

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 18, 1975

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

## CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

(GOVERNOR)

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

## CORONER'S BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, recommended to the House of Assembly the appropriation of such amounts of money as might be required for the purposes mentioned in the Bill.

## PETITION: WATTLE STREET

Mr. LANGLEY presented a petition signed by 172 residents of Wattle Street, Unley, on the boundary of the districts of Mitcham, Bragg, and Unley, stating that traffic prohibition regulations made under the Road Traffic Act and providing for the closing to vehicular traffic of roads within the area bounded by Unley, Greenhill, Glen Osmond, Fullarton, and Cross Roads would mean that Wattle Street would become a main through road, and praying that action would be taken to amend the regulations in order to avoid any substantial increase in vehicular traffic using Wattle Street.

Petition received and read.

## PETITION: GRAIN CARTAGE

Mr. BLACKER presented a petition signed by 39 grain-growers of Ungarra and surrounding districts stating that grain cartage rates charged for rail freight from Ungarra silo did not compare favourably with road freight from Tumby Bay or the charge for grain to be picked up, and praying that the South Australian Railways base its rates on competition and so reduce charges by at least 50 per cent in order to enable growers to support the Ungarra silo.

Petition received and read.

## PETITIONS: COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

Mr. RUSSACK presented a petition signed by 655 rate-payers and residents of the corporation of the town of Wallaroo stating that they were dissatisfied with the first report of the Royal Commission into Local Government Areas and praying that the House of Assembly would not bring about any change or alteration of boundaries.

Mr. NANKIVELL presented a similar petition signed by 376 ratepayers and residents of the district of Paringa.

Petitions received.

## PETITION: KOOLUNGA DEPOT

Mr. VENNING presented a petition signed by 117 residents of the township of Koolunga and surrounding areas concerning the removal of the Engineering and Water Supply Department depot from the township of Koolunga and praying that this matter would be given every consideration, as a decision against the will of this petition would cause the town to be denuded of some of the life activities and community spirit necessary for its well-being.

Petition received.

## QUESTIONS

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

## JUDICIAL WARRANTS

Dr. TONKIN (on notice): When will the Government introduce legislation, as recommended by the second report of the Criminal Law and Penal Methods Reform Committee of South Australia, to require that a judicial warrant be obtained by authorised officers before exercising the powers of entry, search, and seizure?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: This proposal, together with other recommendations of the Criminal Law and Penal Methods Reform Committee, is now being considered.

## RURAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. RODDA (on notice):

1. How many applications were received by the Rural Industries Assistance Authority for farm build-up and debt reconstruction up to December 31, 1974?

2. How many applications have been approved and how many are still being considered?

3. Will the Government be widening the scope of the Rural Industries Assistance Authority in 1975 because of the down-turn of farm income?

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

1. Applications received by the Rural Industries Assistance Authority to December 31, 1974:

(a) Farm build-up . . . . . 477

(b) Debt reconstruction . . . . . 890

2. (i) Applications approved to December 31, 1974:

(a) Farm build-up . . . . . 263

(b) Debt reconstruction . . . . . 334

(ii) Applications pending December 31, 1974:

(a) Farm build-up . . . . . 30

(b) Debt reconstruction . . . . . 12

3. The question of widening the scope of the Rural Industries Assistance Authority in 1975 beyond the terms of reference of the States Grants (Rural Reconstruction) Act, 1971, will be determined by the findings of the Industries Assistance Commission in its inquiry into rural reconstruction. The Rural Industries Assistance Authority is presenting evidence in this regard.

## SUPERPHOSPHATE

Mr. RODDA (on notice):

1. What tonnage of superphosphate was delivered to farmers in this State between July 1, 1974, and January 31, 1975?

2. What was the tonnage of grain delivery in this period during 1973-74?

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

1. Such statistical information is not kept.

2. Possibly the Australian Wheat Board or South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited could supply this information.

## MINISTER'S LETTER

Mr. MILLHOUSE (on notice): Did the Minister of Transport write to Messrs. Stanley and Partners in September, 1973, on behalf of Mr. W. Munday, and, if so—

(a) what were the terms of the letter;

(b) why did the Minister write it;

(c) was such letter written on the office letterhead of the Minister and, if so, why; and

(d) did the Minister write the letter in his Ministerial capacity and, if not, in what capacity did he write the letter?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: On December 5, 1974, I wrote the following letter to Mr. Millhouse:

When Parliament rose on Thursday, November 28, 1974, your Question on Notice to me lapsed, owing to the adjournment. However, notwithstanding this fact, I am writing to provide you with the information you sought.

On September 27, 1973, I wrote to Messrs. Stanley and Partners, and for your information I enclose herewith a copy. This letter was written as a result of a request from Mr. Munday to me as a member of the South Australian Parliament.

It is normal practice in my office that letters originating from that office are typed on Ministerial letterhead, irrespective of whether the subject matter is directly concerned with my Ministerial jurisdiction or not. The letter I wrote on behalf of Mr. Munday to Messrs. Stanley and Partners was in conformity with this normal practice.

However, on December 19, 1974, I was informed that, despite the reply that I had given to Mr. Millhouse by letter, he requested that I give a formal reply when the House met again. Accordingly, the following reply is given:

Yes.

(a) Copy of letter dated September 27, 1973, attached.

(b) At the request of Mr. Munday.

