it and provide the money so that it could continue. The accountability of the Minister to Parliament and the right of the department, where necessary, to ask questions and intervene in the running of schools are basic rights to the functioning of a democratic system. They are unavoidable and must be accepted.

I conclude by dealing with other matters, and these again relate to the setting up of the Commission and its effectiveness. Members may not be aware (I do not know whether they have received any letters) that the suspension regulations of the department have been subject to criticism and question extending over a long time. It has been my view all along that the suspension regulations are necessary: in fact, it was I who took the initiative in writing to the institute suggesting that, regarding one aspect of them, they should be tightened up, and amendments will be introduced soon. That action was taken not at the institute's initiative or at that of the Headmasters Association but at my own initiative, and I have always supported the need for the suspension regulations and for their implementation, when necessary.

I do not, however, say that I am not entitled to ask questions about how they are exercised. I believe that this Commission, if it has done nothing else, has resulted in a much greater public understanding of the suspension regulations and of the need for them than has existed in the past. I believe that that applies not only within the Opposition and among those who support it but also among

those who support the Government. Whatever anyone says, that remains as a significant plus in respect of the Commission. A situation where amendments that weakened those regulations took place would be fraught with almost impossible difficulty to the school. However, I also believe that, in our overall administration of education in South Australia, we have so far been able to avoid the kind of divisiveness that has characterised education in Victoria, above all, and in New South Wales.

Mr. Gunn: It's a political stunt, and you know it.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The member for Eyre may come out with his silly interjections if he wishes but, in the Victorian Education Department, not only are teachers against the department, but also teachers are against teachers. Victoria has three teacher unions, and every Victorian secondary school has a staff with divided loyalties, namely, some as members of the Victorian Teachers Union and some as members of the Victorian Secondary Teachers Association. Every staff in Victorian secondary schools is divided against itself.

Mr. Millhouse: What has that to do with this matter?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I will explain, if the honourable member cares to listen. I am not speaking in the hope that the Opposition will understand or appreciate what I am saying: I am speaking for the record on this matter. That record is important and the future is important, because a grave danger exists that, if we are not careful, we shall get into a situation in this State that develops and encourages confrontation within the schools, as well as division among teachers.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You're frightened of confrontation with any group. You won't take the unions on.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: That is not so. I have stood up and been counted many times, and I am willing to have a confrontation if one is absolutely necessary. I believe that, regarding education administration, if we run into the kind of situation on a regular basis where we have teacher against teacher (the kind of situation that exists in Victoria), our education and the standard of education within the schools will suffer. A danger arises out of an excessive reaction in favour of the report and of some of its aspects (and there are many aspects to it) that we in South Australia may get into a dangerous frame of mind where our approach to the administration of education will be "Let's thump them and ask questions afterwards." If we do that, we run a grave danger of achieving the same kind of divisiveness within our schools and in the community generally as typifies the education systems in Victoria and New South Wales.

Dr. Tonkin: Isn't there consultation?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Yes, and I was the one that originally requested the Headmaster to ensure that, on all these matters, he consult with his staff on a regular basis. He did that, and got their support. I do not criticise him for doing that: I congratulate him. I am not criticising members of the Woodville staff, even though on one or two matters I may not agree with them entirely. Situations exist in Victoria and New South Wales that we do not want repeated here in South Australia. If we, in general, in the administration of education retreat completely from our previous tradition of seeking out working compromises where they can be reached, we run the danger of opting for the kind of situation they have in Victoria.

Dr. Eastick: Are you a policy-maker or an administrator?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: There is not an entirely sharp division between policy and administration. There are blurred edges, as the Leader would know, because he

administered a council once and, from that experience, he might have learnt that no sharp distinction could be made. I again point out that the tradition of the Education Department in this State has been, in the main and over the years, to seek out working compromises wherever possible. That tradition was followed in the Willcox case but, ultimately, it broke down and the need for Jacquelynne Willcox to go to another school became unanswerable and apparent. If the lesson we learn from that is that we should cease to develop working compromises and instead adopt a hard line in all possible situations, we shall produce divisiveness within the teaching service and have the kind of conflict that exists in other States repeated here in South Australia. In conclusion, I believe the motion should be rejected, because it has been moved only with the idea of seeking to gain cheap political capital.

Dr. Eastick: That's a lie.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I was accused earlier by the Leader and the Deputy Leader who, although saying that they were not being personal, had no compunction about accusing me of the basest political motives possible. I have replied to these criticisms in detail and pointed out aspects in which I think the report is deficient. Opposition members are not paid to agree with me, but I throw back in their faces the suggestion that I acted politically. I did not act politically in relation to the events of 1973 or 1974.

Mr. Coumbe: You did!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I acted to enforce the suspension in 1973.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Well, may I be allowed to conclude my remarks without further interjections.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Why don't you run—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Now that the honourable member has said that, I refer to one further matter, and I may, in part, be making amends in relation to this matter. There was a stage in my evidence before the Commission, concerning the demonstration that took place at the Education Department, when I said Jacquelynne Willcox had been rude and insolent to me. I was asked about the incident at the Commission and, subsequently, as I left, Mr. Willcox said to me, "That wasn't Jacquelynne; that was Caroline, a sister." I thought no more about it, but I find in the report a reference to this matter in which the Commissioner describes the situation as one of Jacquelynne's showing base ingratitude towards me in view of my action.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You wouldn't trust Willcox!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The honourable member may care to listen, although I know it is difficult. At the time I gave evidence, my recollection was that it was Jacquelynne that had been rude and insolent. I have not met Caroline, but I understand that they both look similar, and it may have been Caroline. Because of the Commissioner's remarks in which my evidence was accepted and may have been unjustly turned against Jacquelynne Willcox, I think I should make that possible correction and say that I may have been mistaken. Concerning Mr. Willcox, whatever else one may say about him, he is a truthful man in the main.

Mr. Goldsworthy: In the main!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: In the main his evidence was truthful evidence, and there was no suggestion at any stage by any counsel before the Commission—

Mr. Millhouse: In the main!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: It is a turn of phrase: he is more truthful than is the member for Mitcham. I do not agree with his attitude—

Mr. Millhouse: You'd better think of something else to say.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The position is as I have stated. Even though anything said possibly in favour of Jacquelynn Willcox in this case will not go down with anyone, I should have the courage to say that I may have been wrong and that an injustice may have been done in my evidence that led to the very harsh remarks being made by the Commissioner in his report. I conclude by saying that the department and the Government are implementing the basic recommendations of the Commissioner concerning Jacquelynn Willcox. I have told the Willcox family today to what school they may send Jacquelynn; that I require a reply by Monday; and that, if that reply is not available by Monday, the powers of the Director-General under section 75 of the Act regarding compulsory transfer will be used.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Will you call in the police?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Although we are taking that action, I still take the course of trying to substantiate in detail (under a barrage of Opposition interjection) that there are many things—

Mr. Dean Brown: And to assassinate the character of the Royal Commissioner!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The honourable member has been trying to assassinate my character by interjection all the afternoon, and no doubt he will get up and indulge in the vilest personalities he can indulge in; so he should be the last person to talk about that. I have said nothing about the character of the Commissioner. I have referred to the conclusions of the Commissioner that are, in my opinion, not properly based on evidence. They are the conclusions of the Commissioner which I consider to be unjust and which have been made without all the evidence having been called.

Mr. Dean Brown: You are trying to discredit him to protect yourself.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Apparently, according to Opposition ground rules, if one is criticised in public one should not defend oneself unless one is a member of the Liberal Party. This motion is being moved purely with a political motive and should therefore be rejected.

Dr. Eastick: That's a lie.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I object to the unparliamentary language of the Leader. I have not used that sort of language this afternoon, although I may have done so previously. I object to that language. It seems to be all right for the Opposition to accuse me of all sorts of diabolical political action in the world, but any statement about them is a lie, according to the Leader. I say again that the Opposition's action today has been taken to secure a political advantage and that the motion should therefore be rejected out of hand.

Mr. MILLHOUSE (Mitcham): The Liberal Movement supports this motion, although in respect of its terms I do not give it unqualified support. It is not in the terms in which I would have moved such a motion had I had the chance. The terms in which I would have moved it and which I would prefer to see it debated are as follows:

That this House:

- (1) views with grave concern the actions of the Government in the matter of Jacquelynn Willcox and the Woodville High School, as described in the report of the Royal Commissioner on the Suspension of a High School Student, and in particular censures the Minister of Education for his part in it; and
- (2) expresses the opinion that the Royal Commission itself was ill conceived.

As the terms of that draft motion show, before the Minister started to speak I had some sympathy for him, but, having heard him trying to make a defence, lame as it was, I feel much less sympathy for him now than I felt before. The Minister has gone on for 1½ hours replying to peripheral points, but he has not once come to the crux of the matter. It reminded me of the saying we have in the law which perhaps means more to us than it does to a layman (although that is a pity), that a man who acts for himself has a fool for a client. The Minister of Education would have done much better his afternoon to have allowed the Premier (who sat patiently through the whole of the ramblings of the Minister and who will speak next) or the Attorney-General to lead in this debate and defend him, because, in my opinion, the Minister of Education has done his case much harm by what he said this afternoon. I refer to one matter immediately, before I speak about the details of what he said.

He saw fit in his speech to attack the Royal Commissioner, to criticise the Commissioner's findings, and to say they were unfair and unjust. He used that phrase again and again. I do not know where we go from here. The Royal Commissioner was for many years the Clerk of this House; we all knew him, liked him, and respected him. He was appointed by the Government, of which the Minister is a senior member, to be the Ombudsman in this State and that appointment had the approval of all members of this House, indeed I think of all members of this Parliament. The Minister's own Government chose him (and it could have chosen any one of many other people) to be the Royal Commissioner in this matter, but now what do we see? The Minister of Education who, on his own admission this afternoon, took part in the drafting of the terms of reference will not accept the decisions and findings of the Royal Commissioner who he himself joined in appointing to his position. If that is not unfair and unjust, I do not know what is.

What would have been the position had the Minister of Education not been a member of Parliament and had been a private citizen? He would not have had any opportunity whatever, such as the Minister has taken this afternoon, to question what the Royal Commissioner has said in his report. The Minister has been able to take advantage of the fact that he has free rein to speak for as long as he likes in this place in his own defence. Why did not the Minister of Education, if he thought he would be prejudiced in this way before the Royal Commission, seek to be represented at it? He could have been, and do not tell me this matter was not discussed in Cabinet with his colleagues, two of whom (the Premier and the Attorney-General) are members of the legal profession. Why was he not advised, or, if he was advised, why did he not take the advice, to be represented by counsel before the Royal Commission? The Willcoxes were represented, Mr. Goldsworthy was represented, the police were invited to seek representation and Mr. Duggan (Crown Prosecutor) appeared briefly for them, and Mr. Mullighan was counsel assisting the Commissioner. I have no doubt whatever that, if the Minister of Education thought he was to be under attack during the course of the evidence given at the hearing, permission would have been given for him to be represented, or for his wife to be represented if that were necessary. That was the time when the criticisms he now makes of the evidence should have been made so that the Royal Commissioner would have had the benefit of help from counsel giving the point of view of the Minister of Education, and I believe it is a poor show indeed that the Minister, not having taken that opportunity, should come

into this House and criticise the Royal Commissioner for his findings.

It was significant that, when the member for Davenport interjected and asked if the Minister had confidence in the Royal Commissioner, the Minister ignored that interjection and did not answer it. It will be interesting to find out in due course whether the Government does support the Royal Commissioner in his findings, and I now ask the Premier, who is to follow me in this debate, to say whether the Government will accept the findings of the Royal Commissioner. What action does the Government intend to take? If it is willing to accept the findings of the Royal Commissioner, the Minister of Education has, in my view, no alternative but to resign because it will be clear that he and his colleagues are at odds on this matter. That is the question I ask the Premier to answer when he speaks and to answer it directly. Does the Government support the Royal Commission findings or not? If it does not, what action does it intend to take to clear up what it must consider to be an unsatisfactory situation? If the Government supports the findings, does the Minister intend to remain in his present office?

What I believe are the most important matters of principle arising out of this remain totally unanswered by members on the Government side. The Minister started off by saying that there had been no previous situation to guide him or his officers. That may be so, but surely he is not in that position for the first time. From my experience as a Minister, I know there were often occasions when we were faced with a problem with which we had not been faced before. That is not an important consideration because it happens so frequently. How one applies oneself to the situation is what matters, and that is no excuse whatever for the extremely ill advised actions taken by the Minister. I use the term "ill advised" deliberately, because that is putting it at its fairest for the Minister. One could use much stronger language, as did the Leader and Deputy Leader, but I think the Minister was most ill advised and he cannot seek refuge in the fact that such a situation had not arisen before.

He then went on to say that any attempt to get the family out of the frame of mind of confrontation was justified at the time the attempt was made, and still is. However, I totally disagree with that opinion. What price was paid for the attempt that was made? In my view it was an undermining of the authority of the Headmaster of Woodville High School. He was let down by the Minister, as he says himself in the evidence quoted in the Royal Commission report. Not only was he let down: the officers of the department were let down as well. I do not believe that the price paid for the attempt to avoid confrontation was a price that should have been paid, and the Minister should have known that before he paid such a price. The Minister then made much of the fact that this was the only attempt, until the final episode in June of this year, on which success was ever achieved in enforcing the suspension from school of this girl. Literally that may be so, but at what price? How was that suspension successful? By having the girl entertained for two days by the Minister's own wife, which makes a complete travesty of—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You leave my wife out of it.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I will not leave her out of it. Your wife is mentioned in the report. You brought her into this. It was you who said she had looked after the girl.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You read a statement from your wife. What's wrong with you?

Mr. MILLHOUSE: It was the Minister himself—

Mr. Goldsworthy: You brought your wife into it yourself.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You leave her out of it. The member for Torrens raised it. He said I lumbered my wife.

The SPEAKER: Order! Personalities are not going to enter into this debate.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: It was the Minister himself who introduced his wife into this matter—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That's a lie.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: —in an attempt to get the nominal suspension of this girl. The price paid for her suspension was that she was entertained for two days by the Minister's wife, and that comes from the report itself. I know nothing of the facts of the matter except those that are contained in the Royal Commissioner's report. I believe that most of the members of this House, although some of them will not necessarily follow this when they vote, would prefer the findings of the Royal Commissioner, who has no axe to grind on this matter and who is perfectly disinterested, to the assertions of the Minister speaking in his own defence. The Royal Commissioner heard evidence; he heard the submissions of counsel; he saw the witnesses, and he decided which witnesses he preferred to others. The Minister got his wife to look after this girl for two days so that it could be said that she had been suspended and was willing to accept suspension. That was a travesty of a suspension; it was an unwise intervention on the part of the Minister and his family and should not have taken place. The Minister came back to this time and again.

I have dealt with the representation of the Minister before the Royal Commission. It is most unfortunate that the Minister now complains about the treatment he received from the Commission, yet he took no action whatever to protect his interests, as he should have done if he thought that they would be threatened when the Commission was taking evidence. As I have already dealt with the matter of his wife, I will not go into that again.

Mr. Max Brown: You're labouring now.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: No, I am not. The Minister spoke for 1½ hours, whereas I have only 30 minutes in which to deal with the most pertinent points he made. I have already dealt with the matter of his wife, saying that I thought the action was most ill advised. I have also dealt with the criticism the Minister has made of the Commission; I call on the Premier to deal with that. I believe it was impudent of the Minister to say that it was not the normal practice for a Commissioner to comment on terms of reference. A Royal Commission may word a report in any way it likes and say what it wishes within the terms of its reference; it may comment on those terms if it does not find them sufficient. I think that it was a gratuitous insult to Mr. Combe for the Minister to say what he did. Earlier this afternoon, I interjected regarding the grossly unfair reading by the Minister of an extract from the evidence concerning his relationship with Mr. Goldsworthy.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I said it was frank.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: The Minister chose to turn immediately to page 56 of the report, from which he read out a couple of half sentences, out of several long passages, to prove his point. When I challenged him, he admitted that on page 55 a rather different version was to be found. The last paragraph of that page of the report states:

Mr. Goldsworthy considered that the Willcoxes thought that they had had a victory. In reply to Miss Layton's question as to why he saw it as a victory for them, he stated, "Because the three-day suspension, in my opinion, was not upheld;—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I explained that.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: —

it was a two-day suspension and I was put in the position of dealing with the Minister, and he'd intervened and made his decision and hadn't supported my three-day suspension, which I thought was the minimum I would have expected. It was clear to me, although he may not have said so explicitly in our conversation, although I think he did, that the two-day suspension was it. I was not very happy about the fact that Jacquelyne was spending two days in the home of the Minister.

The Minister says he did not know at Parliament House on that evening that it was a three-day suspension, but I find that hard to believe. As they spent two hours together discussing this matter, I find it impossible to think that in that time this fact did not come out. If it did not come out, why was the Minister not properly briefed by his officers before the interview took place? It was up to him, when he was approaching a most difficult and delicate problem, to know all the facts before he went into the interview. I do not believe he would have approached the interview without knowing all the facts. For those reasons, I find it impossible to believe that he did not know it was a three-day suspension. If he did not know, he damn well should have known.

The Minister chooses to say that he does not support the action of the Headmaster in calling the police. I prefer the finding of the Royal Commissioner, who heard the evidence of the Minister and many other people. At page 174 of the report (and I ask members to accept this in preference to what the Minister says), he states:

My opinion is that, in the circumstances—admittedly novel and without guiding precedent to follow—the Headmaster of Woodville High School was fully justified in calling the police to remove Jacquelyne Willcox from the school on Tuesday, June 4, 1974.

Surely the Minister does not expect us to take his assertion in preference to that finding of the Royal Commission. We then had a diatribe from the Minister in the latter part of his speech about his role *vis-a-vis* the Education Department and about what was done if complaints were made. I agree with him that the line between administration and policy is blurred and that a Minister often crosses from one side to the other. In fact, I did this many times when I was in office, so I do not disagree with it for a moment. The important attribute that any Minister must have (and this is what makes a good or bad Minister) is a sense of judgment to know when he should interfere and how he should act in any given situation. I believe this is where the Minister has failed lamentably in this case. He interfered in a difficult situation in a way in which he should not have interfered, particularly (and I believe this is the real reason why this matter arose, and it should not have arisen) as he knew the people, who happened to be active members of his own political Party. For that reason, he and the Premier should have kept right out of it: they should have had nothing to do with the matter.

As I have said, I have based all my knowledge, opinions, and statements on the report of the Royal Commission, which I received for the first time this morning and which I have spent some time studying. It is an inescapable conclusion from the report that, because these people were known to the Minister and were active members of the Labor Party, he bent over backwards to help them to the detriment of his own reputation (as it now transpires) and of the authority of his Headmaster and the department. That is the very thing he should have avoided doing. For this reason, if for no other, he should have left the matter alone. The Minister also spoke about divisiveness, com-

paring the position of the teaching profession in this community with that of the profession in Victoria and New South Wales. I could not follow the logic of that, as I could not see that it had anything to do with the matter.

Dr. Tonkin: It was very piously expressed.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I agree. However, I believe that the Minister's actions in this matter will have done more to create divisiveness in the teaching profession in South Australia than anything else that has happened since he became Minister. I believe that he has been, as a rule, a successful Minister. He quietened down the teaching profession, which was restive when we were in office. When in Opposition, the Minister did his share in stirring up that restiveness. However, on the whole, he has been successful as Minister. Although I do not necessarily say that he has been a good Minister, I do not detract from the fact that he has been successful in his role until now, when I believe he has so breached the authority of his office that he can no longer expect to have the support and respect of the teaching profession after the findings of the Commission have been made public. If anything is likely to cause the divisiveness which exists in other States and to which he has referred, it is the Minister's actions in this matter. Those are some of the main points that I want to make in reply to those made by the Minister.

I come now to what I consider are matters of principle. I have stated that I consider that, in this whole matter, the Minister has acted most unwisely. He should not have interfered at all but, if he did interfere, he should not have taken the actions that he did take. Doubtless, his intervention in 1973 and that of his wife (about whom I say no more) must have minimised the effectiveness of the Headmaster's action. The Minister did not deny that. It must have minimised the effectiveness of the Headmaster's action to have the girl in the Minister's own house and looked after by his own wife. That is the crux of this matter. I consider that Mr. Bill Forbes, who is quoted in the report at page 165, summed up the whole situation. I have the greatest respect for Mr. Forbes. I have known him for about 20 years and have served under him in the Citizen Military Forces. I consider that he is a man of intelligence, integrity and experience. The Royal Commissioner refers to Mr. Forbes and states:

I believe Mr. Forbes recognised the crux of this entire problem when he said, "The whole thing, to me, was a matter of whether a school was run by a headmaster and staff and council, and so on, or whether it was run by somebody else outside the school."