(c) Yes, it was written on Ministerial letterhead, which is the normal practice for letters from my office.

(d) It was written in my capacity as a member of Parliament.

**STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

The SPEAKER laid on the table the report of the Parliamentary Standing Orders Committee, together with minutes of proceedings.

Ordered that report be printed.

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The SPEAKER laid on the table the following reports by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, together with minutes of evidence:

- Deepening Channel to Outer Harbor and Container Ship Berth,
- Fairview Park (Yatala Vale) Primary School,
- Highbury Infants School,
- Kadina High School Additions,
- Karcultaby Area School,
- Kidman Park Co-Educational High School (Stage II),
- Miltaburra Area School,
- Modbury High School Additions,
- Modbury South Infants School,
- Modbury West Infants School,
- Murray Bridge South-West Primary School,
- Port MacDonnell Breakwater,
- Port Pirie Hospital Redevelopment—Phase II,
- South Australian Country Fire Services Headquarters, Keswick,
- Water Storage Tank at O'Halloran Hill.

Ordered that reports be printed.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: STATE FINANCES**

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: On Friday last, February 14, at the Premiers' Conference held in Canberra, the Australian Government agreed to assist the States to combat unemployment by giving its support to several programmes to the extent of an additional \$240 000 000 in 1974-75. Originally, it was rather less than that but, because of the activities of the Premier of South Australia, it was bid up to that figure.

Mr. Millhouse: Who said that?

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Well, honourable members might refer to their colleagues in other States if they wish to know what happened at the Premiers' Conference. At the moment there is some fairly bitter remarking from people in other States that I got what I asked for in my submission.

Mr. Mathwin: You weren't very pleased with that.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Mathwin: You had a sour face.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, I had a smiling face when I returned. I am sorry the honourable member was not watching me on television.

*Members interjecting:*

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Premier sought leave, which was given unanimously, to make a Ministerial statement. Interjections are not permitted during the making of that statement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: It is desirable that I should now report to the House what the Government proposes to do with its share of those additional funds and summarise the overall financial situation which needs to be kept in mind. South Australia's share of those additional provisions is as follows:

	\$
General revenue grants . . . . .	6 600 000
Loans and capital grants towards Loan programmes . . . . .	8 100 000
Special employment grants scheme . . . . .	3 600 000
Grants for roads purposes . . . . .	2 700 000
Borrowing authority for semi-government bodies . . . . .	1 900 000
	22 900 000

In calling the Premiers' Conference, the Prime Minister sought information about the amount and form of financial assistance which State Governments, authorities and local government required to retain or re-engage employees. In making the offer of additional funds from his Government, he said that it was on the understanding that the funds should have the greatest practicable effects within the remainder of this financial year in terms of employment. We have had regard to those views in approving the proposals which I now outline.

We propose to use the whole of the additional funds becoming available under the first two items (that is to say, \$14 700 000) to increase the previously approved capital programmes of most of the major construction departments; to employ the \$3 600 000 in a scheme similar to that which operated successfully between December, 1971, and September, 1973; to use the

\$2 700 000 for the activities of the Highways Department, including grants to councils; and to allocate the bulk of the \$1 900 000 of borrowing authority to the South Australian Meat Corporation. I will give a little more information on each of these in turn.

First, as to the Revenue and Loan Budgets, the activities are interdependent, as it is necessary always to have in mind the requirement to hold a reserve of Loan funds to cover revenue deficits. Of course, in the most unlikely situation of a revenue surplus, the surplus could be made available to supplement capital programmes. The present estimate of the possible eventual outcome on each account in 1974-75, taking into account our proposal to increase selected departmental appropriations by \$14 700 000, is as follows:

CONSOLIDATED REVENUE ACCOUNT

	\$
Accumulated deficit at June 30, 1974 . . . . .	500 000
Add present estimate of deficit for 1974-75 . . . . .	20 400 000

That is, the \$27 000 000 that we submitted to the Commonwealth as the amount of the prospective deficit, less \$6 600 000 that we received in respect of the Revenue Budget, amounts to \$20 900 000, less the \$8 500 000 completion grant from the Grants Commission in respect of 1972-73. So, the estimated deficit at June 30, 1975, will be \$12 400 000, or very close indeed to the figure that appeared in the State Budget. On the Loan Account, the balance that was held in reserve at June 30, 1974 (and I point out to members that, after all their previous forecasts of bankruptcy, the State was in surplus at June 30 last year), was \$4 500 000. As to the Loan Account, the details are as follows:

	\$
Balance held in reserve at June 30, 1974 . . . . .	4 500 000
Add present estimate of surplus in 1974-75 . . . . .	5 700 000
Estimated reserve at June 30, 1975 . . . . .	10 200 000

The estimated net deficit on the two accounts taken together, which would have to be funded from State working accounts or prospective receipts in following years, is \$2 200 000. The Revenue Budget for 1974-75, as introduced to Parliament on August 29 last, forecast a deficit of about \$12 000 000 for the year. It also, of course, forecast the holding of Loan moneys and the receipt from the Grants Commission of a completion grant, which would bring us out at about a balance at the end of the year. It took into account a possible increase of 20 per cent in the level of average wages and it included the expected receipt of a special grant of \$6 000 000 towards South Australia's particular problems. When the Australian Government brought down its Budget in mid-September, it included financial assistance grants to the States on the assumption of a 25 per cent increase in the level of average wages. The net effect of this increased allowance was an adverse one of about \$4 000 000, because the cost to the South Australian Revenue Budget in wage increases is greater than the increase in grants and pay-roll tax which flow from such increases. This net adverse effect of \$4 000 000 and the non-receipt of the special grant of \$6 000 000 took the estimate of deficit to about \$22 000 000. A late down-turn in revenues from stamp duties and increased costs for departments, other than for wages, gave indications that the deficit could be further increased to as much as \$36 000 000, if we took no corrective action.