The Minister answered that question by trying to run the school himself, despite the memorandum which the Leader of the Opposition has referred to and which the Minister sent out in 1970. That memorandum gave to headmasters undisputed control of their schools. The Minister has not denied that his action must undermine the authority of headmasters.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I do deny it.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: If he does deny it, he is a bigger fool than I thought he was, because what I have said is plain common sense and cannot be denied by anyone who is not trying to undermine his own cause. The other matter in which I consider that the Minister has acted badly is that of allowing political connections to influence his actions. As I read the report, I cannot but come to the conclusion that the Minister, for reasons that I do not know, was afraid of the influence of the Willcoxes in the Australian Labor Party. If the line between administration and policy is blurred, that is one thing. However, the line between straight-out administration and a person's political affiliations is another matter, and there should be no blurring

there, but, on what the Minister has said, in this case there was a blurring of that line. Whatever compelling reasons there were, the Minister should not have blurred that line. He and the Premier knew that the Willcoxes were political supporters, yet the Minister has given no explanation whatever.

One can imagine what he would have said if the situation had been reversed and someone on this side of the House had done some favour (that was what he was doing for the Willcoxes) for some political supporter. He would have attacked us and would have been right in doing so, yet that was just the trap into which he fell in this case. After all, this has happened, and the Government has chosen to have a Royal Commission and bring the matter out into the open (something that I consider was ill advised). We have the report and this debate, and I cannot for the life of me understand how the Minister of Education can ever be as effective in that portfolio as he has been previously. He has been criticised publicly by a man whom his own Government appointed to sit in judgment on this matter.

I do not know whether people will accept what the Minister has said this afternoon in preference to accepting the Royal Commission report but I do not think that they will, and that must affect his authority in this portfolio. If he is not willing to resign, in the interests of education in this State he ought to be moved to another portfolio where he can start again, because he will never be able to recover the position that he has had in the eyes of the teaching profession. He has made a mistake in a vital part of the portfolio that he now holds as Minister of Education. That is why I support the motion. I do not consider that the Minister should continue or that he can continue effectively as Minister of Education. It may be that he fancies himself in another portfolio and that he could administer that portfolio well. However much he and the Attorney-General may laugh about what I have said, the Minister will never again have the authority that he has had, because he has chosen to allow himself to be criticised, and criticised correctly. I consider that the Minister must be condemned for the part that he has played in this matter, and that this afternoon he has not made a convincing defence of his actions.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I make clear that the Government entirely supports the Minister and his actions in this matter.

Mr. Millhouse: You don't support the Royal Commissioner?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I will deal with that matter, but I suggest that, if the honourable member wants to know what the Government thinks, he wait rather than try to interrupt, by his usual form of interjection, what I am saying. The South Australian Minister of Education is by far the most outstanding Education Minister in this country. His administration has produced in South Australia an Education Department that is the admiration and envy of every other part of Australia. Teachers from elsewhere in Australia constantly are seeking to come here, because they acknowledge that education administration in this State, under the present Minister, now is far in advance of education administration anywhere else in Australia.

Mr. Goldsworthy: He has a reputation for trying to tear it down when Joyce Steele was Minister.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Mrs. Steele left that office during the term of the previous Government. She was replaced as Minister then, and the responsibility for her removal was the responsibility of the then Premier. The Opposition did not do it. I suggest that the honourable member do not cite that as an example.

Mr. Goldsworthy: It was the same as the activities of the members of the Labor Party Opposition.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: If any Government has confidence in its Minister, it will stick up for that Minister. We have confidence in our Minister of Education and, if he had been so ill advised as to take the criticism by the Royal Commissioner as a reason for offering me his resignation, I would have refused it promptly and stated that in no circumstances would we accept it. Let me now deal with criticisms that members opposite have tried to make. First, it has been suggested that the Minister is wrong in his administration by not leaving the administration of the school entirely to the Headmaster and the council in all circumstances. That is not a position that has been taken by the Opposition on other matters relating to education. I can remember when the Minister of Education maintained the right of schools to exercise their own judgment about matters to be discussed in schools and when members opposite condemned the Minister for not acting to control what headmasters allowed to be discussed in schools. There is an extraordinary inconsistency among Opposition members when they say that on the one hand and then, on the other hand, condemn the Minister for seeing to it that a question that was going to involve overall education administration in many ways was dealt with by him.

The position we were faced with in this matter related not only to schools but also, as the member for Bragg very well knows, to other groups of students where there are movements of some strength in the community that seek confrontation with authority. In these circumstances, and with the history of this kind of confrontation in schools and universities elsewhere in the world, it means that much care has to be taken in dealing with anyone seeking an organised confrontation; otherwise one does not deal with it effectively and so far exacerbates the situation that it gets beyond the original case in point. It was entirely with that in mind that the Minister sought to resolve a situation of confrontation and was successful in doing so. He quietened down the situation and did it effectively.

Subsequently, the Headmaster was supported in his suspension of the girl, and that was made perfectly clear to the parents and to all involved. The only difference was the question of whether the police should have been called without, as might normally be the case, the department being consulted before such an extreme step was taken.

Mr. Goldsworthy: If that were the only question, why did the Royal Commissioner have to consider whether the Headmaster was justified in suspending the child, or had that already been resolved?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It was a vital part of the inquiry because, after the suspension, a confrontation situation was again building up. It was then proposed to deal with the situation through a departmental inquiry. The Willcoxes, however, and their supporters demanded an open inquiry. The Government believed that its support for the suspension of the girl would be shown to be correct on any inquiry and saw no reason why the inquiry should not be an open one. Indeed, had the Government said that it would be a departmental and not an open inquiry, it would have been criticised (as it has so often been criticised on other occasions) that it was not proceeding with open government.

Dr. Tonkin: There are many other examples. You're not being consistent.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member talks about consistency; that is something new, because he has nothing to claim on that score.

Dr. Tonkin: Have you?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes.

Mr. Gunn: What—irresponsibility?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In the circumstances, we believed an open inquiry would show the public that the course taken by the school of suspending the girl and the enforcement of the suspension were correct.

Mr. Goldsworthy: It was a fairly expensive way of going about it.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The only way of holding an open inquiry in South Australia is through a Royal Commission; there is no other way of conducting such an inquiry. If the honourable member can show me another way, I should be interested in his telling me about it.

Mr. Goldsworthy: It would have been simpler to say you supported the suspension.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Minister had already stated that he supported the suspension; that was not in issue. The Minister had tried to quieten down the confrontation. When it again arose, he said that he believed that the action of the school in suspending the girl was correct. The only administrative difference was the question of whether the police should have been called without consultation. The position then arose that, in order to resolve any widening of the confrontation, there had to be an inquiry. An inquiry was agreed on by all parties. The Government agreed that it would be in the best interests of all concerned to have an open inquiry. I do not see anything in that for which the Minister can be criticised.

The remainder of the debate has turned around a certain amount of criticism by the Royal Commissioner, first, for holding the inquiry at all, and the matter that I have just raised was not canvassed before the Commissioner. It has always been considered improper for a Commissioner to comment on his appointment or on his terms of reference, which are normally discussed with him before his appointment. If a Royal Commissioner considers that his terms of reference need to be widened, it is normal for him to make representations for that to be done, and that has been done on several occasions, as members know.

Mr. Jennings: Or he should not take the job.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes. As to the Royal Commissioner's criticisms of the Minister, they are not accepted by the Government. We do not believe they are correct for the proper reasons that the Minister himself has advanced in detail in this debate. It is suggested by the member for Mitcham and other members opposite that, for the Government to adopt such an attitude, shows no confidence in the Royal Commissioner and that the Government should accept the report of any Royal Commissioner who reports. I find it extraordinary that we should be required to accept in detail the report of every Royal Commissioner, when, for instance, the report of the Royal Commissioner on the riot that occurred in 1970 outside Parliament House was condemned and was not supported by the Opposition. When the stand of the Labor Government was vindicated by the Royal Commissioner on that occasion, the report was condemned by the Opposition. The Royal Commission into Local Government Areas does not seem to have received much support from members opposite, either.

Mr. Coumbe: Your Minister changed it.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: When the Royal Commission reported, members opposite bitterly condemned the report and, when the Minister of Local Government tried to accommodate objections, the Opposition objected to

that, too. The Government cannot win. In these circumstances, the position the Government has taken is a perfectly practical one. We said that, on the releasing of the Royal Commission's report, we believed that the Willcoxes would decide, as a result of the report, on an alternative education for Jacquelynne by the end of the week. That would be a more preferable line of action than expulsion, which could always be resorted to for any reason if the provisions of section 75 proved to be ineffective.

The Minister said he hoped that the Willcoxes would realise that it was essential to give any school that degree of co-operation essential to its continued effective functioning, and that whatever new school Jacquelynne attended would be given co-operation, not opposition. Action will be taken as a result of the Royal Commission's report, and Jacquelynne Willcox will transfer to another school. The Government accepts that this is necessary in the circumstances and will act accordingly, but it does not accept the Commission's strictures on the Minister or the Director-General. We entirely support the actions of the Minister, in whom we have every confidence.

Mr. Coumbe: Even though you're trying hard, you'll have to do better.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I do not know what kind of game the honourable member thinks he is playing. The Government has every reason, as has every citizen of the State and every other Opposition member, to be proud of the work of the Minister of Education in this State and of the unexampled success he has had and continues to have in his portfolio. We stand by him; we are proud of him and, as far as the Government is concerned, the remarks which the honourable member and his Leader have made today are precisely as the Minister categorised them: a piece of cheap politicking that we expected.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): As this is a serious motion, I am disappointed that the Premier has not considered the matter in more depth, because a great deal has been said by Opposition members which must be explained but which has not yet been explained by the Minister to Opposition members' satisfaction or that of members of the general public. The Premier has made clear that the Government supports the Minister totally. He went even further and said that, if the Minister had been impelled to offer his resignation, he would not have accepted it. I suppose that that says something for the Premier's loyalty to his Ministers, but it seems to me that, in these circumstances, his loyalty is ill founded. The Premier said his colleague was an outstanding Minister of Education and that the department was the envy and enjoyed the admiration of people throughout Australia. Whatever may have applied in the past (and I am not necessarily associating myself in total with these remarks) will not apply and cannot apply in the future.

There is no doubt that, even if the Minister of Education has had a perfect copybook hitherto (and that I doubt), he certainly does not have one now. He has not just blotted it: he has spilled the entire bottle of ink all over it! The Premier said that we should be well aware of the groups in the student community now bent on confrontation, and that this confrontation must be dealt with effectively. Certainly, a lesson is to be learnt from the Flinders University incidents, to which I am sure the Premier was referring: that lesson is that it is necessary to deal with confrontation when it first appears in its earliest form and according to the rules and regulations appertaining at the time.

If the confrontation is dealt with in that manner (and I am expressing a personal opinion now) we will save ourselves much trouble in future, because these groups, once

started on their way of confrontation, and once they get away with any small matter at all and win a victory, or believe that they have won a victory, undoubtedly will move on to the next stage of confrontation.

Mr. Duncan: That's a good authoritarian view.

Dr. TONKIN: I think it is a view the Minister now wishes he had followed up. When the Premier said that the Minister was able to quieten down the situation effectively, we must remember that he was able to do so only by granting the Willcoxes a victory. It was a victory, and whether or not he admits it is immaterial. It was interpreted by the Willcoxes as a victory, and it will be interpreted by those people in the community who read the report as a victory for the Willcoxes, who have said as much. If the Minister (and I share the doubt of the member for Mitcham about this matter) really believed that the suspension was for only two days, I am absolutely amazed that he should have gone to the discussion without being fully acquainted with all the facts. If the Minister was to go there not knowing what the true state of affairs was, he should have made the necessary inquiries.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I inquired.

Dr. TONKIN: As I have no doubt that the Willcoxes believed that they obtained some concession in the matter of the suspension, it was not surprising to me that a further confrontation came about.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: When?

Dr. TONKIN: If the Minister does not know (I thought that was what we had been debating all afternoon and what he had been trying to explain away)—

Mr. Wells: Do you supply the comic relief?

Dr. TONKIN: I will wait for the member for Florey to leave the Chamber if this matter upsets him.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr. TONKIN: I do not believe that this is the last we will hear about this whole matter. A report has been brought down that is, I believe, a satisfactory and detailed report, which has been compiled without fear or favour, and which is based on all the evidence it has been possible to present. If the Minister says that there was evidence for which he was not asked, it was his duty, if he was to do it fully, to present it to the Royal Commissioner. There are no two ways about it. The Premier has said that it was improper for the Royal Commissioner to comment on the various matters on which he has commented. However, I submit that it is totally improper for the Government and the Minister to condemn the Royal Commissioner on the basis and on the grounds on which they have attempted to do so today. The only sign of any relief on the Government side was when the Premier managed to dredge into the past and refer to other Royal Commissions. Although we may have disagreed with the findings and recommendations of other Royal Commissions, we have not condemned their right to make criticisms of members and other individuals, yet that is what the Minister has done today.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That's not true.

Dr. TONKIN: If the Minister has not done it directly, he has certainly done it by innuendo. The Minister has said that it is a most unusual state of affairs: of course it is, and it has become unusual purely and simply because of his intervention and interference in the whole matter. The Minister's intervention was brought about by his political fears and political consideration, and his interference came about not because of but regardless of his duty as a Minister of the Crown. This has culminated in the Royal Commission. The Minister has replied to criticisms about his acting politically, and has bitterly attacked the Royal Commission.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Come on! Why can't I reply to the criticisms?

Dr. TONKIN: The Minister had a hand in appointing the Royal Commission and in drawing up its terms of reference, but he is not willing to support officers of his department or the Headmaster and, apparently, he is not willing to support the independent open inquiry that he had said he asked for. He is the only person in step according to what he has said, but he is not making sense. I believe people will judge from the report, and I believe that the reputation of the Ombudsman, who was the Royal Commissioner, is such that criticism levelled at him by the Minister will not affect his reputation. I know upon whom I would rather rely. It does the Headmaster of Woodville High School much credit that he refused to discuss this matter at any time, either personally or by telephone, with his brother, a member of Parliament. I think the Minister will recognise—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I have never said anything else.

Dr. TONKIN: I am not suggesting that the Minister did, and I am saying that the Minister has recognised that this was the proper course of action. The Headmaster was solidly backed by his staff, the school council, and the Institute of Teachers, but he did not take, or seek, any political advantage in the situation in which he found himself, although he conceivably could have done so in some way. However, the Minister was blatant in taking account of political considerations, perhaps for personal reasons but certainly for political reasons. The attitude that Mr. Willcox displayed (and I admit that the situation has not been an easy one) is apparent early in the report. He is a man who writes pithy down-to-earth letters: he is not reticent in making his point of view known and in making demands. I think the Minister's actions, although possibly well intentioned, were ill advised, and I believe that he should never have been influenced in any way by approaches made to him. This is the whole crux of the matter. If the Minister had done what I think should have been his impartial duty as a Minister when this matter was first brought to his notice (and what I would have done), and inquired about the situation, satisfying himself that the matter was being dealt with by the Headmaster—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: It wasn't.

Dr. TONKIN: —he should have declined to talk to Mr. Willcox. I find it difficult to imagine why the Minister did not first go to the Headmaster and also did not allow the Headmaster to apply the rules and regulations designed specifically to cover such a situation. The Minister's first duty is to his officers and staff. What confidence Education Department officers can now have, I do not know: I think it will be absolutely nil. I believe that this case could have been dealt with at departmental level with the backing of the Minister, if he had so wished it to be dealt with, but, because of the intrusion that has been made, the whole structure of his department has been compromised.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Rubbish!

Dr. TONKIN: That remark clearly indicates how little insight the Minister has and how ill fitted he is to hold his present position. How on earth can his officers have any respect for him now when he overrides or undermines their authority and when he interferes (I suppose intervenes would be a better word) in matters that should be dealt with at school level? What will happen in future in any example of confrontation in relation to this girl or to any other student? Any headmaster and headmistress, or principal, striving to deal with this problem, will wonder whether the parents of the child know the Minister of Education, whether the Minister will take a personal

interest in the case, whether the incident will lead to the appointment of another Royal Commission, whether their career will be in jeopardy, whether they will have to appear before a Royal Commission and give evidence, and whether they will have to justify every single little action that has been taken in respect of the matter.

All this may occur simply because the Minister may know the parents of the child. It cannot be denied that this is exactly what has been shown up in this instance. I am beginning to wonder whether the Minister realises how deeply involved he is. He has made intolerable the position of the staff at Woodville High School, and this situation will affect other members of the department. Whether the Minister likes it or not, he has let his staff down and has betrayed his trust. I am particularly concerned about what is to happen to this girl who has been dragged before a Royal Commission and who, if one can believe newspaper reports, is already playing the part of the martyred victim of circumstances, and already fighting the establishment. The whole matter has come to this base because it was escalated out of all proportion by the activities of the Minister.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That's rubbish! Did I escalate it?

Dr. TONKIN: If the Minister does not understand how his intervention has resulted in the escalation of this matter, I am sorry for him. He should have a hard look at the report. The situation should have been left in the hands of the Headmaster, and the Minister should have been firm, because it could have been covered by departmental regulations and procedures. It was only when the Minister intruded that the situation began to blow up and became potential dynamite. By interjection I suggested that this situation of confrontation was far more likely to occur again, and the Minister agreed. I do not think he will agree with my comment that it is only the Minister's activities in this instance that will cause this situation to occur again. It is obvious why he interfered in this case: he interfered because of his political affiliations and his fear of those political affiliations.

Mr. Max Brown: Where did you get that from?

Dr. TONKIN: I may have misinterpreted—

Mr. Wright: You know that's not true, and you should withdraw it.

Mr. Max Brown: Get it right!

Dr. TONKIN: I refer members to page 150 of the report, where the Minister was speaking about certain difficulties at a Labor Party State council meeting. The Minister cannot laugh that off.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I'm not, but what you're suggesting is out of court.

Dr. TONKIN: For political considerations the Minister has clearly superseded his duty towards his department: he has swept away the loyalty that he has deserved as Minister of the department, from the children under the care of his department and, I believe, by and large from those people in the community who up until now have put their trust in him as Minister. I believe the Royal Commissioner has acted properly. He has not acted unfairly or unjustly, and those of us who know him so well know he is incapable of being unfair or unjust. I think he is one of the most fair-minded people we know. Indeed, if we want an example of his fair-mindedness we should read that part of the report which deals with the Minister at that time when his wife looked after Jacquelyne Willcox, and I think the Minister will agree that the Commissioner makes a fair comment when he states, at page 160 of the report:

In my view there can be no tenable objection to the right of the Minister of Education to intervene in the Willcox affair in June, 1973 . . . One admires the solicitude of the Minister and the kindness and compassion, of course, of his wife.

That is fair enough and I think it was probably the least that could be done in the circumstances.

The Hon. L. J. King: You say the intervention was the cause of all the trouble: how do you reconcile that?

Dr. TONKIN: He could easily not have intervened at departmental level but interested himself as a friend in that instance and looked after the girl, and I would commend him for that. But he should not have aggravated the position; he should have taken all possible steps to keep right out of the matter, particularly since his friendship with the—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: It was an acquaintanceship, not a friendship.

Dr. TONKIN: The report continues:

However, the Minister's personal involvement to the extent of having the suspended student looked after by his wife for those two days and the Minister's undertaking to act as a go-between should there be further difficulty at the school, predictably, in my view, would make people in the department hesitant to act firmly with the Willcoxes in any future encounters. Further factors were the Minister's decisions not to uphold the Headmaster's recommendations for exclusion and to reduce the suspension by one day, without consultation with the Headmaster.

In his responsible position, the Minister should have bent over backwards to avoid giving this sort of impression, and he certainly did not do that. The resignation of the Minister of Education has been suggested this afternoon, and I am a little surprised that he has not tendered it before now. I consider that a man of principle would have done that. It may be that the Premier would not have accepted his resignation; I do not know. However, of one thing I am quite certain: the Minister was not game enough to see whether or not the Premier would accept his resignation. I believe there is every reason for the Minister to tender his resignation from this portfolio. One is left with the unanswerable question: when will this happen again? It is not a question of whether it will happen again, because inevitably the Minister has proved by his action on this occasion that ultimately he will succumb to pressure again and that it will happen again. The only question to be answered is: when will it happen again? How can the Minister maintain the respect of the community if he is not willing to back up the officers of his department and show them loyalty?