The introduction of franchise taxes has given us prospects of about \$9 000 000 in additional revenues and, for purposes of the Premiers' Conference, the prospective deficit had been estimated at about \$27 000 000, that is, \$36 000 000 less the \$9 000 000. I should add that departments had been asked to exercise every possible economy

and, for a few weeks, Cabinet had maintained a virtual freeze on the creation or filling of new positions in Government employment. I am not able to estimate, in financial terms, the effect of these latter measures.

Just prior to the Premiers' Conference, a complete review by departments of the first six months results gave indications of an up-turn in some revenues, but this was offset by higher estimates of the costs of wage awards. The best estimate of deficit for the year remained at about \$27 000 000. During each of the last two years, the Revenue Budget result has worsened by about \$9 000 000 between the end of January and the end of June. The deficit for the first seven months of 1974-75 was \$27 300 000 but, because of the expected receipt of revenues from new and increased taxes in the latter part of the year, I had expected no further deterioration. Now, because of the offer of the Australian Government to provide additional general revenue grants of \$6 600 000 to South Australia, it follows that the deficit may be reduced from \$27 000 000 to about \$20 400 000. If the recent indications of some up-turn in revenues are strengthened by experience in the next few months (and the indications are that they may well be), it is possible that the deficit could be held to a figure less than that.

Of course, we have in prospect a completion grant from the Grants Commission which should be not less than \$8 500 000. In the circumstances, Cabinet has decided to remove the virtual freeze on new jobs which has applied in recent weeks, but to require departments to continue to be very careful in giving effect to the modest programmes of expansion previously approved. These are within very restrictive targets set for each department in the preparation of the Budget estimates. In particular, we must be very careful to consider the carry-over effects into next year of anything we do in the remainder of 1974-75.

The greatest benefit of the additional funds becoming available as a result of the Premiers' Conference will be felt in Loan Account programmes. The original Loan programme for 1974-75, put before Parliament in mid-August last, proposed that all funds becoming available currently be used for works and that the balance of \$4 500 000 at June 30, 1974, be run down by a nominal \$200 000. I believed then that the holding of a balance of \$4 300 000 at June 30, 1975, was a reasonable objective in order to provide a reserve towards revenue deficits and to meet other unknown and uncertain circumstances. Had the two Budgets, as put to Parliament, been achieved, we would have had Loan funds of about \$4 300 000 on hand at June 30, 1975, and an accumulated revenue deficit of about \$4 000 000: that is to say, a nominal surplus of about \$300 000 on the two accounts combined, not the desperate bankrupt situation that I have heard members opposite talking about but the best revenue situation, in fact the most conservative and effective budgetary situation, of any State in Australia.

*Members interjecting:*

Mr. Goldsworthy: "Conservative" is a dirty word on your side.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am amazed at the protests from honourable members opposite; I thought that they liked the word. When the Australian Government brought down its Budget in mid-September, it provided for additional support of State Loan programmes to an extent which added \$12 500 000 to South Australia's new borrowings and capital grants. However, at the same time, it became clear that the higher allowances for wage increases,

the non-receipt of the special grant, evidence of down-turn in revenues and indications of higher non-wage costs were all adding significantly to the revenue deficit. Therefore, the Government considered that it should attempt to hold the additional Loan funds in reserve to cover that rapidly growing revenue deficit.

This has been our consistent objective through the year. While we have exercised caution in respect of Revenue Account, including a temporary freeze on new employment, the Government has declined to cut back on the recurrent programmes in education, health, and community welfare that were approved earlier. We have preferred to apply the necessary restrictions primarily to capital works financed through Loan Account. Because we had decided earlier to avoid the harsh step of actual retrenchment of Government employees, it was apparent that the heaviest impact of the State's financial problems had to be borne in those areas of works normally carried out by contract. I have referred often in recent months to our inability to let new contracts, if the objective of reserving Loan funds were to be achieved.

I must say now that a review carried out shortly before the Premiers' Conference showed that merely to defer the letting of contracts would not have been sufficient to achieve the reservation of Loan funds we believed prudent. There was a stage where retrenchments of employees would have been unavoidable, if the desirable balance of Loan funds were to be reserved. Thankfully, the provision of additional funds by the Australian Government has freed Cabinet from the necessity to consider that possible course of action. We have now decided to approve additional appropriations aggregating \$14 700 000 (that is, a total equivalent to the whole of the new funds offered on Friday last towards Revenue and Loan Accounts) to enable construction departments to retain their labour forces and to let contracts for additional works so that contractors may retain their labour forces.

I referred earlier in this statement to the original aim to hold about \$4 300 000 of Loan funds on hand at June 30, 1975, and to the present proposal to hold about \$10 200 000. It might be useful if I were to give a brief reconciliation of those two figures. The original aim was to hold Loan funds at June 30, 1975, to the extent of \$4 300 000. The Australian Government offered additional support in mid-September of \$12 500 000, and in mid-February of \$8 100 000. The total Loan funds in hand (those carried over from last year and additional funds offered this year) amount to \$24 900 000. The present proposal is for immediate increases in Loan appropriations of \$14 700 000, with an estimated reserve at June 30, 1975, of \$10 200 000.