Mr. Chapman: Never again.

Dr. TONKIN: That is the answer.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must address the Chair.

Dr. TONKIN: The findings of the Royal Commission will be a lesson to members of the Government, to the (hopefully) ex-Minister, certainly to the department and, I think, to the community as a whole. I think it will encourage the Minister's successor to give every support to his officers. If a Minister allows political affiliations and pressures to override his Ministerial responsibilities, and if he is totally discredited, as I believe the Minister of Education has been by this episode, it is only left for him to resign. I think the total lack of any insight into his present predicament is another reason why the Minister should resign. It is probably the best thing that could happen to him. His defence, which has been to blast the Ombudsman (the Commissioner), has been floundering and unimpressive. He has expressed the pious hope that we will not have the divisiveness or divided loyalties plaguing Education Departments in other States.

How a man, whose actions have brought about a situation where that loyalty has become non-existent, can seriously get up in this place and express those hopes, I do not know. It shows an appalling lack of insight. I believe the Minister's intervention in this matter has escalated the confrontation. It is likely to cause discontent and divisions within the department. I believe his position is totally intolerable and indefensible. The Minister has lost all credibility, and the future of his department has not only been seriously jeopardised by what he has done but also will continue to be seriously affected by his remaining Minister. I believe there is only one decent thing he can do, and that is resign.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I support the motion so ably moved by my Leader and supported by my colleagues. This is another clear example of a disgraceful episode in the history of the Labor Party Government in this State. There has not been one shred of evidence this afternoon to justify the action of the Minister of Education, and I do not make that charge lightly. I believe it is one more clear example of friends of the Labor Party receiving preferential treatment. During the last few weeks we have witnessed the questioning of a senior headmaster, a person who joined the Education Department in 1943 and who has successfully moved up through the department to a senior position. His integrity has been questioned, his name has been dragged through the press, and he has been humiliated by a group of people who have deliberately set out to defy authority.

This afternoon, the Premier piously supported people who had deliberately set out to destroy the normal traditions of a school. How can any headmaster conduct the affairs of his school without the support of his Minister and the department? I think the Minister of Education ought to be leaving the House, as he apparently is, because his exhibition this afternoon was one of his worst that I can remember in the period of nearly five years that I have been a member. While he is outside the Chamber he ought to give his resignation to the Premier. We have seen the Minister of Education, as well as this Government, place one individual (one spoilt brat of a child) before the integrity of not only one headmaster but all headmasters who try to maintain discipline in their schools. This is a serious set of circumstances, and the member for Spence who is apparently about to leave the Chamber has also received a rather dishonourable mention in this report. It will be interesting to see what sort of write-up the report of the Royal Commission receives in the *Herald*. I wonder whether it will feature on the front page. Will the member for Spence report what the Minister of Education has said? Will he also try to humiliate the Royal Commissioner, repeating the nonsense of the Minister? What members have to decide today is whether to allow the Minister of Education to put Party allegiance before his support of a senior headmaster. Will he allow Party loyalty to undermine the authority of headmasters in this State?

I believe all responsible members support the action taken by the Headmaster of Woodville High School; certainly, they would not support the action of the Government. Now, the Minister of Education is casting doubt on the reputation of the Royal Commissioner. On that score alone, he should resign forthwith. I want to put on record the fact that I totally support what the Royal Commissioner has said in his report. I stress that I am greatly disturbed about the course of action taken by the Minister of Education, as I believe it will undermine law and order in our schools. We all know that head-

masters have great difficulty in maintaining discipline in the schools. If the Minister of Education, who is supposed to be responsible for ensuring that adequate education is provided, will not support his officers, that is disgraceful. Not only should he resign: he should also hang his head in shame.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I support the motion. I have no doubt that the Minister of Education let Party politics interfere with his Ministerial duties. This may have been one of the occasions when he allowed his political philosophy and ambitions to cloud what should have been a clear-cut decision. Ministers are elected to make decisions and accept responsibility if those down the line cannot find the right solution to a problem. In this case, the Headmaster found the right solution, as the report of the Royal Commission establishes. The Royal Commissioner is an independent person divorced from politics. As Clerk of this House, he sat here for a long time, respected by all members. When he left, we all said that he was fair-minded, honest, and just. It does little credit to any member to attack him on his findings in this case. If he is to succeed as Ombudsman, it is important that he be respected and trusted. If, for Party political reasons, members start to attack him, taking points at his expense (and he has no means of answering these charges), the respect other people have for him as Ombudsman will tend to be downgraded. There can be no doubt that the Minister of Education set out to attack the Royal Commissioner in this debate.

Reference has been made to a former Minister of Education (Hon. Joyce Steele). I point out that, when the present Minister of Education talks about political manoeuvring to gain a point, he should remember that, when in Opposition, he was the greatest offender when it came to stirring up the teaching profession. He spoke to teachers at meetings, making it as difficult as possible for the then Minister. He cannot accuse Opposition members of deliberately stirring up groups of teachers to attack the present Government; we have more respect for the education system than to do that. Members opposite who were here then and other members of the then Opposition supported the then member for Glenelg (the present Minister of Education) when he caused trouble and disturbance in the teaching profession. However, today, he says that we have the best system in Australia. He has been the greatest offender in stirring up trouble, and he cannot deny that.

At the time to which I am referring, Mrs. Steele accepted a change in portfolio in the interests of achieving a better situation in relation to education. Although I was not in Cabinet I was close enough to the scene to know the type of discussion that took place. The Party opposite had started a campaign to denigrate the then Minister and tear down the education system in order to win an election. That was the only purpose of the campaign: it was not designed to provide better education or to benefit schoolchildren. When the Premier thinks about that situation, let him remember that Mrs. Steele had the courage to accept a change and carry out her duties in another portfolio. However, the present Minister does not have the decency or the courage to do that. The Premier does not have the courage, either, to make a change in a situation that is far worse than the situation that obtained when Mrs. Steele was Minister.

At no time did she have the sort of allegation made against her that is now made against the present Minister. At the time she agreed to change her portfolio, she was not faced with an allegation that had been substantiated by

an independent inquiry conducted by a person divorced from Party politics. No-one can deny this. Government back-benchers sit silently, seeming to indicate that they do not regard the present situation as serious. However, it is very serious. As the member for Mitcham has said, the present Minister will never again have the respect of the teaching profession. This fact detrimentally affects the education system in this State. The Australian Labor Party, the Premier, and the Minister of Education will not necessarily suffer in the present situation: it is the children we hope to educate to a better way of life who will suffer. From now on, headmasters will not know whether they have the autonomy they are supposed to have. The present Government said that it would give autonomy to schools, universities, and teachers colleges, but once this autonomy is used to discipline someone who has a strong A.L.P. connection the Minister steps in and says, "Lay off." He says, "I will look after the child for a couple of days; I will use a Ministerial car to pick these people up."

Any political Party that shows this sort of favouritism deserves to be criticised and even condemned. The Minister now has the opportunity to show a sense of responsibility by admitting that he has made a serious error and acknowledging that, if he remains Minister, his remaining as Minister will have a detrimental effect on the teaching of children in this State. The Minister should say that that would be detrimental to the education system in this State and that he had, therefore, changed his portfolio. Alternatively, he should say that he would resign from Cabinet. The motion is justified and, if the Minister has not the courage to resign, the Government should either dismiss him or change his portfolio. He cannot remain Minister of Education and claim to be in that portfolio for the benefit of education in this State. I conclude by saying that the temporary Minister of Education has the worst record for causing disruption in the teaching profession and in education generally. He achieved that record as a member of the Opposition and, by remaining Minister of Education, he would be taking another step towards causing discontent and instability in the profession.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General): I have listened with interest and growing astonishment to the case the Opposition has presented in support of the motion. It is important to bear in mind that it is a motion of no confidence in the Minister of Education, and the proposition that has been put forward is that the Minister ought to resign. When a proposition of that kind is put to the House, we expect to hear cogent reasons that would justify a Minister's resigning.

Mr. Dean Brown: Haven't you read the Royal Commission report?

The Hon. L. J. KING: I have listened to the speeches made by Opposition members, and noticeably the member for Davenport has not taken part in the debate, so he may as well subside from now on.

Mr. Coumbe: You're speaking with a retiring voice.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I do not know what the honourable member means by that interjection, but I have listened to what Opposition members have said in support of the motion. They have referred to statements in the report that are critical of some of the Minister's actions. They have referred to matters on which the Royal Commissioner disagrees with the Minister about certain aspects that led to the appointment of the Royal Commission.

Mr. Dean Brown: Don't you agree—

The Hon. L. J. KING: Even if we agreed with everything that the Royal Commissioner found and disagreed

with everything that the Minister said in reply, we would still have nothing that supported the proposition that the Minister should resign. Opposition members recognise that, because they have not been willing to rest their case on the report. They recognise that nothing in the report supports the proposition, so they must go further than anything there and suggest, contrary to what the Royal Commissioner has found, that the Minister allowed his political affiliations or political associations (someone even suggested personal friendships) to interfere with his duties as Minister. Nothing in the report justifies that: it has been contradicted over and over again by the Royal Commissioner. Do members opposite accept the Royal Commissioner, or do they not?

Mr. Goldsworthy: Read page 160.

The Hon. L. J. KING: I am delighted that the honourable member has said that, because that is the page that I have in front of me, and I have marked it.

Mr. Goldsworthy: It's your interpretation on the matter.

The Hon. L. J. KING: We find out what the Royal Commissioner has said. The member for Bragg (and the member for Fisher supported him) based his support for the motion that the Minister should resign on the proposition that the Minister's intervention had been unjustified and had led to the escalation of the whole matter. Those members said that the Minister intervened because of his political associations. I think the member for Bragg even referred to the Minister's political ambitions. I will read what the Royal Commissioner has said about the intervention which has been criticised and which is said to have been motivated by political considerations. The Royal Commissioner states:

In my view there can be no tenable objection to the right of the Minister of Education to intervene in the Willcox affair in June, 1973.

How is that reconcilable with the proposition put forward by the member for Bragg that only base political considerations led to the Minister's intervention and that that produced the escalation? The Commissioner also states:

Whether the Minister's judgment in exercising that right was well founded is not a question I am called upon specifically to answer; but if one were to do so, it would be necessary, in my view, to dismiss from one's mind the Willcoxes' political affiliation and examine the proposition free from that complication. Defiance of a suspension threw up a unique problem; there was no precedent to follow. I believe that in any like situation, the Minister would inevitably have been brought into the discussions and decisions, regardless of persons involved.

Do members opposite accept the Royal Commissioner, or do they not accept him? The Commissioner is saying that the situation demanded the Minister's intervention, but the member for Bragg, the member for Fisher, and other members opposite say that the intervention was motivated by political considerations. True, the Royal Commissioner goes on to disagree with certain actions by the Minister following that intervention. It is for members to exercise their individual judgment whether they think the Royal Commissioner's view of what would have been a desirable form of Ministerial intervention or decision in the case would have been the better course. It is easy to be wise after the event.

I consider that what the Minister did then was extremely praiseworthy. He was faced with a situation in which a suspension was being defied and no-one was making any progress in solving the problem of how to resolve the position that this defiance had created. The Minister resolved the matter without confrontation and in a way that I consider makes him deserving of much credit. Frankly,

he did something that I would not have done. The Willcoxes said that they could not carry out the suspension, because they were not at home, and the girl could not stay there. The Minister said, "If the worst comes to the worst, I will even care for the girl in my own house to see that the order is carried out and that the suspension is complied with." He did that and, frankly, I would not have been willing to go so far as that. I believe the Minister showed great courage, great concern, and great devotion to duty. I give him full marks, and they are much higher marks than I would have deserved had I been in that situation.

In considering what this is all about, there appear to be two views as to whether the Minister should have cared for the girl at his own home. I have expressed my view, and the Royal Commissioner takes another view. Even if we accept that there can be two views, how can that possibly justify a motion demanding the Minister's resignation? What absolute nonsense that is. As I have said, Opposition members, recognising the weakness and futility of that sort of proposition, have tried to say that the Minister's intervention was motivated by political considerations. In adopting that line, however, members opposite must contradict the Royal Commissioner's own finding on the matter. Members opposite are willing to accept one of the Royal Commissioner's findings when they think it suits them, but they repudiate those of his findings that do not suit their political purposes.

One really extraordinary suggestion is that the Minister failed to support his staff. Anyone who puts that proposition forward simply has not read the report. The events of 1973 were a support of the attitude of the Headmaster in an attempt to resolve the confrontation. True, the point has been raised in the report and in this debate about the reduction of the suspension from three days to two days, and we have heard what the Minister had to say about that matter: that in his mind there was no question about that because he did not know that the Headmaster had added an additional day's suspension. So, there was no question of undermining the Headmaster's authority.

In 1974, the Minister took the view that the Headmaster was amply justified in suspending this girl. Indeed, in giving evidence to the Royal Commissioner, he went further and said he would have done it earlier himself. The Minister said, "The Headmaster showed great patience and I praise him and support him for it. I would not have lasted that long, and I would have done it earlier." That is the Minister's evidence, so how can it be said that he failed to support the Headmaster?

Another point I wish to make (although it does not really arise) concerns the proposition of the member for Bragg that the Minister should support his officers right or wrong—"My country right or wrong". This attitude is inconsistent with the duties and responsibilities of a Minister. A Minister has a responsibility to this Parliament and to the public for what happens. That carries with it a correlative responsibility to ensure, as far as he can, that correct decisions are made. If his officers are wrong, it is the Minister's duty to intervene and to correct those decisions. Members opposite should make no mistake about this: there is no running away from that proposition. I do not believe it arose in this case, because the Minister agreed with and supported the actions of the Headmaster in all material respects.

The other extraordinary proposition put forward concerns a Government decision to hold a Royal Commission, an open inquiry into a matter. It has been said that such a decision carries with it the implication that the Government is critical of the officer concerned in the events being

inquired into, whereas nothing could be further from the fact. A Government often appoints a Royal Commission, although sometimes it is completely confident that its officer has acted correctly. However, because what they have done has been called into question, it is important that the matter be aired publicly with a view to resolving the matter and vindicating the officer concerned, if he is right.

In this case the decisions of the Headmaster, in relation both to the suspension and to calling the police, had been called into question by some groups, even to the extent of an occupation of the Minister's office. So great was the feeling in some quarters about the decision that in such circumstances a Government is entitled to say, "If that is the feeling, the matter has to be aired publicly. Let everyone have their say; let it be resolved; and let the actions of the officers concerned, the Headmaster, if he is right in the matter, be publicly vindicated." There is no imputation against an officer merely because it is decided to hold a public inquiry. Sometimes Royal Commissions are appointed because of allegations made by members of Parliament, sometimes because of irresponsible allegations made by members of Parliament and, as a result, some officer can suffer grievously. Nevertheless, the inquiry has to be held because, when conduct is called into question, the matter has to be resolved. It is a remarkable proposition to suggest that a decision to hold a Royal Commission holds some sort of acceptance by the Government that there has been improper conduct. It does not mean that at all. When Royal Commissions are appointed, the Government is often satisfied with the conduct of all the people concerned in the matter, but it realises that it has a public responsibility, not only to be satisfied itself, but to satisfy the public to whom, after all, we are all responsible.

There are now only two other matters to which I wish to refer. First, the Opposition has demonstrated over and over again the weakness of its case in the classic way in which weak cases are presented: it has tried to twist and distort what the Minister has said. What has been constantly repeated during this debate is the suggestion that the Minister has attacked the reputation of the Commissioner. That was said in turn by two Opposition members and implied by other Opposition members. What utter nonsense!

In his speech the Minister took issue with the Commissioner on matters about which the Commissioner had disagreed with him, and he replied to some of the Commissioner's findings. Why should he not reply? The member for Mitcham said that, had the Minister not been a member of this place, he would not have had the opportunity to defend himself here. Of course he would not, and he would not have been subjected to the sort of attack that the Leader visited on him today, either. Indeed, that attack has been made only because my colleague is a Minister, and it has been made only for Party-political purposes. Were he not a Minister in this Labor Government, and if the Opposition were not devoted to its desire to shift this Government from office, we would never have heard said the sort of thing that was said today, especially as it cannot be justified by even the wildest stretch of the imagination.

Finally, I take up the matter referred to by the Commissioner towards the end of his report, because I believe an important question of principle is involved. The Commissioner states that the holding of the inquiry itself was ill conceived. The Commissioner is entitled to hold whatever opinion he may form on the matter, but an important matter of principle is involved. A Royal Commissioner is

appointed to inquire into the matters specified in the terms of reference that constitute the inquiry. If he believes that on the facts the terms should be widened or altered in some way, he must report to the Executive and suggest that the Government consider an alteration to the terms of reference. There is no basis for a Royal Commissioner to question his own appointment or the appointment of the Commission itself, and that is for a very good reason. The terms of reference do not and cannot include whether there should be a Royal Commission, and there are sound reasons for that, too.

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

The Hon. L. J. KING: As it is not within the terms of reference of the Royal Commission, it cannot be debated before the Royal Commission. Quite apart from that, the matter is essentially one for the decision of the Executive Government, which, of course, is responsible for its decision to the Parliament and to the public, and the considerations that lead to the appointment of a Royal Commission are often matters of wider public interest. Sometimes they are matters essentially political in character, such as the desirability of allaying public disquiet or anxiety about a certain matter. It may be the desirability of providing a peaceful avenue for certain strongly held emotional convictions to be put which contribute thereby to the preservation of public order—matters of a political and social character essentially for the Executive Government to decide, for the decision on which it is responsible to the Parliament and to the public, but matters that are entirely beyond the scope and functions of the Royal Commission itself.

I am bound to say I believe that the Royal Commissioner was mistaken in embarking upon a discussion of the desirability of the appointment of the Royal Commission itself. Having said that—

Mr. Millhouse: But surely he is entitled to comment.

The Hon. L. J. KING: Anyone can make any comment he likes. The question is whether it is a comment that he should make. The honourable member can make any comment he likes but he would be better off if he did not make many of those that he does make. A Royal Commissioner should confine himself to the matters within his terms of reference which have been debated before him. As I said earlier, when the member for Mitcham was not here, if a Royal Commissioner thinks his terms of reference are defective, his proper course is to report to the Executive Government and seek a variation of the terms of reference. The whole exercise we have seen this afternoon has been curious. It sought to show that the Minister had been guilty of some conduct that should lead to his resignation. That, of course, means that the allegation has been that he has been guilty either of improper conduct or of grossly incompetent conduct that should lead to his resignation. Nothing has been put forward to support that. Indeed, it is contradicted by the report itself.

As to the central issue whether the Minister should have intervened in 1973, the Royal Commissioner himself has said not only that it was proper for the Minister to intervene but that it was inevitable that he should intervene. The Commissioner himself in his report has made not the slightest suggestion of any conduct that could be described as improper or incompetent, even on matters where the Commissioner himself has taken a different view from that of the Minister. Indeed, he points out that no-one could expect to have his day-to-day activities scrutinised by a Royal Commission and emerge completely unscathed. The reason for saying that is that the Commissioner was using

an expression entirely inconsistent with any suggestion that he was making a finding that involved improper or incompetent conduct on the part of anyone connected with the Administration. This is to be found at page 176 of his report. The Leader of the Opposition has read the report, so he would know it was there. The Commissioner says:

None of us, I submit, would emerge unscathed following a close scrutiny of our daily activities through the microscope of a Royal Commission . . .

Any criticism should be read in that light. That is not the expression that a Royal Commissioner uses when he is making accusations of impropriety or misconduct. The case that the Opposition puts in support of its motion demanding the Minister's resignation is not substantiated by the facts and is at direct variance with the report on which the Opposition seeks to rely.

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): The defence of the Government in this case is astounding. Sitting here during the afternoon and briefly so far this evening, I have heard the incredible arguments put forward by the three Ministers: first, by the Minister of Education, who devoted most of his 1½-hour speech to attacking the character of the Royal Commissioner.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That is not true.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The Minister criticised the conclusions that the Commissioner had come to.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I did not attack the Royal Commissioner's character.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: You attacked his judgment.

Mr. Millhouse: You kept on criticising, as you well know.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That does not mean that I attacked his character.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You questioned his judgment.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That is not attacking his character.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The Minister spent most of his 1½ hours criticising the judgment and the conclusions of the Royal Commissioner. If that is not attacking his character, I do not know what is. Of course he was. It is astounding that a Minister of the State should attack a Royal Commissioner appointed by the Government. Furthermore, the Royal Commissioner is a man who holds the position of Ombudsman in this State. One shudders to think of any conclusions that may be drawn from future Ministerial statements about the Ombudsman. For 1½ hours the Minister devoted his remarks almost entirely to the judgment of the Royal Commissioner. I should have thought that the Royal Commissioner was the person I would support. He was a person emotionally removed from the facts of the situation.

Mr. Millhouse: Having appointed the umpire, they will not accept his verdict.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: That is correct. He was a person who was capable of handing down an independent judgment but, not liking that independent judgment, members opposite start to attack his judgment. The Premier devoted his brief and low-key speech to trying to pat the Minister of Education on the back saying, "After all, you are the best Minister of Education we have had."

Mr. Langley: Ask the schoolteachers in your district.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: We can take the Premier's defence as possibly a great slight on the Minister himself. Surely the Premier, if sincere, would as a Queen's Counsel have

taken the facts, set them up and smashed the argument put forward by the Opposition, if that were possible.

Mr. Wells: The Attorney-General did that capably.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I will come to the Attorney later. As a Queen's Counsel, the Premier did not do that: he reverted to glib praise of the Minister, but we will not swallow that and the public of South Australia will not swallow it, either. Then we come to the third Ministerial speech, that of the Attorney-General. This afternoon, the Attorney amazed me: he completely prostituted his legal talents in trying to defend the Minister.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member is not entitled to reflect on the character of any member, and I take objection to his statement that the Attorney-General completely prostituted his legal talents, as I regard that as a reflection on the Attorney-General. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that statement.

The SPEAKER: Although there are certain terms and statements one can take objection to, I cannot uphold the point of order that there is something in the remarks of the member for Davenport that can be objected to.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: As I was saying before being interrupted, the Attorney prostituted his legal talents in an attempt to protect the Minister and, further, to discredit the report of the Royal Commissioner. I refer specifically to the points raised by the Attorney-General: first, he used a debating tactic that most people turn to when unsure of themselves and cannot defend their position: that is, he had a bet each way. That is what the Attorney did this afternoon when, following the Minister of Education's 1½-hour attack on the judgment of the Royal Commissioner, he took a brief statement from the Commissioner and based most of his case on how credible that statement was. I refer to the statement on page 160 of the report. The Attorney-General summed up and used this same line of attack when he said that the Royal Commissioner admitted that the Minister should have become involved. What the Attorney failed to do was to read further in that section. In order to show the extent to which the Attorney prostituted his legal talents, I read the following paragraph, which states:

However, the Minister's personal involvement to the extent of having the suspended student looked after by his wife for those two days, and the Minister's undertaking to act as a go-between should there be further difficulty at the school, predictably, in my view, would make people in the department hesitant to act firmly with the Willcoxes in any future encounters. Further factors were the Minister's decisions not to uphold the Headmaster's recommendations for exclusion and to reduce the suspension by one day, without consultation with the Headmaster.

The Attorney-General, in basing his argument on what the Royal Commissioner had said, failed to read that paragraph, which I believe condemns the Minister and, in doing so, demands his resignation from public office as Minister of Education. The second point of the Attorney's attack was the right of the Royal Commissioner to comment on the need for a Royal Commission. This was a subtle attack, and followed the attack of the Minister of Education on the better judgment of the Royal Commissioner. I see no reason to attack the Royal Commissioner because he commented on the need for a Royal Commission. The final paragraph of the report's recommendations is as follows:

With the greatest respect—

I love his terminology here: it is classic—

I submit that, in origin, the present Royal Commission was ill conceived.

Of course the Attorney has attacked the Royal Commissioner for that, because it was the judgment of the

present Ministry that called for the Royal Commission: that comment was a great slight on the judgment of the Ministry, and its members did not like it. They do not like being criticised in public, as we have seen before, particularly as the rest of the report throws grave doubts on the ability of the Minister to carry on his portfolio rationally and sensibly to the betterment of our society, and not, as suggested, for the benefit of a specific section of it. In other words, political aspects clouded the Minister's judgment. The second line of attack of the Attorney-General was to further attack the judgment of the Royal Commissioner. The third aspect the Attorney-General played on in an emotional way: he made great play about the compassion of the Minister of Education and of the fact that he made sure that this small girl would be looked after whilst suspended from school. He dealt at great length on the compassion shown, and suggested that the Minister of Education had shown greater compassion than he would have shown if he had been in a similar position. Therefore, he tried to clear the Minister completely of his personal involvement on the ground of compassion. However, from reading the report we all know the real reason for the Minister's personal involvement: it was not one of compassion but one of political involvement.

Mr. Wells: Rubbish!

Mr. Millhouse: He was scared of the Willcoxes.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Because of the interjections, I should read one of the general conclusions on page 175 of the report, as follows:

It would be naive to think, given the political affiliations, that the Minister's intervention would not have a significant influence on the future thoughts and actions of departmental officers.

I think that passage clearly shows that it was not compassion for the girl that caused the personal involvement of the Minister, as the Attorney suggests. It was a political involvement by the Minister with someone in his political Party that caused him such personal involvement.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Do you think he would have done it with a Liberal Party member?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Of course not. The Attorney-General launched his attack on three points: I shall repeat them because my argument completely demolishes any that the three Ministers have put forward. We can readily dismiss the arguments put forward by the first two Ministers, whilst the Attorney-General had a bet each way because he accepted some recommendations of the Commissioner. However, in his speech he did not read the full statement in its context and took one part out of context, because the Royal Commissioner condemned the personal involvement of the Minister. Secondly, the Attorney attacked the judgment of the Royal Commissioner and questioned his ability to comment on the need to hold a Royal Commission. This followed the Minister of Education's attack on the Royal Commissioner. Thirdly, the Attorney played on the emotional aspect that the Minister had great compassion. Even if one looks at the general recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner, it is obvious that it was not compassion but political involvement. The Minister of Education stands guilty on two grounds. First, he completely undermined the authority of his departmental staff and, secondly, he did so in a manner that involved his own political friends. Therefore, we can reasonably come to the conclusion that his political judgment tended to override his judgment as a Minister of the Crown. It is these two grounds on which the Minister stands condemned and to which the Ministers failed to refer to today. It is

on these two grounds that the Minister of Education should resign, because Government Ministers have not refuted those arguments in any way whatsoever. For those reasons, I support the motion and, for the sake of education in this State and the respect of Ministers of the Crown in South Australia, I ask the Minister of Education to resign.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Education): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: In his opening remarks, the member for Davenport said twice that I spent my speech attacking the character of the Royal Commissioner. That is a complete misrepresentation of the stand that I took.

The Hon. D. H. McKee: He tells lies.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: True, I disagreed with certain views expressed by the Royal Commissioner, just as he disagreed with some of my views. However, at no stage during my remarks did I attack the character of the Royal Commissioner. May I say, if it needs to be said (and it should not have to be said), that I have no doubt that, in reaching his conclusions, the Royal Commissioner—

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: This is part of my personal explanation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Coumbe: It is not a right of reply.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I am not saying that it is: I am merely saying that I have no doubt that the Royal Commissioner, in reaching his conclusions, did so honestly and sincerely in terms of his own views.

Mr. Goldsworthy: You're disputing his judgment.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: My personal explanation is intended to reply to the lie peddled by the member for Davenport that I attacked the character of the Royal Commissioner. That is not true.

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: In granting the honourable member for Davenport leave to make a personal explanation, I raise with him the matter that I raised with the honourable Minister: that he must make a personal explanation and not enter into debate.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I wish simply to correct the Minister's statement that I said he had attacked the Royal Commissioner's character. I said that he had attacked the Royal Commissioner's character by attacking his judgment.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You know—

Mr. Millhouse: You can't take criticism, can you, Hugh?

The SPEAKER: Order! I call on the Leader of the Opposition. If he speaks, the Leader closes the debate.

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): Before returning to some of the statements that the three Ministers have made in this debate, I should like quickly to review several of the statements that appear in the Royal Commissioner's report. In this respect, I refer, first, to page 158, where the following appears:

I note here again Mr. Willcox's threat to go to higher authority, this time to the Superintendent of Secondary Schools. His daughter, too, told Miss Glynn, it appears, to ". . . go and ring up Mr. Hudson—he knows my father".

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You can't take any notice of that. That's the same as saying, "Ring up the Leader of the Opposition."

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr. EASTICK: At page 160—

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: You don't even know—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Dr. EASTICK: —it is stated that Mrs. Willcox was unwilling to carry out her part of the arrangement made with Mr. Barter. This is clearly stated on page 160 of the report. Indeed, the report states:

Whether the Minister's judgment in exercising that right was well founded is not a question I am called upon specifically to answer; but, if one were to do so, it would be necessary, in my view, to dismiss from one's mind the Willcoxes' political affiliation and examine the proposition free from that complication. Defiance of a suspension threw up a unique problem; there was no precedent to follow. I believe that, in any like situation, the Minister would inevitably have been brought into the discussions and decisions, regardless of persons involved.

There is no argument about that; the Royal Commissioner has found that clearly. The report continues:

However, the Minister's personal involvement to the extent of having the suspended student looked after . . .

That aspect has been referred to previously; I merely reiterate that it is referred to in the report. On page 161 of the report it is clearly stated that the headmaster had the support of his staff. No-one will dispute that, because it has been stated often in this debate. However, at page 166 of the report one sees the comment that the headmaster believed that the staff should have received support. He believed, as did the staff members and, indeed, as do most other people in this State, that the staff had failed to receive the support it should have received. One sees from page 167 of the report that the final suspension was supported by the Minister of Education. Indeed, he said, "I would have done it earlier."

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Isn't that supporting the staff?

Dr. EASTICK: It was not supporting the staff for the Minister to have a view of that nature and to have taken the action which he took and which eroded the support that the staff expected.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: What support should the staff have expected?

Dr. EASTICK: The Minister should wait for it. One finds that the staff had lost its feeling of support which is so essential and which it had come to expect as its right as a result of the Director-General's letter, which has never been repudiated, withdrawn or commented on by the Minister.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: I did comment on it.

Dr. EASTICK: Not in the sense of withdrawing it or referring to any part of it by way of a countermanding memorandum or letter.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: It talks about delegation of authority. When one of these days you come to delegating authority to a shadow Minister, does it mean that you will not contravene a delegation? I am subject to personal attack in connection with this matter.

Dr. EASTICK: Where is the personal attack?

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: The Leader should have listened to what has gone on.

Dr. EASTICK: The skin is almost so thin that one can see the blood straight through it. Perhaps we can leave the question of the report, since it upsets the Minister, and turn to the holier-than-thou attitude that he expressed earlier this afternoon. The Royal Commissioner, having been charged with a responsibility, did not, in the Minister's opinion, come up with the right answers. The Minister then gave the answers that the Royal Commissioner should have given!

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: The member for Torrens apologised to me in private, but you have not done it in public.

Dr. EASTICK: Evidently it is the normal situation for private conversations to be recorded in *Hansard*.

The SPEAKER: No, it is not.

Dr. EASTICK: I would not have thought so, nor does the member for Torrens, and this highlights what we have been saying; the Minister is not fit to be a Minister when he refers to private conversations during a debate.

The SPEAKER: Order! At this late stage I warn the House that the debate is not going to get out of control. Personalities and personal clashes must be avoided at all costs, and I ask the honourable Leader of the Opposition to continue the debate along proper lines.

Dr. EASTICK: I believe, as would any thinking person, that the Minister and his Government should accept the Royal Commissioner's decision, however unfavourable it may be to them personally. The Government created the Royal Commission and determined who would be the Royal Commissioner. In effect, the Government created a court of final appeal. However aggrieved the Government may be about the result of that appeal, it is the Government's responsibility to accept the decision reached. This is exactly the same kind of position as that of people who appear before a judge or a court of appeal or the Privy Council. People have created a train of events and, whether or not they like the final result, they accept it, because the matter has been thoroughly considered by persons charged with the responsibility.

Mr. Coumbe: Like an umpire.

Dr. EASTICK: Exactly.

Mr. Crimes: It was not a court or a trial.

Dr. EASTICK: There is no difference. In effect, it is a court of final appeal. People were asked to assist the Royal Commission according to the contribution they could make, and it ill behoves the Minister to say that the result was not correct because people who had something to contribute were not called to give evidence. The Royal Commissioner had the support of Mr. Mullighan, who is highly regarded by the legal profession. He received information and statements from people. Following discussions with people who were going to make information available, he assessed whether their contributions would be valuable and relevant or purely repetitive. Had he been approached by someone who thought that he had not been questioned as fully as he might have been, he could have sought further assistance. However, there is no evidence that the Minister requested that people be questioned who had not been questioned. I have referred to the Minister's holier-than-thou attitude. His attitude is: I am right, and everyone else is wrong. An incredible situation has unfolded today. The Royal Commissioner's ability has been seriously questioned by the Minister in his unprecedented attack on a person who is not here to defend himself; that is the crunch of it.

Mr. Goldsworthy: They want a Royal Commission into the Royal Commission?

Dr. EASTICK: It is not unlike a situation that occurred in this House five or six weeks ago, when the Deputy Premier indicated that there was nothing wrong with Mr. Justice Sangster criticising the Government if he was not satisfied with the manner in which his report on water rating had been handled by the Government. What a ludicrous position—to expect members of the Judiciary to attack the Government! They are impartial and should always be

impartial. For the Minister to criticise the Ombudsman in the way he did does the Minister no credit at all.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: That is not true. I replied to criticisms made of me.

Dr. EASTICK: This questioning of the Commissioner's ability to assess the facts is an insult to a person who is of the highest integrity. It brings out a criticism that I made publicly at the time the Ombudsman was appointed the Commissioner. I am referring to the office of Ombudsman, not to the person who holds that office; there is no question about his ability. The Government appointed the person holding the office of Ombudsman to be the Royal Commissioner for this purpose, thereby introducing a degree of dual activity. Members on this side voted for the establishment of the office of Ombudsman and believed it would be to the advantage of South Australia. I hope the office will always be advantageous to this State.

I hope that the experience gained from this outburst by the Minister and his colleagues about the Commissioner's report will not in any way react unfavourably against the position of Ombudsman in South Australia, a position that has a real place in South Australia's affairs. The Attorney-General suggested that members on this side had not come to grips with the report. However, I believe that the Minister of Education, the Premier and the Attorney-General have not come to grips with the report. They have sought to destroy the arguments put forward from this side. They have attempted to belittle the Opposition for raising the matter. They have not recognised that the report states, as any thinking person would expect, that the Headmaster should have been supported. It also states clearly that this Royal Commission should never have been set up. In his general analysis of the report, the Minister, having said that he knew all the answers and that all that needed to be known was whether the Headmaster had the right to call in the police, failed to note that the Royal Commissioner stated clearly that the Headmaster did have the right to call in the police and had acted responsibly in taking that action. It is important that the significance of that aspect of the report be noted.

We believe that, as a result of his involvement in this matter, in future the Minister will not have the respect of the teaching profession; he will certainly not have the respect of the public. His future position is weakened because he has been tried and found wanting. He has been tried on the question whether he supported his staff in a way that could reasonably be expected from a person in his position, and he has been found wanting, as he has not supported his staff as he should have supported them. Members of the profession will always recall these events, recognising that they cannot totally expect the support of the Minister, as he has been found wanting, especially in relation to his inability to show responsibility at a time when it was so necessary.

The Attorney-General had the temerity to suggest that the Minister of Education was required to deal with this matter. I believe that it had already been dealt with by a Headmaster who had the courage of his convictions and took the action that he believed was necessary to safeguard the future of his school and the teaching of all the other students under his charge. As has been said so often in this debate, the Minister stands condemned for his part in this miserable exercise, which has resulted in large sums of public money being spent in this area rather than in areas of real need. What has happened has caused headmasters, teachers and other staff much anxiety. Nowadays, teachers at the top administrative level are in positions

of real responsibility. There was no reason for these people to be placed under the microscope of a Royal Commission and to face the burden of appearing on the witness stand.

Members of the teaching profession, particularly headmasters and deputy headmasters, have lately had to face constant criticism and great demands on them. The matter of authority has been raised. Pressure has been brought to bear on them to allow all sorts of activity that a few years ago would have been considered improper at schools. There have been pressures to alter the curriculum and to allow decisions to be made by people much further down the line than was formerly the case, such decisions previously being accepted as the traditional duty of headmasters. Therefore, these people are in a critical position in today's society. The added burden placed on them by the Minister does him no credit. All that was needed in this whole affair was an element of common sense. I do not believe the Minister showed common sense either in relation to the involvement in events in June, 1973, or subsequently in those of 1974; I believe he has shown a singular lack of common sense. Instead of people being stood up for, they were stood up. Instead of the Headmaster's being able to expect the support of his Director-General and Minister, he was stood up to public ridicule.

The Commissioner's finding in favour of that Headmaster and his staff is the only result we could have expected. That is what we would expect in the case of a professional teacher of high standing who is held in great esteem by members of his profession. More is the pity that he did not receive similar regard and support from the man who is currently his Minister. I believe this motion should be passed unanimously. The member for Florey may say, "Wait until the numbers go up." He knows how easy it is to win a race if the lead bags are left back in the stable. I suggest that he should not leave the lead bags in the stable this time but should accept his responsibility to—

The SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the honourable Leader that, as he is speaking in reply to the debate, no new subject matter may be introduced at this stage. However, he is introducing new material, and that will not be permitted.

Dr. EASTICK: The question to be decided by members is simple: are they willing to stand up and be counted, taking the opportunity now offered to correct what was a deplorable action by the Minister of Education?

The House divided on the motion:

Ayes (19)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick (teller), Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, McAnaney, Millhouse, Nankivell, Rodda, Russack, Tonkin, and Venning.

Noes (23)—Messrs. Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Crimes, Duncan, Dunstan, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood, Hudson (teller), Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, McKee, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, Wells, and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Mathwin and Wardle. Noes—Messrs. Corcoran and McRae.

Majority of 4 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

HIGHWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

ABORIGINAL LANDS TRUST

The Hon. L. J. KING (Minister of Community Welfare): I move:

That this House resolve that, pursuant to the final proviso of section 16 (5) of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act, 1966-1973, it hereby authorise the sale by the Aboriginal Lands Trust of the land comprising 23 Elizabeth Street, Maitland, certificate of title register book, volume 2723, folio 118, to the Point Pearce Housing Association Incorporated; and that a message be sent to the Legislative Council transmitting the foregoing resolution and requesting its concurrence thereto.

This motion is moved by reason of the provisions of section 16 (5) of the Aboriginal Lands Trust Act, which provides:

The trust may—

(a) with the consent of the Minister, sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise deal with land vested in it pursuant to this Act; or

(b) develop such land subject to compliance with the provisions of any Act or law relating thereto. as it thinks fit: Provided that neither the trust nor any lessee or assign of the trust shall depasture any stock on any lands situate within the pastoral area of the State as defined in the Pastoral Act, 1936-1960, and vested in the trust without the approval of, and upon such conditions (including the number of stock to be depastured on any such land) as may be specified by the Pastoral Board. The Minister shall not withhold his consent unless he is satisfied that the sale, lease, mortgage or dealing fails to preserve to the Aboriginal people of South Australia the benefits and value of the land in question:

This is the proviso to which I direct attention:

Provided that no land vested in the trust may be sold unless both Houses of Parliament during the same or different sessions of any Parliament have by resolution authorised such sale.

The subject property is a house at Maitland that is the property of the Aboriginal Lands Trust. Situated at 23 Elizabeth Street, Maitland, it was purchased in 1972, with funds provided by the State Government, in order to provide accommodation for the trust's Farm Manager at Point Pearce. The supervision of the farming operation at Point Pearce has been altered and, because the trust has ceased to operate the farm, the house is in the course of being handed to the Point Pearce Housing Association Incorporated and is no longer required by any employee of the Aboriginal Lands Trust.

The trust wishes to sell the house property to the Point Pearce Housing Association Incorporated (that is to say, the Aborigines' housing association) for \$12 500. The price has been recommended by the Land Board of South Australia. In those circumstances, I think it is a practical and sensible move that the house be sold by the trust to the Point Pearce Housing Association Incorporated, and I therefore commend the motion to the House.