The proposed allocation of the \$14 700 000 of additional appropriation is to those activities which are carried out predominantly by (a) departmental work forces (Engineering and Water Supply Department, \$5 000 000; Marine and Harbors Department, \$1 300 000; Woods and Forests Department, \$500 000; and Lands Department, for irrigation, \$400 000), and (b) contract (Public Buildings Department, \$7 500 000), a total of \$14 700 000. The Government's intention is that the use of the funds should have the greatest practicable effect on employment in the short term and should not create problems next year. Accordingly, we propose that the allocation for Public Buildings Department should be used, as far as possible, for minor works or projects on which the bulk of the work can be carried out by the end of 1974-75.

The SPEAKER: Order! Under Standing Orders, the honourable Premier must seek further leave of the House to enable him to continue his Ministerial statement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I seek that leave, assuring members that I have only about two more pages of my statement.

Leave granted.

Dr. Tonkin: Will there be an opportunity to debate this mini Budget?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member knows his opportunities. While the allocation is described for simplicity as being from Loan Account, I believe that to apply it in part for maintenance and repair jobs would be both quick-acting in terms of employment and effective in preserving Government assets. The letting by the Public Buildings Department of contracts for new major works will need to take into account not only the increased availability of funds this year but also the probable availability of funds next year. I point out that, just before the Premiers' Conference, in anticipation of funds to become available, Cabinet approved the letting of major contracts for new buildings for the forensic sciences and the Transport Department.

Quite apart from the results of the Premiers' Conference, a full review of the Loan programme is being made in terms of the longer-term planning guidelines which are now normal procedures of the Government. This review will need to take into account such factors as the deferment of the Redcliff proposal, increased requirements by the pipelines authority and additional funds needed for Leigh Creek coalfield.

Mr. Millhouse: What about taking off the petrol and tobacco taxes?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: In making this review, the Government will be seeking to reallocate funds to bolster employment either in the short term or by the selective letting of longer-term contracts, if it is at all possible to do so. Further, if revenue receipts continue to improve in the next few months and there appear to be real prospects of a reduction in the prospective Revenue deficit, the Government will consider the release of additional Loan funds to carry out further works and provide employment. The Government has had a detailed study carried out to ascertain what extent of funds could be used effectively in creating more jobs to meet the worst effects of the present unemployment. Our study shows that about \$18 000 000 would be required to build up and then phase out a programme providing about 4 000 jobs between now and September next. The offer of \$3 600 000 from the Australian Government, while falling far short of that requirement, will still enable a useful campaign to be mounted between now and the end of June. We plan to seek the maximum possible co-operation from local government in the use of these funds in a programme which will follow the lines of that which operated successfully from December, 1971, to September, 1973. At the Premiers' Conference, the Prime Minister said that his Government planned to expand the Regional Employment Development scheme markedly. That expansion will take up part of the gap between the \$18 000 000 that I sought and the \$3 600 000 approved.

Grants for road works of \$2 700 000 will be very useful in assisting the Highways Department and local government bodies to maintain their levels of employment on roadworks. In this area it may even be possible to restore part of the reduction in work forces that has occurred in the past seven months or so.

Regarding borrowing authority for semi-government bodies, amongst these bodies the South Australian Meat Corporation has the greatest need for new loans to finance

the continuation of capital works programmes. Accordingly, most of the additional borrowing authority of \$1 900 000 is to be allocated to the corporation. The requirements of the other semi-government bodies will be kept under review and some part of the additional borrowing authority will be made available to them if needed for works. I believe that the proposals I have outlined briefly will make the greatest practicable contribution to the retention or re-engaging of employees in the short term and, at the same time will make an effective contribution towards the provision of urgently needed works.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: MASLIN BEACH

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Government has been considering for some months the provision of beaches where nude bathing would be permitted. A number of sites has been considered. During this summer, however, the Government was faced with what amounted to a *fait accompli* at Maslin Beach South, where nude bathers had increased to the extent that there had been considerable newspaper publicity. The District Council of Willunga, in whose area Maslin Beach South lies, did not have a by-law regarding the wearing of bathing costumes, but such a by-law had been passed by the council, had lain upon the table of this Parliament for the required time, and was due to be ratified in Executive Council.

A letter was therefore sent to the council asking whether it would consider an amendment to its by-law by a proclamation pursuant to the Local Government Act which would have the effect of amending the by-law so that it did not apply in Maslin Beach South. The council had intimated orally that it was not opposed to the continuance of nude bathing at Maslin Beach South, but the matter had not been discussed at a formal meeting of the council. The by-law, however, could not be amended until it had come into force, and accordingly it was submitted to His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council on February 6, 1975, and was thus due to come into force one week later.