Mr. BOUNDY secured the adjournment of the debate.

PRISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. L. J. KING (Attorney-General): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

It amends the principal Act by way of corrective legislation to facilitate consolidation under the Acts Replication Act, 1967. Clause 2 strikes out the definition of "comptroller" in view of the change of title from Comptroller of Prisons to Director of Correctional Services. This change had been effected by proclamation under the Public Service Act on April 11, 1974, and, consequent on that change, the references in the Act to the comptroller are no longer meaningful. The definition of Assistant Director is added, as there are now several Assistant Directors.

The definition of "Deputy Director" has been inserted, as section 7a of the Act already provides for a Deputy

Comptroller, and new section 7a proposed by this Bill provides for the appointment of a Deputy Director and Assistant Directors for the purposes of the Act. This is not inconsistent with appointments already made by the Public Service Board. The definition of "the Director" is inserted in place of the definition of "comptroller".

Clause 3 (a) is consequential on the change of title from "Comptroller of Prisons" to "Director of Correctional Services". Clause 3 (b) repeals subsection (2) of section 6 as it relates to acts done prior to the first appointment of a comptroller and is no longer relevant. Clause 4 is consequential on the change of title from "Comptroller of Prisons" to "Director of Correctional Services". Clause 5 repeals section 7a and re-enacts it in a form consistent and in conformity with existing policy. Clauses 6 and 7 are consequential.

Clause 8 repeals section 12 and re-enacts it without in any way altering its effect but omitting reference to the second schedule, which is to be repealed by clause 38 of this Bill. The second schedule contains a list and descriptions of prisons in existence when this Act had been first enacted. That list is out of date because of the closure of some prisons and the establishment of others by proclamation and, this process being a continuing one, no useful purpose will be served in perpetuating that schedule. Section 12 is accordingly repealed and replaced by a new section that has the same legal effect as the present section but is more meaningful.

Clause 9 makes an amendment to section 14 that is consequential on the enactment of section 82 of the Community Welfare Act and sections 55 and 70 of the Juvenile Courts Act. Clauses 10 to 25 are consequential. Clause 26 (a) and Clause 26 (c) are consequential. Clause 26 (b) makes a conversion to decimal currency. Clauses 27 to 29 are consequential. Clauses 30 to 35 make conversions to decimal currency. Clause 36 (a) is consequential. Clause 36 (b) is consequential on the enactment of the Community Welfare Act. Clause 37 substitutes the word "dollars" for the word "pounds" in section 67. Clause 38 repeals the second schedule for the reason given in the explanation of clause 8.

Clause 39 repeals subsections (2) and (3) of section 3 of the Prisons Act Amendment Act, 1954. Subsection (2) of that section was a transitional provision that dealt with persons who had been detained in prison at the commencement of the 1954 amending Act by virtue of the provisions of section 77a of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act or section 122a of the Maintenance Act, 1926-1952 (as it then was called). There are now no prisoners in prison who had been detained since the commencement of that 1954 Act under either of those provisions, and that subsection is therefore no longer relevant. Subsection (3) of that section was also a transitional provision that had validated certain regulations relating to earnings or gratuities of prisoners, which had been made before the passing of the 1954 amending Act. Those regulations have since been replaced by regulations made in 1959, and subsection (3) therefore now serves no purpose. The repeal of subsections (2) and (3) of the 1954 Act is necessary for removing from the Statute Book two provisions which had not been given a "home" in the principal Act and which are now no longer meaningful. If they are not repealed it would be necessary to include the 1954 amending Act (which is now exhausted) as a separate Act in the new edition of consolidated Acts.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY secured the adjournment of the debate.

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from October 31. Page 1837.)

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I move:

To strike out all words after "That" and insert:

The Bill be withdrawn and redrafted to provide for—

- (a) abolition of rural land tax on land used for primary production; and
- (b) reconstruction of the scale under which the amount of land tax to be paid by all taxpayers is computed.

I thank the House for the opportunity to expand the matter that can be discussed under this Bill. In introducing this Bill, the Government has sought to alter the Land Tax Act to correct an anomaly which has been shown up and which has been recognised over a period of years whereby a person who has sold a property can claim that he is not responsible for paying land tax when, in fact, the Lands Titles Office has been notified of a change in land ownership but, because of the work load in that office, the necessary clerical work has not been completed. It was probably of no great avail to the organisations associated with the sale of property if it was clearly stated in the notice of sale that a person was responsible for the land tax on the property from the date of purchase and that, if the tax was levied or charged against the original owner until the time that the necessary transfers were effected through the office, he would become responsible for payment. With the marked increase in the amount of land tax levied on the people of South Australia, a person who has sold his property and who has been caught up with the long delay that is so often associated with transfers through the Lands Titles Office may receive an account for several thousand dollars, and be embarrassed by having to meet that account.

Under the Bill as introduced by the Government, certain words will be inserted to overcome that difficulty. Apart from the validity of that subject matter (and there can be no argument about that), I believe that the problem of land tax in South Australia has got completely out of hand. We have a situation that is not unlike the situation concerning water rates. Under the new system, 20 per cent of the State is revalued each year on a rotating basis, so that after five years all areas will have been revalued. However, the effect of land tax or any other tax that relates to unimproved land values is that people in some areas are asked to pay on the existing formula amounts for land tax which sometimes represents a 1 500 per cent increase on the tax that has applied in the immediate past.

I mention as an example two properties, one on each side of the road, used for the same purpose. Perhaps they are held by two members of the same family, but they are not held in the same ownership. The same equipment may be used for wheatgrowing, vinegrowing, or for some other purpose, and if one holding is in a newly-assessed area, the valuation may be five times as great as that which applies to land immediately across the road. The land tax levied against the property is commensurately greater, as is the council rate, if the local council uses the unimproved value to determine the assessment of that property. This creates difficult situations. Certainly, it causes much social upheaval. It is a problem that reflects the marked inflationary trend in land prices, which has been with us for the past 18 months. I submit it is unjust that people should be called on to make such payments without there being a rationalisation of the amount that people in newly-assessed areas are called on to pay.

In my time in this House previous attempts have been made to abolish land tax on land used for rural production.

We have been often told by the Treasurer that one of the problems he faces when he goes to the Grants Commission is to prove that South Australia is doing all that it should be doing to raise taxes similar to the taxes being raised by non-claimant States. In this instance he can have no argument, because South Australia is the only State that still maintains land tax on rural production areas. Eliminating those areas from land tax would not cause any problem with claims before the Grants Commission.

In 1971, as a result of a revaluation and reassessment of properties, it became necessary for the Government to introduce amending legislation to revalue many rural properties, because the Government had told the rural organisations and the people of this State that it intended to raise by way of tax on rural land the sum of \$1 100 000 only. Yet, on the valuations that applied and on the scale in vogue, the actual figure was to be more than \$1 325 000. The Government fulfilled its promise to the community by having that revaluation to reassess the position for rural properties and to bring the income to the State from rural land tax back to that figure of \$1 100 000. As well as can be determined, that is the figure that has been used for a long time, and the Government has not suggested or reported to this House or elsewhere that it intended to raise more than \$1 100 000 from rural land tax.

We say (and I said during the last election) that we would abolish land tax on property used for rural production. That immediately indicates that we do not believe there should be a loss of revenue to the State from those areas in the rural sector where houses are situated. In other words, there needs to be a reorganisation of the valuation or of the amount of money returned to the State by way of land tax which allows a tax to be imposed on an area of land used for housing, be it in the country or in the city; but on that land directly related to rural production (not to rural living) this tax should be abolished. I seek that by the amendment I have moved.

Another matter causing alarm to many people who have looked into the land assessment position and the potential land tax that will apply for 1974-75, for that 20 per cent of the State that has been reassessed, is something that needs considerable public scrutiny. The responsible department has forwarded accounts to groups that are partnerships or companies. It has also commenced sending out accounts for land tax purely alphabetically. As a result, people throughout the State whose surnames start with the letters A and B have received their land tax accounts and, to my knowledge, those whose surnames begin with the letter C have probably received theirs within the past few days. The point is that, instead of all those people who would be adversely affected by this massive increase in land tax (a 1 500 per cent increase, in some cases) receiving their accounts at the same time so that they can communicate one with the other and make the public generally aware of the consequences of the present system, (or more particularly of the use of the present scale on the reassessed values), if the accounts are sent out to small groups of people and if we accept that there are people whose surnames begin with each letter of the alphabet, it means there are 26 groups. If the accounts are sent out to two groups a week, or less, it will be 13, 14, or 15 weeks before everyone has received his account. As the accounts are payable within 30 days, many people aggrieved by the size of the increase in the tax will have been forced to pay their accounts before the next groups who are also in a difficult situation with the massive increase foisted upon them. Those people, too, will receive their accounts but will not have the same degree of public support for any

argument they may put forward because at any time only a few people in the community will be immediately affected or will recognise that they are immediately affected.

Because the Government has acted like this, I suggest it is wise that every person who expects to pay land tax should immediately apply, either by telephone or in writing, to the Land Tax Division to determine what his rate of tax will be for the current financial year. If people take this voluntary action to determine what their accounts will be, more and more people will appreciate the massive increase that has been imposed on them and the real problem that is with us will be highlighted. In the absence of Ministerial control of the House at the moment, I hope that at least one Minister somewhere is listening in so that he can accept the validity of my argument.

Mr. Coumbe: I have never seen this before—no Minister on the front bench.

Dr. EASTICK: Perhaps there has been a sudden Caucus meeting to appoint a new Minister of Education! I believe there is a real case for restructuring the present scale of land tax. It will be necessary to institute a scheme giving everyone an opportunity to receive a land tax account based on equality, notwithstanding the present inequality in the new valuation scheme. I am not attacking the valuation; I am attacking this inequality brought about by a valuation scheme involving only 20 per cent of the State at any one time. The Government, having accepted the responsibility in this regard for water (and, I believe, sewerage), should accept this argument in respect of land tax. Certainly, it would be consistent with the Treasurer's pronouncements to the United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia and the Stockowners Association when they made representations to him.

One further point is that the alteration I am seeking will benefit people throughout the State. It is not merely a variation that will benefit the rural community. My amendment calls for a restructuring of the whole scale so that, wherever a person in this State is required to pay land tax, that tax will be equitable. I doubt whether the present \$2.50 minimum charge is a reasonable figure, having regard to the cost of administration. For the benefit of members who have not considered this matter, clause 13 makes clear that, where an aggregate property or a single property does not warrant a charge of \$2.50, no tax will apply. This figure was increased in 1971, after having been for a considerable time the equivalent of \$2 in the old currency. Many anomalies are creeping into the system, and I hope that members will accept my amendment and that the legislation will be withdrawn and returned in a much more balanced and equitable way than it has been presented.

Mr. RUSSACK (Gouger): I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Land tax was first introduced in South Australia in 1884, and has remained with us since. This type of tax was introduced in Victoria in 1877 (and I am sure it was introduced for the same purpose in South Australia) with the object of breaking up large holdings. I suggest that this need in South Australia has long since passed, and that rural land tax cannot now be justified. The first part of the amendment moved by the Leader deals with the abolition of rural land tax. The first reason for this tax to be abolished is the one I have just stated. Secondly, I consider that the area owned by a farmer must be likened to the plant of a commercial enterprise. Such an enterprise may be established in a municipality on land that is worth, say, \$10 000 and the plant may be worth \$250 000 or more, yet no tax is applied to that plant. A farmer cannot

function unless he uses the land to produce cereals, beef cattle, fat lambs, or wool. It is only the land that makes it possible for him to produce.

Therefore, is it fair that such a tax should apply to this means of productivity, when no tax applies to plant used in a commercial enterprise? The third reason is that, when the Government (and particularly the present Government) wishes to introduce a new tax or to increase an existing tax, it invariably justifies the move by comparing South Australia with other States. Because other States have a similar tax, or it is applied at a certain percentage, the Government says we must fall in line. Using the same criterion, I suggest there is a strong reason why rural land tax in South Australia should be abolished, because other States do not have such a tax of any consequence. According to my information, taken from the Taxpayers Association annual taxation summary, in Victoria there is no tax on land used for primary production. New South Wales had such a tax, although in that State as late as December, 1973, some provisions for such a tax were repealed.

In Western Australia there is no tax on land used for primary production but, according to my investigations, I believe that land used for primary production in Queensland up to a value of \$45 000 is exempt. However, I have a note stating that there may be a larger exemption available under Part A, so it seems that, in some circumstances in Queensland, there is an exemption beyond \$45 000. Rural land tax should be abolished in South Australia, if only for those three reasons. The need for its introduction in 1884 has passed, as large areas are not now held without being used for production. Secondly, the land used by a primary producer can be likened to plant used in a commercial secondary enterprise, and, thirdly, we are the only mainland State with any significant land tax applying to the rural sector. Within the past few months this tax has become unbearable and unacceptable, and it is an iniquitous impost that cannot be carried by many landholders in areas that have been recently revalued.

Last evening I attended a meeting of landowners in Tarlee: the hall was packed, and this meeting was not a singular experience of recent origin. Some weeks ago a meeting was held in Bute, and meetings have been held in Meadows and Clarendon. I say in all sincerity that people have attended the meetings not because the tax has been levied: they are concerned. Is it fair, and can it be justified, that a tax can increase by at least 800 per cent on average and in some isolated cases by up to 1 500 per cent? In one instance, the tax increased from \$213.56 to \$2 164.80. I must be fair and say that, although this involved the same area of land, last year that land was in the names of two or three members of the family but that, during the year, a company was formed and the land placed under one ownership. Because of the aggregation of the various assessments, the land tax has increased astronomically. However, this is still the same piece of land capable of the same production and with the same number of people working it. The increase to which I have referred is therefore unjustified.

Why has land tax increased so drastically over the last two years? Why should property owners become so concerned (I believe genuinely) about this matter? It is because of the valuation system that has been adopted. In 1970, when the last quinquennial assessment was made, there was a steep increase. We were then experiencing a cost-price squeeze and there was a rural depression. Farmers objected to and appealed against the valuation that was then made. Having considered the matter, the Premier stated that an adjustment was necessary.

In 1971, the new Valuation of Land Act was passed and a new position of Valuer-General created. As I have stated previously, I do not in any way criticise that officer or his department, or, indeed, the officers of the State Taxes Department, who can only act solely within the confines of the relevant legislation. The officers concerned can value land according to sales and, when a valuation is made, apply the tax. I should like now to relate what has happened in this respect. Whether this is coincidental or whether it was designed so that there would not be the united opposition that occurred in 1970, I do not know. Having inquired, I have ascertained that the land within the Port Broughton District Council's boundary has not been valued since 1970, although this area is covered by the Act. Indeed, the definition contained in the Act states that an area is either a municipal or district council area as defined in the Local Government Act. It therefore seems that valuations are being made in those areas.

However, the Port Broughton council area was not valued, although the Bute area was. Kadina was omitted, although Clinton was valued. Central Yorke Peninsula was left, and Snowtown was not valued for the purpose of land tax and ancillary rates. Blythe was valued, although Balaklava, Saddleworth, and Auburn were omitted. Riverton was valued, although Owen was left. It therefore seems that the system at present being used leaves much to be desired, and that it has been evolved so that there will not be a united opposition to the valuations or as many appeals as were lodged in 1970.

When a valuation is made, it affects not only land tax but also other rates and charges. I have taken out two examples to illustrate the effect these valuations are having on water rating. Although one person's land tax increased from \$48 to \$502, his water rates increased from \$405 to \$486 a year. In the example to which I referred earlier, the land tax on a property in the Kybunga area increased from \$213 to \$2 164, although the water rates increased only from \$994 to \$1 106. One should not claim that land tax is a burden unless one can state facts to substantiate such a claim.

I can state without hesitation that in the Gilbert Valley, in the Mid North of the State, there is good productive land. A survey was recently conducted by the Lower North Advisory Service which has an office at Riverton and which has affiliations with about 100 farmers in South Australia. This organisation conducted a pilot survey on 20 farms, the average size of which was about 420 ha, in the Riverton District Council area between Manoora and Tarlee. A total of 91 per cent of the land on these farms was arable, 37 per cent of the area being used for cropping. The value of land and fixed improvements averaged \$136 700. The plant used for production was valued at \$10 000 a property, and the non-productive plant \$2 998, making an average total of \$12 998 invested in plant. The average value of livestock was \$17 575, making the total sum invested \$167 273.

The average employment component involved a labour unit of two males. The rotation system used involved an average of about 141 ha of cereal, 40 ha fallow and 222 ha for grazing. The gross farm income was \$19 670 and farm costs, before family labour was taken out, were \$15 000. This included depreciation of plant of \$1 600, leaving an income for a one-family unit of \$5 000. It was a two-unit labour proposition, and the sum of \$5 000 was arrived at after allowing for the other labour unit of \$3 000. This survey was carried out for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1974. Over the last 10 years income from these properties

has varied from a base of zero to plus 50 per cent and to minus 42 per cent.

To subsidise living on these properties it has been necessary to use depreciation. Borrowing ability is restricted to 49 per cent of the market value of the property. Taking \$140 as the market value for each 0.4 ha, the purchasing power is limited to 162 ha for 15 years. Rates and taxes over the 10 years have varied from 2 per cent in some years to 10.45 per cent in other years; this includes water rates, land tax, council rates, etc. Because of the fluctuations, how can a fixed rate be justified on properties such as this? A secondary industry may be established by a commercial enterprise on a property worth \$10 000, on which the land tax is \$20. The income from the property on which the factory stands may be \$1 000 000 a year. Is it not therefore an imposition on the rural community that land tax should be applied as it is at present? There is therefore a very real case for abolishing rural land tax in this State.

Regarding the second part of the amendment, I point out that the scale of charges has not been amended since 1966, but valuations have altered drastically since then. While the valuation of a property can increase threefold, the taxation on that property can increase by 700 per cent, 800 per cent or even 1 000 per cent. When this scale was considered there was definitely not the steep percentage increase in inflation that we have today. It was considered that, if a person acquired new property, he had the possibility of earning more income, and there should be applied a greater amount of taxation, in accordance with the scale. Perhaps that principle could be justified at one time. But how the situation has changed! Nowadays it is not because a landowner has acquired more land that his valuation has increased so drastically: it is simply the result of inflation. It is not that he can produce any more.

Of course, productivity has increased as a result of advances in technology and also as a result of the work of Agriculture Department advisory officers and the Lower North Advisory Service, which has provided me with the statistics that I have used this evening. Although productivity has increased, today prices are slumping. Cattle prices are half what they were some time ago, while wool and sheep prices are also depressed. Further, cereal crops have been reduced as a result of rust and other diseases.

Mr. Payne: What about wool prices?

Mr. RUSSACK: They are low, too. As in other industries, the costs of rural industries are increasing, while income is decreasing. In other words, there is a cost-price squeeze. A business cannot spend more than it earns. In connection with the average income of \$5 000 for a private enterprise farming unit, a person may work up to 50 or 60 hours a week. Farming cannot be tied down to set hours. So, the scale of taxation is most unrealistic not only in rural areas but also in general areas. The scale should therefore be adjusted so that it is commensurate with present-day values. During 1973-74 the income from land tax throughout the State was about \$11 000 000. I recently asked the Treasurer what amount of rural land tax was received. His reply was as follows:

An analysis of land tax levied for 1973-74 will not be available until late in November. Using available statistics, it is estimated that the 1973-74 tax levied in respect of land used for primary production was \$1 375 000, of which about \$300 000 applied to land used for primary production within the Metropolitan Planning Area. Therefore, the figure for 1973-74 rural land tax would be about \$1 075 000.

I cannot understand why \$300 000 applied to land used for primary production within the Metropolitan Planning Area should be deducted. People who hold land in the Metro-

politan Planning Area which is used for primary industry also pay an additional tax of 1c for every \$20 of the valuation. Nowadays many people in rural industries find it almost impossible to meet the costs that are levied. In fact, if the Government is not careful, it will bleed to death, through high taxation, the private sector. In order to pay a tax, people must have the ability to pay it. I know of a man who has lived in an area for 50 years, having traded with the same bank for 37 years. He is not indebted to that bank or to the stock firms. However, when he asked the bank for \$1 000 carry-over cash because he had a liquidity problem and needed ready funds, the bank said that it could not grant the loan, as it had to save the money for someone who was worse off. The point I am making is that, even though a person may have assets and may be continuing in rural industry, he may have to wait for years, in some cases, for the final payment on his grain.