On February 11, 1975, it was learned that the council, on the previous night, had decided that it did not wish its by-law to be amended by proclamation. Arrangements were then made for the Chairman of the council and the District Clerk to call to see me at 12.30 p.m. on February 12. At that meeting, it was learned that the council thought that any action taken to exclude the area from the operation of its by-law should be the responsibility of the State Government. Whilst the council members were not opposed to provisions of nude bathing facilities, they felt that the action should be taken by the State Government rather than the local council. It was explained to the council representatives that the area between the high-water mark and the surveyed road running along the coast was a recreation reserve that had been placed under the care and control of the council on March 26, 1942. This recreation reserve extended from the southern boundary of a mineral lease just north of the parking area at Maslin Beach along the coast around Blanche Point and down some distance towards Port Willunga. It was proposed that a piece should be excised from this recreation reserve and placed under Government care, control and management. The remaining pieces would be rededicated as recreation reserves under the District Council of Willunga. Simultaneously, a proclamation would be issued under section 476 of the Local Government Act reserving the foreshore opposite the reserve for clad and unclad

bathing from the jurisdiction of the District Council of Willunga. The reserve extends from a line some 600 metres south of the mineral lease to Blanche Point. The areas concerned have been issued with section numbers, and section 800 comprises the reserve for clad and unclad bathing.

The reserve for clad and unclad bathing, therefore, comprises the area from the surveyed road to high-water mark plus land between low-water mark and high-water mark and the adjoining sea. So the report of a correspondent to the *Advertiser* yesterday was wrong. The sea below low-water mark is removed from the provisions of the district council by-law because the foreshore has been removed from the care, control and management of the council and the sea no longer abuts on the area. For the council to have control of the sea, it must comprise open public water abutting on to its area. Appropriate signs have been and are to be erected at various locations on the perimeter of the new reserve. Indeed, the only untoward act at Maslin Beach reported to us was the removal of the sign, and that is being replaced permanently.

The Police Offences Act has not been amended but the police have been informed that it is Government policy not to prosecute persons for offensive behaviour simply on the grounds of nudity if they are within the area of the reserve for clad and unclad bathing. There is, of course, the possibility of a private prosecution but the Police Offences Act does not specifically say that nudity in itself is an offence, and I would expect that a court would dismiss a prosecution for nudity in an area specifically set aside for clad and unclad bathing which had been adequately marked with sign posts. I will table an opinion of the Crown Solicitor that confirms that view. A court would not be bound by a precedent as would be the case in regard to prosecutions for nudity on other public beaches not set aside for the purpose of nude bathing. Therefore, the statements made publicly that the public would be in some doubt about this matter and that it needs to be cleared up by legislative amendment are, in fact, so much nonsense.

It was necessary for the Government to resume the recreation reserve in order to rededicate it for the purposes mentioned above prior to the operation of the District Council of Willunga's new by-law requiring bathing costumes to be worn. I seek leave to table this statement pursuant to section 5 (f) of the Crown Lands Act, 1929-1974, and, in addition, an opinion of the Crown Solicitor to which I referred. Also, I have a report from the Commissioner of Police on this matter. This report, which should be placed before the House, is as follows:

Prior to the proclamation of Friday, February 14, 1975, which legalised nude bathing at Maslin Beach some 12 arrests and 24 reports with a view to prosecution were made. One arrest followed a deliberate act of indecent exposure; the rest involved people simply on the beach without clothing. Other complaints included that of a young man (nude) caressing the body of his female companion (nude) with his penis in a state of erection. This occurred on the beach. Another complaint by two young women was given in statement form. Both alleged that they had witnessed a young man masturbating both himself and his dog in the sandhills at Maslin Beach. In both cases the parties were not identified and no police action resulted. By far the greater number of complaints came from residents and other people who objected to the presence of nudists at Maslin Beach, particularly at the northern end, where they in fact were using the only car park in the nude and causing strong objection by family groups.

Those were the complaints to the police before the action was taken by the Government. The report continues:

Since the proclamation of Friday, 14/2/75, no arrests or reports have been made at Maslin Beach for any

offences. Police activity was limited to patrol visits on five occasions on Saturday, 15/2/75, commencing at 10.30 a.m. and concluding at 7.40 p.m. The only nudes observed were in the proclaimed area and no complaints of offensive behaviour were received. A larger crowd attended on Sunday, 16/2/75, when an estimated 1 000 people (both clad and unclad) occupied the proclaimed area at 3 p.m. Again police patrols paid periodic attention and no complaints of offensive behaviour were received.

No complaints were made to the police at all about offensive behaviour. The report continues:

Anticipating the crowds, additional traffic patrols were used on both days. Parking space was limited both in the car park on top of the cliffs and in the streets of Maslin Beach. The traffic crews described the situation as congested but not dangerous. There were two main problems on each day. One was the limited parking available, and no doubt this was accentuated by an influx of the curious as distinct from bathers clad or unclad. A second was the activities of persons using binoculars to study the activities of the nudes in the proclaimed area at the southern end of the beach. They occupied whatever vantage points were available to the exclusion of people wishing to use the beach. Neither problem is likely to resolve itself in the immediate future. In conclusion, I would point out that overnight the notice indicating the northern limit to the proclaimed area on the beach had been removed. Steps have been taken to have a more substantial notice erected.

The result of the report of the Commissioner of Police is that, apart from traffic congestion and a few sightseers, the situation has improved on what it was before the Government took action.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: HOUSING LOANS

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

Leave granted.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Government has received notice of the provision by the Australian Government of a further \$1 000 000 to the Home Builders' Account in South Australia. This will allow the Government to take the necessary steps to raise the limit of loans under the Home Builders' Account from \$15 000 to \$18 000, a necessary step in order to assist—

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: Subject to a means test.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes.

Dr. Eastick: It should be unlimited.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable Leader does not realise that if it were unlimited the result would be that fewer loans would be made to people in need. However, I point out to the Leader that the raising of the limit from \$15 000 to \$18 000 for those under the means test is a practical step in assisting people who have, and should have, first claim on the Home Builders' Account.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT: STATE FINANCES

The SPEAKER: I have received from the honourable Leader of the Opposition the following letter, dated February 18, 1975:

I hereby notify you that it is my intention this afternoon to move that the House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow at 1 o'clock for the purpose of discussing the following matter, namely, that the Premier stands condemned for his failure to obtain funds from the Commonwealth Government adequate to meet the urgent financial needs of the State.

I call upon those honourable members who approve the motion to rise in their places.

*Several members having risen:*

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

That this House at its rising do adjourn until tomorrow at 1 o'clock,

for the purpose of discussing the following matter, namely, that the Premier, who is also Treasurer of this State, stands condemned for his failure to obtain funds from the Commonwealth Government adequate to meet the urgent financial needs of the State. Before proceeding with that motion, I move:

That Standing Orders be so far suspended as to enable this debate to be continued until 4 p.m.

The SPEAKER: I have counted the House and, there being present an absolute majority of the whole number of members, I accept the motion to suspend Standing Orders. Is the motion seconded?

Mr. CUMBE: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Motion carried.

Dr. EASTICK: First, I thank the House for accepting the motion to suspend Standing Orders, because we have had, in the presentation of so many Ministerial statements this afternoon, a situation that was foreseen by those members who have been considering Standing Orders: namely, the possibility, by manipulation, of preventing the adequate airing of views and grievances in this House and, more particularly, of preventing questions from being asked of Ministers. On this point, I must say that we have been denied the opportunity to ask questions of Ministers this afternoon, even though we have had a suspension of Standing Orders to continue the debate until 4 p.m.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: You're doing that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The House has made a certain decision and I cannot allow the honourable Leader of the Opposition to comment on a decision of the House after he has moved a motion that the House has given him permission to move.

Dr. EASTICK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The situation clearly is that the normal convention that allows for some questions to be asked before we proceed with an urgency motion of this kind has been prevented. However, I return to the motion, which is one of condemnation of the Treasurer for his failure effectively and adequately to bring finance to this State. We have had this afternoon an example of an attempt at manipulation of the press and of the facts, for political gain. We have seen a practice that has been used several times recently in order to try to create a totally false impression as to the exact financial situation of this State and of the finance that has been made available to it. On a recent Saturday, we saw a spectacle on television and heard an announcement on radio. Featured on the front page of the *News* (and subsequently in a prominent position in the *Sunday Mail*) was the story of the Prime Minister visiting South Australia to sign, with the South Australian Treasurer, a contract that would inject an additional \$41 000 000 into the economy of the State. The Prime Minister and the Treasurer were aware (and I suggest that many of the people who recorded that event were aware) that there were no new initiatives of any value in the document or the sum associated with that event.

Had the Prime Minister been in Australia on an earlier occasion it would have been possible for him and the Treasurer to sign that document which, in the main, required the passing of the Commonwealth Budget. The fact that the Prime Minister was not here prevented the formal signing, but we had an attempt (successful in some part) to hoodwink the people of South Australia into believing that these were additional funds, money to be advanced to South Australia by the Commonwealth

Government, a Government (we were told) which concerned itself with the plight of the Australian community. However, nothing could be further from the truth than that statement. The Treasurer was fully aware of this: a look at his face on television that evening (quite apart from his comment to my colleague earlier this afternoon relating to last Saturday) indicated that he recognised he was being part of a spoof and part of a calculated effort to misrepresent the actual case to the people of this State.

The people of South Australia are demanding answers, free of political double talk of the kind in which the Treasurer has been involved, concerning the present financial circumstances. This afternoon, when he gave a documented comment on money that was forthcoming as a result of his visit to Canberra last week, he indicated the result of deliberations of his Government as to the areas in which the money was to be spent, but he gave the people of this State no clear indication that this money would be injected, either directly or indirectly, to any extent into the private sector. As has been indicated by my Commonwealth colleague, Bill Snedden, to keep working on Government activity without stimulating the private sector is to continue the present unemployment situation in Australia.

It may well be that, as a natural follow-on from Government contracts undertaken basically by Government workers, there will be a spin-off to the private sector, but the Treasurer should be open about the fact that the major effort to reduce unemployment should be to stimulate the private sector more forcefully rather than await any benefits from a spin-off. When the Treasurer went to Canberra last week he let it be known (or failed to deny the rumour) that he was seeking more than \$40 000 000. In the *News* of February 13, under the banner headline "Dunstan wants extra \$40 000 000 for South Australia", a report states:

The Premier, Mr. Dunstan, will be seeking an extra \$40 000 000 in Commonwealth Government funds when he goes to the Premiers' Conference in Canberra tomorrow. And if he can get substantial Commonwealth grants the 5c a gallon State petrol tax will be dropped.