Mr. Nankivell: You can't eat your assets.

Mr. RUSSACK: True. Some people will find it most difficult to meet the increase of several hundred dollars in land tax. I eagerly and anxiously support the Leader's amendment, which I am sure all members will earnestly consider and support so that these matters can be put into their right perspective and so that viability will be possible for those who produce the necessary food in this country.

Mr. EVANS (Fisher): I support the amendment. Members will know that, in the Hills area (and this covers the largest part of my district), concern has recently been expressed about development and subdivision involving the cutting up of rural properties. One of the causes of cutting up these properties is the cost of rates and taxes. As the urban community spreads towards the farming community, a conflict of interest arises. Today, the Treasurer received a deputation from the Stirling council asking that all subdivisions be suspended in the area until a plan from the State Planning Authority was available. As I have said, people in the Stirling council area and neighbouring areas are causing the number of subdivisions to increase mainly because of the cost of rates and taxes. The member for Gouger has pointed out the problems facing the rural community in meeting these charges. In the Stirling council area, the unimproved value of 72.8 ha of scrub land is \$180 000. If a person does not own this land and is borrowing money to pay for it at a rate of 10 per cent, he then has to pay to the State Government 4 per cent on every \$1 of unimproved value of the property. Therefore, on the money he has borrowed, he pays an extra 4 per cent or 38c on every \$10 over \$180 000.

Members opposite will immediately say that if the property is worth \$180 000 he is a rich man and can afford to make these payments. The member for Mitchell is trying to interject. I thought he was concerned about the environment. It is in the interests of everyone in the State that a property of 72.8 ha of scrub land should be retained in that state. However, if it has an unimproved value of \$180 000, the owner pays land tax at the rate of \$3 420 a year. It is impossible for him to go on paying such a sum. One action he can take is to declare his land open space under section 61 of the Planning and Development Act. A person living in Coromandel Valley has done that with his property. Now the Minister of Education has a problem in trying to establish what is a fair and reasonable price for the property, as the Education Department wishes to acquire it for a school. It was declared as open space in 1969, and now the Valuation Department believes that it is worth much less than any neighbouring land. Over the five years, the only saving the owner has had is in rates and taxes. The value of this saving does not nearly equal the

tens of thousands of dollars in price that the department is trying to beat him down. I now caution anyone who is considering declaring his land as open space under section 61, because the owner is not protected at all, being placed in an impossible situation.

Owners of land in the Hills area find that it is now considered valuable because it is close to the city. If they intend to keep it in its natural state or use it for primary production, they face charges such as the sum of \$3 420 a year to which I have referred for areas of 72·8 ha to 80·9 ha. In the Stirling council area, there are areas of 72·8 ha that are totally cleared, although not many such areas are left. Owners of such properties also face a charge of \$3 420 a year, and it is just not possible for farmers in that situation to survive. They must also pay council rates and, in many cases, the Engineering and Water Supply Department has put water mains past the door, so that water rates must also be paid, even though the owners of such properties may have committed much capital over the years, even borrowing money for the purpose, to put in their own water supplies. It is not inconceivable that sewerage mains will be put past some properties. In that case, sewerage rates will also be payable, as the Government is always willing to charge people an extra 30 per cent for this purpose.

The Leader has made the point that each year one-fifth of the State is valued. First, the Government sends out accounts to companies, trusts, and partnerships; then accounts are sent out alphabetically. As the Leader and the member for Gouger have said, as a result of this system only a small number of people object about rating at any one time. Even in the case of the one community, such as Stirling, Clarendon, and Kangarilla, only a small section of the community complains, because at this stage only people whose names commence with the letters A, B and C, and companies, have received accounts. We are not yet through one-eighth of the alphabet, in one-fifth of the State.

Mr. Nankivell: That's a clever way to do it, isn't it?

Mr. EVANS: It is. I accept that the original intention was to spread the department's work load. That was acceptable when we had a stable Liberal and Country Party Commonwealth Government and inflation was running at a reasonable rate. However, with the present inflation rate, land values are escalating by up to 100 per cent in a two-year period, and this system is totally unacceptable. One-fifth of the State has been valued in the past nine months and one section of the community will have to pay that rate for five years, unless the Government accepts the motion and amends the Act.

In future, because of deflation, values will drop off, so the next section of people will pay a lesser rate. The people in one-fifth of the State are being penalised substantially and the people in the second section will be penalised to a lesser extent because of the position regarding agricultural products. Kangarilla is just outside my district, and people who attended a meeting of the Kangarilla and Clarendon Dairymen's Association were disturbed at how high their rates would be. Only about eight of those at the meeting had received their rate notices. Some others had telephoned the department, asking what the increase was likely to be, while others were about to take that action. These people just cannot survive.

One person who paid \$200 in land tax last year has had to pay \$2 069 this year. Another person at Bradbury had his land tax increased from \$17 to \$335, or by about 2 000 per cent. No-one can meet that sort of commitment. The property comprises about 28 ha. It is an old pughole

and it was used for clay and silicone production. It cannot be so used any more, because of the regulations regarding catchment areas. The owner could not argue about the valuation on the property, because if it was placed on the market people would pay at that valuation so that they could build a house and commute to the city. There is no way in which those properties can stay intact. The member for Gouger has said that, when land tax was introduced in Victoria 100 years ago, the purpose in introducing it was to break up the large estates. If that was also the intention in the Hills area, it has been successful. The Minister of Environment and Conservation and his officers have a concern in this matter and, if the Government does not vary the present rate, all the persons in the Stirling council area will cut up large household allotments when they are told by February next how much they will have to pay.

Although some members may say that the land tax cannot be high on some old housing properties, some properties in the Stirling council area would have about 8 ha of ornamental garden around the houses. The Minister of Environment and Conservation advertises these areas as a tourist attraction. These people would be condemned by conservationists if they cut up the properties into allotments of about ·2 ha each. However, they will have to do that, because the land is worth about \$10 000 to \$12 000 for ·4 ha (an acre) unimproved, and the people cannot pay land tax as provided in the schedule at present merely for a residential property. I consider that the \$2·50 exemption figure that the Leader has mentioned is too low. The inflation rate has increased by more than 100 per cent since 1966, so the exemption would need to be increased to about \$5. The cost of collecting \$5 at present would warrant that sort of charge. At present the Treasurer has a problem regarding the Hills section. The farmers have the problem that beef prices have reduced considerably; the applegrowers do not receive a fair return; and the vegetable growers face a fluctuating market, although in recent times they have received reasonable prices.

Dairy farms in the Hills are small, but their viability has decreased. Those dairy farmers who have had to borrow money have had to do so at high interest rates, because of the actions of the Commonwealth Government. They cannot meet all their commitments and, if we consider that they should go to the wall, we will leave the Act as it is. However, if we consider that they should be saved, we will exempt those who use land entirely for primary production. We must include scrub land in the definition of "primary production" land. We must do that for conservation reasons and also because farmers use that land for shelter for cattle. Recently I asked the Government to purchase about 40 ha of natural bush land but it refused, saying that it did not have the money. However, it expects a person to pay land tax on that property. We should include all natural bush land in the definition.

I support the amendment, because the position is serious. The Government has said that it wants to raise an additional \$1 000 000 from land tax this year, but we know that it will more than double that amount. It has under-estimated regarding the amount to be received and it should give the farmer a concession and a fair go, instead of kicking him in the teeth, as the Commonwealth Government has been doing. I would not like the State Government to take similar action.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): I support the amendment for reasons that should be obvious to the Government members who have listened to this debate. Precious few

of those members have been in the Chamber, and even fewer Ministers have been present. Obviously, the Ministers are showing scant interest in a matter of vital concern to many people in this State. The purport of the amendment is clear: first, we seek to bring this State into line with the other States regarding the levying of the land tax. Members of this Government and their confreres in Canberra have shown scant respect for and little knowledge of the predicament that rural producers are in. That is not surprising, in view of the background and the traditional links of the personnel who make up the Parliamentary Labor Party in this place and in Canberra. Nevertheless, I would have thought that Government members in South Australia would seek to inform themselves on the plight of these people. I would have thought that a debate of such importance would attract more interest from Government members. Again, they have merely illustrated that they are interested only in one section of the community: the metropolitan community, and then only a certain section of that community, namely, trade union organisations, which comprise only a small percentage of the total population.

South Australia is out of step with the other States as regards the levying of this tax. The matter has come before this House because of the impact of these current reassessments, and that impact is disastrous. It behoves the Government to inform itself of the effect of the tax. I only hope that the Treasurer takes the time out to study the facts put before him this evening by the member for Gouger and the member for Fisher, who have quoted specific examples of the way in which this tax operates. This tax does not operate in this way in any other State. It is the Opposition's policy that land tax on rural land should not be levied and that we should fall in line with the practice in other States. We have heard much from the Treasurer from time to time (and this was alluded to by the Leader) that we must tax with a severity equal to that of the other States in order to uphold our claims for specific grants from the Grants Commission.

That argument certainly does not apply in this case, because none of the other States levies this tax. Considerable benefit would be obtained by removing this levy on rural producers. There is no getting away from the fact that it is capital taxation that causes these people trouble. I have received from the Gumeracha District Council a letter that is relevant to the amendment moved by the Leader. The taxing field of local government is limited, and the taxes it levies are mostly capital taxes. True, local government can impose dog registration fees and other minor taxes, but these are insignificant, and generally the taxes levied by local government in terms of the Local Government Act are capital taxes. This letter refers to the severe hampering of local government in its ability to raise revenue because of the incursion and impact of land tax on ratable properties in the district council area, especially in rural areas.

The Minister of Local Government has repeatedly asserted that local government must stand on its own two feet. Of course, this implies that local government must get more money, but the Minister has never bothered to enunciate exactly how it is to get more money. According to the Minister's most recent statement, the way local government is to obtain more money is to grow bigger. How will this give local government more money, especially when it will employ the same number of staff as are currently employed? The Gumeracha District Council has lost over a third of its ratable property as a result of Government activity. The Government has taken up land

for afforestation, it has taken over the town of Chain of Ponds, and these and other activities have resulted in a loss of more than one-third of the council's ratable property. I believe other members have received a copy of this letter, which states:

Local Government Finance—Land Tax

Over the past year the efficiency and effectiveness of local government in South Australia has been under perhaps more scrutiny than ever before—the highlight of this being the Royal Commission into Local Government Boundaries, the general basis of this costly inquiry being that areas should be enlarged to increase ratable revenue to a point of making each area "viable". It is obvious at this point of time that the report of the Royal Commission will not be adopted in its entirety (if at all), thus it is most unlikely that this exercise will prove to be of any real assistance in the financing of local government generally.

Government policy is that local government should stand on its own feet—and Government has decreed how local government can raise revenue—it being restricted to the rating of properties. However, councils in South Australia are hampered even in this one field because the Government "skims the cream" from this by levying land tax—and the ability of local government to exploit this "restricted" field is being seriously threatened by the extremely steep increases in the land tax assessments. Council believes that the future of local government lies in its ability to be self-supporting and that its revenue-raising fields should not be trespassed by the Government. Members therefore respectfully request that serious consideration be given by the Government to vacating this area to allow local government to accept the responsibilities and provide the services demanded of it by ratepayers.

The letter commends itself to me as an eminently sensible suggestion, which if accepted would help local government do what the Minister says it should do, that is, be self-supporting. But how can local government be self-supporting when the Minister denies it funds? Many rural councils are denied funds for roadworks and other allied programmes as a result of the financial stringency placed on the State Government by its Commonwealth colleagues. How the Minister can expect local government to be self-supporting is a mystery to me, to all other members on this side, and to members of local government themselves.

What will be the result of making local council areas bigger? This is the Minister's solution to the problem: if we make councils bigger, by some miraculous means we make them more efficient, and we enhance their ability to finance themselves. This is utter rubbish. The fact is that all present staffs are to be retained. Even though the Minister suggests that he will take some of the top men into his own department, those officers have to be paid, and they will still be on the public pay-roll. How is local government to be funded? If local government is to stand on its own two feet, the only way councils can raise funds is by levying capital taxes, thereby increasing rate revenue.

The recommendation that has come forward from the Gumeracha council should receive serious consideration and, I believe, the support of this House. As has been stated, the Government is out of step with Governments in the other States, and I believe that is making it increasingly difficult for rural councils to raise rate revenue. I genuinely believe that the fairest way to tax rural producers is by income tax. No-one can deny that rural incomes have been fluctuating violently in the last few years. In just about every area of primary production, producers have been subject to wild fluctuations in their market prospects and their prices. The Government saw fit to reassess land tax when we had a real rural depression on our hands not so many years ago, since I have been in this House. The Government must acknowledge the fact that rural producers are again in serious difficulties. These taxes are levied year in year out, irrespective of market trends

or the prosperity of the rural producers. What is the Government afraid of—that they will earn too much money? Surely, if the rural producers do earn more money, they will pay increased income tax, so the Government will get it from them one way or another; but the capital taxes are crippling our rural industries, particularly those in marginal operation. These current increases have dug far deeper and the bite has been far more severe than to affect merely the marginal producers.

The scales are so constructed that there are astronomical increases in the charges being levied. When we view the position of our primary producers in relation to the primary producers in the other States, we see how severely our primary producers are treated. Some people, instead of paying \$100 in land tax, are paying thousands of dollars. The situation is far more serious than it was when the Government saw fit to change the assessments not all that long ago. One has only to examine the scales to see how these assessments are having a disastrous effect on the country people. The Government cannot for a moment suggest that these properties have suddenly become five times as productive as hitherto. In many cases, the assessment has doubled and, if the land tax has not doubled, it may have quadrupled or increased five times, or even 12 times.

Two things basically the amendment seeks to do, both of which are essential. First, we should seek to put our primary producers at least on a par with those in the other States: we should seek not to tax them out of existence but to put them in a competitive position equal to that of producers in the other States. If the Government is worried (and it has no need to be) about rural income, income tax can take care of that as it does in the other States. Secondly, the amendment seeks to look hard at these schedules. If a property has a valuation that has doubled (and many of them are being doubled), the tax can become astronomical—five, six, or seven times greater. That will put people in an impossible position.

It is essential that the Leader's amendment be seriously considered by the Government, as it involves matters of the gravest concern. I have mentioned the impact that this is having not only on the position of our rural producers compared to those in other States but also on the ability of local government to raise rate revenue. As for the gratuitous nonsense that the Minister of Local Government gives this House about local government standing on its own feet, while he offers not one constructive suggestion about how it should stand on its own feet, we have here the answer to the Minister. I hope that the Government will implement these suggestions and get out of this field of taxation, particularly in rural areas where grave difficulties are being experienced not only in trying to be viable but also in maintaining the present work force. I support the amendment and trust the House will do likewise.

Mr. McANANEY (Heysen): I strongly support the amendment. Many times in this House I have stressed that the value of land in this country depends on the ability of the people who have created the wealth that comes from the land. There is some argument about the spread of cities: that, in the development of a city, a farm close to the city becomes valuable, and there should be some form of tax on such land. There is a logical argument there because, if a person works hard and gets a reasonable income and the Government takes 50 per cent or 60 per cent of it, consider the people with unearned income from the increase in the value of such land getting off scot free. Millionaires have developed in Adelaide merely through acquiring land. There should be a tax that attracts a rea-

sonable share of such income. The situation that has developed with land tax through increased assessments and the amount of land tax now being paid is just ridiculous.

I support what the member for Kavel has said about local government. I have a copy of a letter from the District Council of Strathalbyn, sent to the Treasurer for his consideration. If the councils and corporations are to survive, they need more revenue and, if the Minister of Local Government will not give them a reasonable share of the income derived from the petrol tax collected in those areas (and failure to do so is a crime in itself), more money will have to be collected in rates, but the people having to pay the rates cannot afford to pay land tax as well. There is a great cry that the Commonwealth Government has assisted people to make their properties bigger so that they can survive. However, it means that now those people will have to pay four or five times the expected amount of land tax on those areas and this will reduce their viability again.

I was talking recently to a young farmer with a young family who, having just bought more land, got a sudden shock when he found he had to pay 50 per cent more interest than he had expected to; and now he will be up for a substantial increase in land tax. On his farm, there would be at least as much work to be done as five people working in a factory would do. He said, "If I have to pay this land tax, I will have to sack my workmen and do more work myself." He is already working an 80-hour or 90-hour week. It is not sensible that he and many other farmers should have to pay this greatly increased land tax; it is out of all proportion.

I know we have a spendthrift and irresponsible Treasurer who, in the first four months of this financial year, spent 32.1 per cent more than he did in the corresponding four months of last year. Any Treasurer who does that under present living conditions is, to me, an irresponsible Treasurer of the lowest order. When he gets up and boasts, as he does, in the House of what is good in the State of South Australia, I am amazed that he has the colossal nerve to get up and admit to having spent 32 per cent more money than he spent in the corresponding period last year. I admire the Minister of Education, who has done a good job. He is capable but has had an armchair ride. There has been no increase in our school population.

The SPEAKER: Order! There is no reference in the Bill to population.

Mr. McANANEY: Very well, but let the Speaker run the House, not the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that we are discussing a Bill.

Mr. McANANEY: All right, but I object to the Clerk—

The SPEAKER: Order! We are discussing an amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. McANANEY: Yes, and I admire you, Mr. Speaker, but many times the Clerk—

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McANANEY: If a member is speaking about raising revenue, he has a right in this House to discuss how it has been spent and often wasted. That is my democratic right, as the Minister of Education claimed in this afternoon's debate. Let us get back to what I was speaking about when I was so rudely interrupted. Land tax is an unfair burden, particularly with a sudden increase. The Meadows area is the only part of my district that has been reassessed at a high level this year. Farms in that area are of a reasonable size, and owners wish to continue on the

properties. They have some of the most beautiful country in South Australia but, if they are forced to pay high taxes, they will have to sell some of their land. It will have to be sold in 30 ha or 8 ha lots, because in the watershed area an allotment of 8 ha is allowed. If this land has to be sold, the remainder of their properties will not be viable as dairy farms, and these people will be replaced by people from the city who will run horses.

African daisy and other pests will flourish because the newcomers will not look after the land as well as these farmers who have been on the land all their lives look after it, so that the Hills area will change in atmosphere and general appearance. Some of these people are now handicapped because they are located in the watershed area and cannot carry out the activities that they would like to. As the member for Fisher said, much of this is natural bushland and country, and it should be allowed to continue as such without the impost of high land tax. The Government must take some action in regard to this tax, because in these areas values have increased two or three times. However, owners admit that, comparing sales around the area, these are reasonable valuations, because available land has been purchased at prices well above its productive value by people who have accumulated wealth in the city and wish to live in the country.

On the present method of land valuation these values are realistic, so people realise they cannot appeal against the assessment, because they do not have a case for appeal. However, they also come into a higher tax bracket. One chap at Echunga was paying \$186 but now has to pay \$2 300. In an almost identical case, an old chap and his wife, both 70 years of age, struggle out and milk cows morning and night and have to pay another \$1 600 or \$1 700 in land tax. This situation cannot be allowed to continue. In strongly supporting the amendment, I suggest that the Government should reduce land tax and base it on ability to pay. The member for Kavel said that income tax was the proper way to collect tax, and I agree with that statement. Indeed, I am a single taxpayer. Income tax is charged according to ability to pay, and it is not inflationary. This is the way taxes should be levied. It is rather a disaster that income tax, rather than other taxes, is now to be reduced.

The SPEAKER: Order! We are discussing a Bill.

Mr. McANANEY: Right, Sir, I accept your ruling. I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and strongly object, as I sit down, to the Clerk advising you of what to do when I am speaking for the benefit of other members. This is a democratic country.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has been in this House long enough to know that the Speaker is in charge of the House of Assembly.

Mr. McANANEY: Yes, and he does not need the assistance of the Clerk.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Heysen.

Mr. McANANEY: Good, thanks.

The SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Heysen for the second time. The honourable member for Alexandra.

Mr. CHAPMAN (Alexandra): I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, as I believe that it is the only responsible way to approach the system of taxing our rural land. It has been obvious in the short time since I have been a member that the Government has little or no regard for the wealth-producing sector of the community. It has failed to recognise the problems faced

by those in rural areas, and has failed to recognise that there is such fluctuation in rural incomes that one cannot be faced in this community with fixed land taxes. It is reasonable, and recognised by everyone, that one must pay a tax on one's income, and that income taxing is the fairest and most reasonable system of gaining revenue from that sector of the community.