Let us analyse further that situation. The Treasurer had made no secret of the facts that, unless he had money additional to that with which he came back, he could not remove the petrol tax, and that it was necessary for the Commonwealth Government to spell out that there would be a continuing sum available to the State that would allow the removal of such franchise taxes. Although the Treasurer has failed to indicate that by this promotion he was seeking \$40 000 000, that is no proof that he did not say that he was after \$40 000 000; but, if we analyse the totality of his statements, what he received plus the extra required to remove the State franchise taxes would add up to almost \$40 000 000. According to the *Advertiser* published next day, he came out of the exercise with a total of \$21 000 000, plus or minus a little.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: \$22 900 000.

Dr. EASTICK: I have been told that it was \$22 900 000, and I accept that as being the figure. In the *Advertiser* of February 15, a report states:

These developments emerged from yesterday's Premiers' Conference which Mr. Dunstan described as the best and fairest for a long time. He finished the day's dealings with a smile on his face and \$21 000 000 for the State Treasury.

However, that was \$19 000 000 short of what was required to honour his promise to the people of this State that, if he obtained from the Commonwealth Government a

better deal, they would not be disadvantaged by these franchise taxes. He seemed to forget rather conveniently that he had said many times in this place (and even before 1972) that, with a Commonwealth Australian Labor Party Government, South Australia would have no further fiscal problems and that the South Australian Education Department and the South Australian transport system would be in no difficulty, and so it goes on. At present, members of the teaching profession in the Education Department have had directed to their attention letters that refuse them the chance to undertake services for students that were available to them last year. Teachers are told that there has been a reduction in the number of assistants available to help with the work load of the department. These are the sorts of problem that we now have with a Commonwealth Government and State Government of the same persuasion: two Governments that were to prevent such happenings in future and not create the problems of the past. By so many of their actions, both Commonwealth and State Governments have failed miserably to help South Australians and the whole of the Australian community.

Mr. Becker: This was to be the model State.

Dr. EASTICK: It was, and Labor members basked in the glory of the promise that this was to be the guinea pig State, but there is no advantage to us in being a guinea pig Socialist State that denies its members rights and prevents South Australians from benefiting to the same degree as do their counterparts in other States.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: What do they get that we don't?

Dr. EASTICK: On past performances we should expect a show of pique from the Treasurer because he did not get what he set out to get and because South Australia received less than 53 per cent of what it sought, whereas Sir Charles Court of Western Australia obtained 75 per cent of the sum he requested. Obviously, he made a better case or was more realistic in his approach to Canberra. Alternatively, did he succeed because he was more realistic in putting a case he could substantiate to the people of Western Australia rather than a case engineered to obtain headlines in an attempt to draw the wool over the eyes of the people?

Mr. Becker: Was he a better negotiator?

Dr. EASTICK: I tend to think Sir Charles Court was being truthful to the people he represents and was not seeking to convey, by means of a media manipulation service which is contained within this Government's services, a false impression to the people, as is being done in South Australia. In this the Treasurer stands condemned: he gave the media a story based not on fact but on his own imagination. Quite apart from the announcements the Treasurer has made this afternoon, which indicate that South Australia will benefit from an infusion of money, home builders will benefit by being able to obtain up to \$18 000 for home loans compared to the previous \$15 000. I hope the Treasurer will admit that this figure was increased from \$15 000 in South Australia only after the Opposition had pointed out how much below the figure applying in other States was the South Australian maximum house-building loan. It was raised to \$18 000 after members of the Opposition had pointed out the disparity between \$15 000 and the amount needed, and the fact that the cost of bridging or second mortgage finance was so great that many young people in South Australia were being denied homes. It is as a result of stimulation from the Opposition that the Government has



now made this increased amount available. The Treasurer now hides behind the fact that he has additional funds.

The Hon. D. A. Dunstan: You said we didn't get them.

Dr. EASTICK: The Treasurer has announced \$1 000 000. How is it the other States have no limit on loans to home builders of the same category, whereas the Treasurer of South Australia says we cannot afford to have no limit? Is it because, under this Government, the Housing Trust has been forced into a miserable existence and that the record of the trust is such that tens of thousands of people in South Australia are waiting for houses? As other members will wish to address themselves to this subject, I shall not deny them this opportunity.

The Treasurer of this State stands condemned for his failure to obtain from the Commonwealth Government the funds necessary to correct the anomalies, to reduce unemployment, and to eliminate the financial fiasco resulting from the mismanagement of the State's affairs by the Labor Government.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition's condemnation of me. The Leader apparently paid no attention whatever to the detailed financial statements I gave the House this afternoon. Attacking me on the basis of a newspaper headline that said I was asking the Commonwealth Government for State funds of \$40 000 000, he said that I did not explain or deny that amount, but that is not true.

Mr. Becker: You never denied the statement.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Yes I did.

Mr. Becker: Where?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I suggest that the honourable member come back to realities instead of trying to play his usual silly self. The headline appeared in the *News* over a statement which I shall detail later. In the channel 7 telecast to which the Leader has referred I was asked whether the State Government was applying for State funds of \$40 000 000, and I said, "No, I am not asking for that sum for State funds: I am asking for \$19 000 000 or \$20 000 000 in respect of Revenue and Loan moneys for the State and \$18 000 000 to \$20 000 000 in respect of funds outside those moneys towards employment-creating works. Those are the limits to which we can go in creating 4 000 extra jobs outside the State revenue."

That was our submission to the Commonwealth Government. The submission was for \$19 000 000 to \$20 000 000 in respect of the State Budget, and \$18 000 000 to \$20 000 000 in respect of employment-producing works instead of the Regional Employment Development Scheme. That is where the \$40 000 000 comes from. The figures were added up by Mr. Jory and the headline appeared with \$40 000 000. The honourable Leader overlooks the fact that Sir Charles Court also asked for money outside the Revenue and Loan moneys.