Rural land tax is cruel in several ways: it is a tax on land whether or not it produces, even on cleared land. For example, when taxes of this nature are fixed, they are required to be paid whether or not the occupier derives an income, whether he faces a drought, whether he faces a flood, or even if he is faced with the unfortunate circumstances of being burnt out by bush fires. At the appropriate time his taxes are due and payable, and there is no relief from this burden.

I have been concerned for a long time (and still am) with the system of valuing land for taxing purposes. I appreciate that land tax is applicable to unimproved values, and I concentrate on this aspect. Unimproved value of rural land is well known, and need not at any time be in dispute for the purpose of taxing under the unimproved values system. At no time should the unimproved value of rural land be governed or adjusted as a result of recent sales of land in or near the community where sales are made of land to be used for other purposes. For example, in a rural community in which it is decided to subdivide and sell land for closer settlement or other purposes, the system should not allow the flow-on values to affect land that is being retained and used for primary-producing purposes.

Basically, this is the most unfair part of the whole system. It is unreasonable to impose valuations on primary-producing land that flow from prices paid for land to be used for other purposes. The greatest problems exist in the areas adjacent to cities or in the large country towns where land has been subdivided other than for production purposes. In these areas particularly, occupiers have set out to retain their livelihood and to continue producing in a rural manner. These are the people who have been most affected.

South Australia has a dairying industry south of the metropolitan area that is virtually being taxed out of existence. It also has the wine-grapegrowing area of Southern Vales, which is also being forced into a corner as a result of unreasonable and artificially inflated rates that are being paid for land purchased other than for primary-producing purposes. This Parliament ought seriously to consider adjusting the land valuation system on which land tax is based. The mover of the amendment has explained that it is intended that householders not only in the country but also in other areas should be subjected to the payment of taxes on their household land, and the Opposition does not intend to give unreasonable or unfair protection to the rural community in that respect. Indeed, it intends that rural landholders should be taxed on their homestead land, just as people in the metropolitan area are taxed on their household land.

I now refer to the dairying industry. If ever there was an industry, be it a secondary or primary-producing industry, in this State that was getting a rough deal, it is this industry. For many years, it was recognised that it needed subsidised protection and, indeed, it received such protection. Following the removal of the subsidy, the dairying industry has been battling and scraping for many years. Dairymen who work 40 ha and 80 ha properties are trying desperately to maintain a family farm unit and are scraping the barrel to keep their families intact on the income they receive. I refer to these people because I have

recently witnessed the sort of total income on which these families are expected to exist. Not only can they not afford the tax that was recently imposed on them: they cannot find from their gross income sufficient money to keep up their properties, maintain their stock, and feed their families.

It has often been said that it is the last straw that breaks the camel's back, and I suggest that this land tax, which applies particularly to highly productive areas south of the city, will not only break the backs of these people but also drive them out of the industry and the district altogether. This tax is forcing people who have traditionally been attached to rural production in this State out of rural districts and into city centres of the State, making them depend totally on the Government. I do not know whether this is part of the motive or the long-term master plan of this Socialist Government, but it is certainly having that effect. In the long term we cannot afford to let this Socialist policy interfere to this extent with our rural production.

We need food, and we need also to preserve the rich producing parts of the State that help feed our population. In the ordinary course of protecting not only that community but also the rest of the metropolitan population, on whom primary producers admit they depend, I support the amendment. I hope that the Government will see reason and common sense and accept it, too, thereby spreading the effects of a fair taxation system over the whole community.

Mr. GUNN (Eyre): I strongly support the amendment. This is a logical course for me to adopt when discussing this matter. All responsible members who believe that the family farm unit ought to be perpetuated should support it, too.

Mr. Keneally: You will declare yourself on this, of course?

Mr. GUNN: The member for Stuart seems to be speaking some nonsense that I cannot decipher. However, I repeat for his benefit that, if members believe in the family farm unit and want such units to continue as viable enterprises that will assist every section of the community, they will support the amendment. We in this country are faced with the situation that within years capital taxation will destroy the family farm unit unless constructive and concrete action is taken by this Government or the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Keneally: What is your area of complaint: the rates struck or the total valuation of a property?

Mr. GUNN: Both. Unfortunately, the valuations are so unrealistic and have been forced up by the inflationary situation with which we are faced and which is the direct result of the actions of the Socialist Government in Canberra.

Mr. Keneally: But we're dealing with completely different circumstances. Land tax is based on the unimproved values.

Mr. GUNN: We are dealing with two completely different matters. Land tax is based on an unimproved value.

Mr. Max Brown: But you accept the increased value when you sell.

Mr. GUNN: The other matter on which the member for Whyalla has interjected is the improved value. They are two different matters.

Mr. Max Brown: You wouldn't sell for less, would you?

Mr. GUNN: If someone purchased a property and improved it, surely he would be entitled to reap some reward for his labour.

Mr. Max Brown: Then you destroy your own argument, because this tax is based on unimproved values.

Mr. GUNN: Not at all. If certain people, particularly Socialists, in this country want to destroy the family farm units, they will have to accept the responsibility for killing the goose that laid the golden egg, as no nation in the world, particularly a country like Australia, can survive without a viable rural industry. I challenge any member to prove me wrong in that respect. One has only to read reports of the statements made by the American Minister of Agriculture to the United Nations World Food Conference held in Rome last week to realise that that is the position. I commend that report to all members, as the American Minister of Agriculture stated clearly that, if the starving millions are to be fed, farming industries must be profitable. No-one wants to fleece the public or the starving millions: all that primary producers want is the right to survive and to get a reasonable return for their work and on their financial investment.

I refer the member for Stuart and the Treasurer to some of the valuations that have been released. In my district a council has adopted the Valuation Department's assessments, and the valuations have doubled in the last 12 months. The unimproved value has increased from \$1 500 000 to \$3 091 000. People may say, "What is significant about that?" If one examines the schedules to the Land Tax Act, 1966, introduced by a Labor Government, one finds that there is an exemption for anyone owning property valued at less than \$12 500. However, if one considers how valuations have accelerated, one realises that that exemption is not worth the paper on which it is written.

I had brought to my attention this week a person who was paying \$180 in land tax: he was not complaining, but now that his valuation has doubled he will be paying at least \$720. What will happen if the increase continues at that rate? Let us consider what is happening to his income. Cattle prices and wool prices are 50 per cent less than what they were last year. People may argue that the prices of wheat and coarse grains have increased, but we must remember that rust is prevalent in many parts of the State and hay dye is having an effect, too.

Mr. Coumbe: Interest rates are having an effect, too.

Mr. GUNN: This form of taxation should be eliminated because it is totally unrelated to the productive capacity of the land. There may be two identical properties with widely differing valuations because of the ridiculous type of valuation being used.

Mr. Keneally: What is its basis?

Mr. GUNN: Unimproved values. I suggest that the honourable member do his homework. I do not know whether he was in local government when one had to listen to appeals in connection with unimproved values; I have had that experience. I believe that we should abolish this form of taxation. We always get the catch cry from the Treasurer, "Whom will you sack? Where will you get the money from?" First, we will sack the Treasurer and his Government.

The Hon. D. J. Hopgood: That's purely a debating point.

Mr. GUNN: I thought it was a positive suggestion. No doubt the member for Heysen has referred to the railways.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. GUNN: I was just making a passing reference, knowing that my colleague would have dealt with the matter

fully. We will put into practice something that seems to be completely against the grain of the Socialist Government—achieving efficiency in some areas of administration and initiating proven management systems. The Labor Party seems to think that there is a large bag of money from which it can draw. When it runs out of money, it increases taxes, but that is not the answer. I do not believe it is responsible for any Government to continue with this form of taxation. Other State Governments have alleviated the effects of this form of taxation. The member for Stuart rarely gets on his feet to speak in a debate but, if he does so, we will listen to his contribution.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Eyre must get back to the amendment.

Mr. GUNN: Not only country people but also house-owners in the metropolitan area and in country towns are experiencing the vicious effects of this form of taxation. If we are not careful, we will put completely out of the reach of the average citizen the ability to own and maintain a house. If valuations continue to skyrocket, people will be taxed out of their houses. Members of the Labor Party, particularly the member for Spence, believe that people should rent houses, rather than own them. Members on this side do not agree with that viewpoint. We are committed to the idea of every person in this nation having the right to purchase a house and having the ability to live economically in that house. It is one of the fundamental rights in any democracy. The Leader's amendment will guarantee the average John Citizen the right to be able to live in his own house. It is a principle near and dear to the heart of every Opposition member, and we will fight for it.

The people of this State can be assured that when we are in Government after the next State election we will ensure that they have the right to live in their houses and that they are not taxed out of them. We will be realistic: we will not continue to inflict the vicious forms of taxation that the present Government has inflicted on the people. It is no good the members for Stuart and Spence making snide interjections saying that it is impossible.

Mr. Crimes: I own my own home.

Mr. GUNN: Having listened to the extreme Socialist nonsense of the member for Spence, I am surprised to learn he is a capitalist. Many Labor Party members are Rundle Street Socialists: they want Socialism for everyone except themselves. The Minister of Agriculture is the greatest hypocrite ever to be a member of this Parliament. Like one or two other members, he is hardly game to go outside the metropolitan area at present. I support this important amendment.

Mr. DEAN BROWN (Davenport): I support the Leader's amendment, which has two parts. The first relates to the abolition of land tax on land used for primary production, and I think my colleagues have competently dealt with that matter. The second part relates to the reconstruction of the scale under which the amount of land tax to be paid by all taxpayers is computed. This relates to the metropolitan area, and it is to this matter that I wish to refer. People living in the metropolitan area, particularly in areas that have had land values reassessed in the past 12 months, face savage increases in land tax. The response to this can be seen clearly in the case of the people of Burnside who, 12 days ago, held a public meeting on the question of water and sewerage rates and land tax. They overwhelmingly (with no opposition whatever) supported a motion that land tax should be abolished in this State.

Mr. Keneally: Did you expect them to vote that it should be increased?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: They fully appreciated the position the Government was in. They appreciated that, if the tax was abolished, money would have to be raised elsewhere or that Government expenditure would have to be reduced. They did not pass this as a glib, irresponsible motion: they passed it after considering the facts. They realised that this State received just over \$11 000 000 from State land tax.

Mr. Coumbe: \$11 000 000?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The figure given in the Budget is \$10 900 000, whereas the Auditor-General's Report refers to \$11 009 000. As there is a discrepancy, I tend to rely on the Auditor-General rather than the Treasurer. The people of Burnside asked the State Government to raise the money from the Commonwealth Government. State Governments have been receiving an increasingly poor deal from that Government. The percentage of personal income tax received by the Commonwealth that is directed to the States is decreasing all the time. Previously, I have quoted figures in the House to show the remarkable decrease in the percentage amount of total personal income tax that the States are now getting. If the Commonwealth Government will not make that extra \$11 000 000 available, the State Government should reduce its expenditure by \$11 000 000. I could put forward a valid case about where the Government should reduce this expenditure. However, I know that you, Mr. Speaker, would rule me out of order if, in this debate, I advocated cutting the annual rate of increase in the Public Service to 2 per cent. I realise you would also rule me out of order if I touched on some of the irresponsible projects this Government has embarked on, such as the media monitoring unit.

The SPEAKER: Order! I will start to rule the honourable member out of order now. We are dealing with an amendment moved by the honourable Leader to a motion.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I accept your ruling, provided that members opposite do not use that famous argument later, saying, "How would you reduce expenditure? Whom would you sack?" I trust that you will deal with those members—

The SPEAKER: Order! I am dealing now with the honourable member for Davenport.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I think I have made my point. I obviously cannot put forward responsible suggestions about how expenditure can be reduced, simply because of your ruling, Mr. Speaker. I make the point that people who live in the areas in which values have been reassessed are now facing drastic increases in their land tax. We should look at how great some of these increases are. I will give figures that I quoted in a question I asked the Treasurer on October 23, 1974.

Mr. Keneally: These are the poor people of Burnside.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Some of them are. In one case, the land tax has increased from \$24 last year to \$62 this year; in another case, the sum has increased from \$322 last year to \$1 999 this year; in another case, the sum has increased from \$22 to \$42; in another case the increase is from \$22 to \$56; and in another case the increase is from \$16 to \$34. The member for Stuart tends to make a joke of this, referring to these poor people. Apart from one case, the people to whom I have referred live in what I consider to be average metropolitan area houses. Unfortunately, under the present system of rating and because there is a great demand for land and housing in this area, those people are paying far more land tax than are people who live in other suburban areas. I could give several

figures showing the great inequality that exists in the metropolitan area with regard to land tax, even though it is related only to the unimproved value of the property.

The reason for this is the iniquitous system on which land tax is based. It is a spiral: the higher the unimproved land value, the higher the rate in the dollar. What more iniquitous system of taxation could we possibly have, particularly when it is a wealth tax related to an almost non-producing piece of land that returns no income whatever? This is land on which these people are trying to live. We give everyone in our community several basic commodities such as food, security, and shelter. These people are trying to get the basic commodity of shelter, but they are being taxed under an iniquitous system. For the first \$10 000 of unimproved value the rate is 2c for each \$10. For a property valued between \$10 000 and \$20 000, the rate is 4c for each \$10 between these two figures. It then increases to 6c, 8c and 10c for each \$10—the higher the value the higher the rate.

One extreme case of land tax shows an increase of 11 times on the rate for the previous year, compared to an increase in water and sewerage rates of only 2½ times. We have all accepted the injustice of the present water and sewerage rating system. However, we see an even greater injustice in the present system of calculating land tax. A property in my area was purchased two years ago. It is a small suburban block, as it is half of the original block.

The SPEAKER: Order! As personal conversations across the floor of the House are not permitted under Standing Orders, they will not be tolerated.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: As I have said, two years ago a seven-room house on this small block of land was purchased for \$21 500. Under the present rating system, the valuation placed on the property by the Valuer-General is \$14 500. That places almost no value on the house, even though it comprises seven rooms and is in excellent condition. That really highlights the fact that land values in that area are over-inflated. I am not denying that people could not get that sort of value at present for that land, but the values are over-inflated because the properties were assessed at the time of the metropolitan land boom. In the past 12 months, values have dropped.

About six months ago some blocks in my district were bought for home units at \$20 000 for each unit. The subdivision is the smallest possible size allowed in the Burnside council area. That value has dropped, but these people for the next five years will have to pay land tax based on inflated values. Again, this shows how unjust is the present value and rating system. These people made a strong objection regarding water and sewerage rates and, despite the fact the Government said that it would not even reconsider the system, eventually it amended it and introduced what was called an equalisation valuation.

It has taken similar action regarding land tax. I will deal with that matter later, because I intend to discuss what people can expect to pay because of this savage increase. The people have had to pay savage increases because of the inflated values of their unimproved and improved land, and they can no longer face these increases in taxation. They are being taxed out of their houses, and I do not say that as a glib statement. People in the Burnside council area at present must sell their houses because they can no longer afford to pay the rates.

A man wrote to me recently regarding this matter. He and his wife lived in a large house on a large block of land in Portrush Road. The man retired and the couple decided, because they had no income, that they

would sell the house and remain in the area in a home unit. They wanted to remain in the Burnside area. They sold the house and moved into a small home unit. They have recently received their water and sewerage account and their land tax account. In both cases, the amount of the account is more than they were paying previously on Portrush Road.

Now that man and his wife no longer can stay in that home unit. He will have to move to another suburb where land and property values are not grossly inflated. Members opposite have no feeling for a person who, in his retirement, has had to move out of an area in which he has lived for most of his life. It is a pity members opposite have not some sort of social conscience about the problems that these people face. This Government has become engrossed in raising and spending as much money as it can.

Mr. Langley: You didn't tell us how much he sold the house for, did you?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: They are still trying to sell their home unit.

Mr. Langley: You said they sold the house at Portrush Road.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I said they were faced with selling the home unit.

Mr. Langley: You said they sold it.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I did not, and the honourable member should read *Hansard* tomorrow. Land tax is iniquitous. People receive no service for it. It is a so-called wealth tax that has no relationship to the ability of the people to pay it. We have a taxation system based on what a person purchases, but unfortunately we also have this most iniquitous taxing system that is based on what a person has but cannot obtain if he tries to sell the house. The tax is based on a person's house, his shelter. On October 23, I asked the Treasurer what sort of relief he would give to people on fixed incomes who could not afford to pay their land tax. I was interested to know, because when the water rates issue arose I asked the then Acting Minister of Works what relief he would give to people who could not pay their water and sewerage accounts, with particular reference to people on fixed incomes.

Mr. Gunn: None, I suppose?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: No. He stated on television that the Government would consider carefully all cases of hardship, but I have given this House particulars of cases of real hardship. One man with six children cannot afford to pay his water rates.

The SPEAKER: Order! We are dealing with land tax.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: This man wrote to the Engineer-in-Chief, but he got no relief. Now he intends to write regarding his land tax, and I am sure that he will get the same sort of glib reply. The Government's continual promises to consider cases of hardship are nothing but glib promises made to fool the people. Let us consider what sort of relief people can get if they are fortunate enough to be medical card pensioners. They can get a remission of three-fifths of their total land tax, up to \$80, whichever is the lesser.

Mr. Gunn: That won't be much under the new assessment.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: That means nothing in relation to the kind of land tax that people in my district are paying. I refer to people who have home units on land that is valued at \$20 000. For them, the \$80 remission is a drop in the bucket. Most of these people have been diligent in their lifetime and have saved. They are not card

carrying pensioners. They have planned, and invested their money, intending to live on their savings. However, we have had a gross inflation rate of more than 20 per cent under our present Australian Labor Party Australian Government.

What sort of remission or relief can these people get? The Auditor-General's Report states that they can have a remission, in cases of hardship, of \$2 a year. Honourable members should examine carefully that statement on page 210 of the Auditor-General's Report for the year ended June 30. What a sick case that is to put forward! It really shows the lack of concern that the Government has for the hardship people are facing in this time of inflation. The Government really has hit them with land tax, because, whereas the monetary value is inflating at 20 per cent per annum at present, land tax has increased at a much greater rate.

Mr. Langley: The pensioners get remissions now, but your Government did nothing about giving remissions.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Davenport is addressing the House.

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The Treasurer, in reply to my question of October 23, also stated two other areas in which he offered special relief. The first area was that people could make the tax a charge against the estate. Again, that is a sign of a sick Government. People can go on their knees, try to put forward a case of extreme hardship, and beg that the amount be made a charge against their estate. Anyone with any respect (and the people in my district have respect for themselves and their family) would not possibly try to make the amount a charge against the estate.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Wouldn't that be a sensible thing to do, because the property value would increase more quickly than the amount of the rates, and no interest would be charged?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: I will accept that. People have gone to the Land Tax Division and have asked to be allowed to do that, and the same thing has been done in relation to water and sewerage rates, but these people have been denied that concession. Is the Minister honest in his statement? I think we have caught him promoting a double-faced policy, as he suggests that they should do this, yet when they try to do it they cannot.

The Hon. Hugh Hudson: Are they pensioners?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: No. They are people over 65 years of age, who are living on a fixed income. They are not pensioners, because they have saved. The Minister is starting to add conditions. Finally, we have the fourth and ultimate area of relief offered by the Treasurer, the equalisation programme, whereby we will experience exactly the same increases as we have at present, except that it will be spread over five years, instead of applying it in only one year in every five years. Instead of a 500 per cent increase in one year in five, there will be a 100 per cent increase in each of five years. What sort of relief is that? None whatever.

These people face the same sort of increases under this system as they currently face, except that the Government, trying to be politically shrewd and putting politics ahead of principle, is merely trying to remove politics from the situation. The only relief the Government has offered is to remove the politics from the situation.

It was for this reason that the people rejected this system when it was applied to water and sewerage rates, and they will reject it when it is applied to land tax. I appeal to the Government to accept the Leader's amend-

ment, because it is time that the Government appreciated the hardship that people in suburban Adelaide face through the payment of water and sewerage rates and land tax. It is time the Government appreciated the embarrassment it is causing people on low and fixed incomes. True, some people in my electorate can afford to pay high land tax, but they are not the people who are objecting. They are not the 2 000 people who came to the Town Hall to demand the implementation of a different system.

Mr. Langley: What about the company director?

Mr. DEAN BROWN: The one I suspect the honourable member is referring to was not at the meeting. The people who have objected are the people who cannot afford to pay the increases they face. They have been embarrassed financially, and it is time that the State Government realised this. It is time the Government had a conscience and tried to relieve these people of their hardship. Even if the Government is not willing to reduce the land tax rate, as I hope it will, it should at least provide some relief in the three areas I have mentioned and consider cases of hardship. However, the Government does not even consider these people in a position of hardship, even though they have reached the point of having to sell their houses. The Government does not consider that a position of hardship. I plead for the sake of people who are trying to meet these increased rates, and I ask the House to support the amendment.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): I support the amendment. This tax can be described as the greatest rip-off of all time, and it is probably one of the most unpopular taxes that any property owner can experience. Generally, no-one minds paying Government charges within reason. No-one minds making some sort of contribution for Government services, provided that contribution is wisely spent. This applies particularly to contributions to some Government instrumentalities, but sometimes one can see 13 men standing around a hole. Of those 13, two physically do the work, and the remainder are merely supervising.

When such a situation applies, it is time that the taxpayer's voice was heard; it is time that someone put to the Government, and used the media to get the message across, that the South Australian people are fed up with being taxed and being called on to contribute to the Government's irresponsible handling of the State's finances.

This situation has been highlighted on several occasions over many years in the Auditor-General's Report since the Labor Government came to office. We are still faced with the same system of a Government deciding how much it will spend and then taxing the people to cover that expenditure. From the financial statement for October it can be seen that the Revenue Account is in debt after four months of trading by \$19 135 000. In reply to a question I asked some weeks ago, the Treasurer warned the House that October and November would be the worst trading months for the Revenue Account.

The present debt of \$19 135 000 is about \$17 000 000 greater than the debt in the same period in the last financial year. The Treasury and the Government should be worried, as should be the South Australian taxpayer. People may lose their houses and their life savings if the Commonwealth Government continues with its current economic policy. If it does not curb its spending, the inflation rate next year may go even higher than the predicted 25 per cent: it may go as high as 30 per cent. If that occurs, Australia is headed for economic chaos. I have received a letter recently from a motel/hotel company. It had written to the State Taxes Department, in particular, to the Land Tax Division drawing attention to the increase in

land tax levied on its holding. The company said it was objecting to the increase in land tax.

In the last financial year the company paid \$221 in land tax, yet in this financial year it is asked to pay \$1 002.40. This is a 500 per cent increase. We are told that the tourist industry is experiencing a buoyant period. We have been told that the Government is doing everything it can to encourage tourism in South Australia, especially through conventions. Here we find one industry that is highly rated because of the type of development, the size of the property, and the size of the facilities it must provide, but these costs will not be borne by the motel owner, as he will have to add them to the cost to the cost of accommodation.

I refer to the situation applying in commerce and industry and the amount the State receives from land tax. About 257 000 people pay land tax. The average contribution is about \$42. In that 257 000 contributors, about 27 000 are farm owners. Taking the contribution that would be made by the average house-owner, we find that most land tax is paid within the boundaries of the city of Adelaide. Commerce and industry are paying the bulk of that tax. No-one gives a damn about them. Anyone who stands up for them is, of course, branded as a Conservative, but those costs either have to be borne by the organisations concerned or are passed on to the consumer, and invariably they are passed on to the consumer. That adds to the cost of living.

An individual property owner who in 1959 bought his house paid \$1.05 in land tax. In the last financial year the contribution in land tax was \$22: this financial year it is \$55. The person owning an average house in the metropolitan area that has, unfortunately, been revalued under the previous system of valuation is complaining most bitterly and will continue to complain whilst the present valuation system is used for assessing and collating land tax. When one goes to the Valuer-General, asking for a revaluation of a property, one is told that, since the valuation was made last year, which is the current valuation, one can expect at least another 20 per cent to 25 per cent increase in the valuation, which will affect all the taxes and service charges payable, so is it any wonder that the average man in the street who owns a property is up in arms? As has been stated, the people most seriously affected are those on fixed incomes. Pensioners with concession cards receive some benefit.

Many thousands of pensioners this year have lost their concession cards. Many people receive a small Government pension or small superannuation, and those people are quite elderly. In a case I heard about yesterday, a gentleman received a \$40 a year increase in his State Government superannuation. He lost his medical entitlement card, which means he now had to pay his full rates and taxes, and he will be some \$160 worse off. How ridiculous is that! This person has served the State loyally for a long time and has contributed to the State Superannuation Fund, yet he will now be \$160 a year, or \$3 a week, out of pocket! Therefore, he must forgo something. He must reduce his standard of living and, in doing so, he debases himself, his wife, and any relatives depending on him. That is the area where the Government has failed most. The Government has demoralised the people in such a fashion that I do not think it really realises what it has done. Whether it be the State Government or the Commonwealth Government, it must reconsider the whole method of taxation, and in particular of land tax.

This is one of the most shocking imposts that can be placed on the incentive and initiative of an individual to own his or her own house. By owning their own house and not depending on the State for Government accommodation, no matter where or of what kind the accommodation may be (accommodation that is now being heavily subsidised by the taxpayers) these people are saving the State money, yet the Government is slapping them in the face by making them pay additional costs.

The valuation system is wrong. The system of arriving at the tax, and particularly the scale, is also wrong. It is interesting to note that the Auditor-General at page 210 of his report states:

The unimproved land values (inclusive of variations since July, 1970) on which tax for 1973-74 was levied were \$1 940 706 000 (\$1 703 136 000 for 1972-73). Although rates of tax were unaltered, an additional levy was made in respect of land situate within the metropolitan area. . . .

So the rate of land tax has not been altered, and the Government does not have to alter it, because, during a time of high inflation and with the revaluation system that has been adopted, the Government will benefit immensely from inflation. In the Budget the Government is proposing to increase its revenue from land tax by about 10 per cent. The people who are being asked to pay increases in land tax of from 150 per cent to 1 100 per cent cannot see how the Government can expect only a 10 per cent increase in land tax. Therefore, it seems that the Treasury may be placing a conservative figure on the amount of land tax that can be gained this year, although the valuation system is not fair and only one-fifth of the areas that will be ratable and have been revalued will contribute the bulk of this 10 per cent increase. In other words, \$1 000 000 will come from the areas revalued in the last financial year. That in itself is not a fair system; it is not fair to ask one-fifth of the taxpayers to carry the bulk of the increase in this financial year, particularly when they are witnessing a great wastage by the present Administration.

Difficulty is experienced in the rural areas, where it looks like being a good season but the season has not yet begun and no-one really knows what the final benefit will be for the rural areas; rural people have to live a year-to-year existence, gambling on the weather. They may have one, two, or three good years and then go through a bad time, and it is most unfair that they should still be expected to contribute in the way they must by this tax. That is why my Party believes rural land tax should be abolished and the whole system, and particularly the reassessments and the scale of charges of land tax, should be re-examined. Of course, another nail in the coffin of those who show initiative and incentive is that under our land tax system there are multi-property owners, whose property is lumped together; one valuation is arrived at and they are taxed at the higher rate on the total value of all the property. That in itself is inflationary, and that is how the Government is putting an extra levy on initiative.

A tax that has not been criticised lately and is the final crunch in the whole land tax system is the metropolitan area levy of 1c for every \$20 or part thereof on unimproved value. That extra 1c levy is for parks, gardens, etc., but many taxpayers who contribute, and have contributed, will not benefit because large sums of that money go to certain areas only. One has only to consider what is happening in my district: excluding the coastline, little has been spent on recreation areas for the benefit of the local community. People living at the beach have to clean up rubbish brought by visitors or washed on to the beach, but they are taxed highly because they wish to live in that area. People

buy land in a district because it is the environment they want for the benefit of their children, but others are willing to pay any price for land in a certain area.

As the member for Davenport has said, property values have increased markedly in some areas because of speculator-developer activities. This has created many hardships as the Valuation Department uses highly inflated values as a basis for its valuations. Land tax is a nasty tax and should not be continued. We know that Robin Hood stole from the rich to give to the poor, but I believe this Government is robbing everyone and wasting the money on its own follies. The main part of the Bill relates to ownership of property, and defines "owner" in relation to who is liable for land tax at a given date. It is ironical that this Bill should be introduced within a few weeks of a problem that I believe is contemplated in the Bill having been dealt with. The Attorney-General will be interested in the details I am about to relate. I believed that such an incident would not happen but, no doubt, the Attorney will be pleased that it has happened, because it relates to other legislation that has been introduced.

About 18 months ago one of my constituents sold her house to a builder-developer. She received the money at settlement, and purchased a home unit. On settlement the normal adjustment of rates and taxes, including land tax, was made, but about six months later she received an account for land tax for her previous property. She ignored it. She received another notice within a few months and ignored it, too, because she thought a mistake had been made. After about 18 months she received a final notice and a summons to pay the outstanding land tax. It transpired that one of Adelaide's largest land agents, who had handled the transaction, had not registered the transfer of her property. The Commissioner of Land Tax ascertained that she had sold the property, but she had received little co-operation from the land agent. After three weeks of negotiations with the company we were able to satisfy the Commissioner that the transfer should have been processed and that my constituent was not liable for the land tax.

This incident, which placed the Commissioner and my constituent in an awkward position, had been caused by the incompetence of someone beyond their control. When a property changes hands, the land agent forwards an advice to the Commissioner of Land Tax, generally within seven days of settlement. This is recorded and checked at the Lands Titles Office and the notation is made in relation to the land tax account. No-one can blame the State Taxes Department, and I would have nothing said against the efficiency of that department. That department does not come into the matter: it does not matter how long is taken for the transaction to be processed. It is up to the land agent and broker, and I am disappointed at the inefficiency of one of Adelaide's largest land agents. Under this legislation, if that situation occurred again, my constituent would be liable for land tax, and it is ironical that a builder-developer could have got away with this. If my constituent had not been fully aware of the situation, she could have paid the tax.

I support that part of the legislation, because I believe it will cure the problems arising from the incident I have described. It should not be necessary to introduce legislation to do this but, because of the incompetence of some land agents, brokers, and developers, and the things they get up to, it is necessary for this sort of legislation to be introduced. I hope that no-one will be embarrassed by the action of the Commissioner if this legislation is passed: he is a fair and reasonable man. It makes one wonder whether we need land tax, as this system takes away the

incentive and initiative of those who wish to provide for themselves and family a property, building, or a house (call it what you like). That is the situation being caused by this Government which is imposing taxation measures on those who wish to provide themselves with a house. When the Government sinks to this action and taxes people out of their houses, it is time that we changed it.

Dr. TONKIN (Bragg): I support the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition, and I support and associate myself with remarks that have been made by Opposition members in relation to land tax on rural properties, and in relation to restructuring the scale of land tax. I believe that this whole matter must be reviewed urgently, just as the basis for striking other rates must be reviewed, too. Rural land tax is a severe imposition on members of the rural community. The present reassessments on all land are out of all proportion to the actual value of the land, and the policy that land tax should not be levied on rural land is one with which I wholeheartedly agree and will support as a Party policy. The restructuring of the land tax assessment scale for all taxpayers is of special interest to me as a metropolitan member. Inflationary tendencies that have arisen in the past two years have grossly escalated the rates of land tax payable by all members of the community.

Other members have dealt with the restrictive and crippling effects these have had on the rural community, but I believe that these increases, together with those in council and water rates, are a severe imposition on all taxpayers, particularly those receiving fixed incomes. I cannot for the life of me understand the attitude of Government members, who seem to regard this matter as something to be joked about and as something that is funny. Not only does the Government believe that one should sell up if one cannot afford to pay one's rates and taxes but also its Ministers have been heard to give that advice. Indeed, they have expressed the view that people who cannot afford to pay the rates and taxes presently applying ought to move to an area in which they can afford to pay them. And this is the Government that is supposed to have a regard for the people! It does not have a regard for the people if this is what it believes. I cannot understand why people who have worked hard all their lives for not a high income but who have been careful and done without the luxuries that they may otherwise have afforded, in order to put aside money on which they can retire so that they will have some measure of security, should be penalised in the way they are being penalised by Socialist Governments.

Mr. Evans: It is a penalty for thrift.

Dr. TONKIN: It is indeed. This is not a wealth tax but a tax that reacts against the people to whom I have already referred and of whom there are many in the community. These people cannot afford to pay land tax and other rates which apply and, indeed, which have been greatly increased by the general inflationary spiral. Although the current rate of inflation is about 20 per cent, the amount of land tax payable is escalating at a far greater rate; indeed, it is five, six or even eight times greater than was payable previously. This is totally unfair and inequitable. This is a tax which has been deliberately designed to tax the wealthy but which is catching the thrifty: the people who have retired feeling secure but who can now no longer afford to pay the escalated rates of tax.

Mr. Venning: The Government couldn't care less.

Dr. TONKIN: I believe the Government thinks it is terribly funny. What it does not see is that many people would like to move to other areas but simply cannot afford to do so, because of the inflationary spiral and the increased land tax they will have to pay when they get there.

Mr. Venning: Many people are moving to other States.

Dr. TONKIN: That is so, and I am not surprised. I believe that many more people will do so before this year has passed. Land tax scales ought urgently to be revised, as equitable levels must be found. Generally, people do not like paying land tax, although they are willing to do so if they consider it to be a fair thing. However, the whole point at present is that it is not a fair thing. I repeat that I favour abolishing land tax on rural properties, and I strongly believe that those who pay land tax in the metropolitan area should be given a fair go and permitted to live in peace and in the security for which they have worked so hard for so long.

Mr. VENNING (Rocky River): I, too, support the amendment. Only a few days ago I presented to the House a petition signed by many South Australians, stating that they opposed this method of raising revenue, which did not obtain in the other States. So often, when talking about imposing taxes, the Treasurer refers to other States. Recently he referred to the intended petrol tax, and when Opposition members interjected the Treasurer asked what we were complaining about, as our colleagues in New South Wales were imposing the tax. However, land tax is not imposed in the other States and, if the Treasurer was consistent, he would certainly abolish rural land tax in South Australia.

I refer now to a deputation from Bute which, in consultation with United Farmers and Graziers of South Australia Incorporated, recently waited on the Treasurer, who said he would examine the land tax system applying in this State. I see from the latest edition of the U.F. and G. journal that that organisation and the Stockowners Association are telling landowners to pay only the amount of land tax they paid last year, on the understanding that the Treasurer will do something about the matter. I read with much interest in the same publication that a move is afoot amongst the rural community throughout the country to plan protest rallies. I believe that in the new year (probably in February) a large rally will protest against the Government and the various taxes that it is imposing on the people.

I have received several letters from my constituents whose assessments have been increased considerably, one of which involves a property in the Laura district, the unimproved value of which in 1970-71 was \$34 730. At that time, land values had decreased considerably throughout the State and, after many meetings held throughout the State that were attended by Valuation Department officers, who tried to substantiate the values they had placed on various properties, the Treasurer eventually agreed that assessments far exceeded reality and that a reassessment should be made. The unimproved value of the property to which I have referred was reduced from \$34 730 to \$22 800. Now, the assessment for that same property has increased to \$50 400. It is most unfortunate that Government members know little about primary production or business, many of them having been brought up through the trade unions. True, there are a few academics on the Government benches, but generally Government members know little about business practices. I should like to see them get into business and see how they go. I do not believe they would last three months.

Mr. Wardle: That's why they aren't in it.

Mr. VENNING: That is so. These are the problems confronting rural producers, who must pay these increased taxes imposed by the Government. I can recall when the Land Tax Department, as it then was, was in the old Legislative Council building next door. At that time the department had only a few officers, but today there is in the Valuation Department an army of about 200 officers making valuations throughout the State. One hears stories of valuers going on to properties. The other day I heard of a case where a landowner went to an old house on his property. He noticed that a motorist had pulled up and he saw a man coming from the old house. The landowner asked, "Who are you and what are you doing?" The man replied, "I am from the Valuation Department and I am assessing this property." The land owner asked, "What have you been doing in this building?" The man replied, "I am looking around to see whether there is any antique furniture here." This is an example of the stories circulating in my district.

Generally speaking, people do not mind paying a certain amount of taxation. They believe it is necessary to pay taxation because normally it is an investment in their country, but people are narked when they see the way in which this Government is throwing money around willy-nilly and placing no value on it whatever. I am referring particularly to people who earn their living by the sweat of their brow.

Mr. Wells: Like wharfies.

Mr. VENNING: There is no measurement of what a wharfie does. He collects pick-up money. However, the primary producer is not paid for 400 sheep if he does not take them to the market, and he is not paid for 25 head of cattle if he does not take them to a sale, nor is he paid for 2 000 kilograms of wool unless he delivers that wool. He does not get hand-outs if his crop cannot be harvested because it has been affected by rust. The primary producer is the backbone of the country in connection with food production.

Under a Socialist Government this country will starve. Slowly and surely the Socialist Government is imposing a master plan to get everyone down on his hands and knees. The Socialist Government is taking away from the primary producer his incentive to produce. The Socialist countries of the world, unable to feed themselves, are going to private enterprise countries to buy foodstuffs. Recently President Ford cancelled a large sale of grain to Russia because of the situation in his own country. It is clear that Russia is unable to feed its own people. Although in the past Australia has produced a large amount of foodstuffs for export, the incentive is disappearing, and it is only a matter of time before this country will be unable to export.

Mr. Duncan: Didn't a Liberal Government impose wheat quotas in the first place?

Mr. VENNING: I will refer to that matter in connection with the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill. I am concerned about land tax. I support the amendment, and I hope that the Treasurer will support it.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Education): It is not possible to agree to the amendment. The Opposition has put its viewpoint, which will be considered. It is important to get the Bill through, to clear up a difficulty.

Dr. Eastick: Why?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Government has a policy with respect to rural land tax, and it has been debated previously in this House. Although the Opposition has moved previously for the abolition of rural land tax,

that has not been accepted by the Government. The position with respect to the equalisation of the timing of valuations will be sorted out before next year and no doubt, as a consequence of the fact that land tax is a progressive tax and that there is an inflation of land values, the Government will have to consider the position that must apply in connection with land tax rates. It is not possible to do that now, and for those reasons the amendment has to be rejected at this stage.

Dr. Eastick: You won't help the people.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Treasurer has made clear that as from next financial year an equalisation situation will apply. That will mean, from my understanding of it, that those who gain an increase this year will get a decrease next year. Their actual tax will go down.

Mr. Venning: They cannot afford to pay it this year.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: The Government has a revenue problem this year. The revenue problem is more serious than it has been.

Dr. Eastick: Because there is a Labor Government in Canberra.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: There have been previous decreases in economic activity. As a result of the actions announced tonight in Canberra, perhaps the future is a little more hopeful. One way or another, the Government here must pay attention to its revenue position. If concessions on land tax assessments were to be given this year, those who have not had an increase this year would have to pay more to protect the Government's revenue position. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition is advocating that, in order to ensure this year that those who have been charged more pay less, everyone else should pay more. I have not heard him put that point of view, but I should be interested to hear it if he were willing to put it.

Dr. Eastick: Can you tell us how close to correct the Government believes the estimate to be?

The SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are out of order.

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: Treasury estimates are made on the best information available. However, mistakes

can be made. For example, mistakes have been made in relation to Treasury estimates with regard to stamp duties from conveyances, those estimates having turned out to be considerably excessive.

Mr. Coumbe: What's the position?

The Hon. HUGH HUDSON: I do not have the latest figures at my fingertips. The returns started to go down before the Budget was introduced, but went down further afterwards. The Treasury was unable to make a precise estimate, and no-one else could make one, either. I assure the Leader that Treasury officers are most conscientious in these matters. I am sure that the Deputy Leader is aware that these officers are not inclined to fiddle the estimates made. The revenue situation at present is difficult. As the Leader has not put forward a proposition that the costs of the programme he has suggested should be offset by other increases in revenue, and in view of the other circumstances I have outlined, it is not possible for the amendment to be accepted.

The House divided on the amendment:

Ayes (17)—Messrs. Allen, Arnold, Becker, Blacker, Boundy, Dean Brown, Chapman, Coumbe, Eastick (teller), Evans, Goldsworthy, Gunn, Nankivell, Russack, Tonkin, Venning, and Wardle.

Noes (21)—Messrs. Broomhill, Max Brown, and Burdon, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Crimes, Duncan, Groth, Harrison, Hopgood (teller), Hudson, Jennings, Keneally, King, Langley, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, Wells, and Wright.

Pairs—Ayes—Messrs. Mathwin, McAnaney, and Rodda. Noes—Messrs. Corcoran, McKee, and McRae.

Majority of 4 for the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

Bill read a second time and taken through its remaining stages.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.50 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, November 13, at 2 p.m.