Dr. Eastick: He got 75 per cent of what he asked for.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, he got 75 per cent of what he asked for in respect of his Revenue and Loan funds, and he got no greater proportion in relation to employment-producing works outside the Budget than I did. In fact, I got him some extra money. Alone amongst the Treasurers of Australia, Sir Charles Court protested that he was facing a considerable gap as a consequence in his Revenue Budget which he would have to supplement by means of either retrenchments or additional taxation. Mr. Hamer pointed out he could not simply equate his

position with that of the other States because the other States had made special efforts to raise the revenue area which he had not. Sir Charles Court did not get what he asked for in relation to Revenue and Loan moneys, whereas I did. The only areas in which we did not get the money we asked for in respect of this year's Loan and Revenue funds was in respect of moneys entirely outside the State Budget to be given to the States as a grant for employment-producing works outside their normal programme. On that score the Commonwealth Government said it would go only to the limits of \$40 000 000 in grants to the States instead of a figure that would have been about \$170 000 000, less what would have been necessary in unemployment relief. However, they said they were channelling that money out not through the States but through the R.E.D. scheme. That increased at my behest the original offer in respect of this money from \$20 000 000 to \$40 000 000.

Mr. Coumbe: They took it out of R.E.D.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No, they included it in addition to R.E.D. It is in addition to the R.E.D. scheme completely. It does not take away anything from what the R.E.D. scheme is doing and the additional money put into the R.E.D. scheme makes up the gap between the \$3 600 000 we will be spending and the original \$18 000 000 we said would be necessary to create 4 000 jobs. The Leader ought really to pay a little more attention to what I say to the media than simply to base his case on a headline that is inconsistent with the contents of the story under the headline and inconsistent with the questions put to me by the media in a programme he quoted. In addition, the Leader said that no money was being injected into the private sector.

Dr. Eastick: I asked what sum was being injected.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I point out that in the last week we have let two major building contracts for the centre of the city of Adelaide that affect construction expenditure. A significant proportion of the \$7 500 000 for the Public Buildings Department will go out in private contracts.

Mr. Becker: When?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Straight away; it will go out before June 30. We will spend that money in the period for which it is given to us.

Mr. Becker: It takes a long time—

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member wants something done yesterday.

Mr. Becker: No, now.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Members say that money is not going to the private sector, whereas I say it is. Then members opposite ask why people are not being employed tomorrow. The Leader asserted that I had promised the people of South Australia that I would remove the petrol tax. I did not do that: the Leader cannot quote a single instance where I did so. What I said was that, if sufficient additional moneys were given me by the Commonwealth Government to allow us to replace an additional \$9 000 000 this year, plus \$20 000 000 in continuing years, we could take it off.

Mr. Dean Brown: Yet you claim you have sufficient money.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I got money from the Commonwealth to bring the State Budget back within the limits I had originally proposed. I point out that the financial deals with the Commonwealth for this financial year are not ended by the arrangement we made on Friday.



Negotiations are continuing with the Commonwealth. I hope that, when these negotiations have been concluded, members opposite will, for the first time that they will have been known to do so, give credit where credit is due.

The Leader then went off on a tirade not related to the conference, saying that South Australia would get money for education under this Commonwealth Government, and it has received money for this purpose. In fact, no Commonwealth Government in the history of the nation has ever before channelled the massive sums to the State for education that this Commonwealth Government has channelled to us. A vast sum has been given to the State to an extent far beyond—

Dr. Eastick: What about all these teachers out of a job?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: Where are they?

Dr. Eastick: Some teachers are not employed.

The Hon. J. D. Corcoran: They've never been employed.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Leader cannot deny that what has happened under this Commonwealth Government is that the needs, which have been shown at the national education inquiry and which have been the subject of submissions from this State and parent and teacher organisations throughout the Commonwealth at Premiers' Conference after Premiers' Conference when there have been Commonwealth Liberal Governments, have been matched. Members should tell parent and teacher associations that money has not been given by the Commonwealth Government for education; those organisations know the true position. The Leader then said that we had been restrictive under the Home Builders' Account in not providing funds for the house builders of South Australia.

Dr. Eastick: Adequate funds.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Leader contrasted the position in this State with the position in the Liberal-governed States. Under this Government, 20 per cent of the total funds for house building comes from Government sources, either through the Housing Trust or the Home Builders' Account. However, in New South Wales the comparable figure is 11 per cent; in Victoria, it is 8 per cent; and in Queensland, it is 6 per cent. The Leader has said that there is no limit in respect of house-building funds advanced by permanent building societies to house builders in the other States. I will say there is no limit, but there is a lower proportion of loans given. A higher proportion of people in South Australia is able to get Home Builders' Account loans than is the position in any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Mathwin: You claim your record is the best?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: By far the best in housing. I suggest that the honourable member take advantage of the help I give members to take trips so that they can do their homework.

Mr. Mathwin: You've never sent me on a trip.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I give help to members opposite so that they can travel and inform themselves; I suggest that the honourable member make use of that assistance and inform himself of the situation in the other States. In New South Wales, Victoria, or Queensland, if a person gets a Housing Commission house he thinks he has won the lottery.

Mr. Becker: It's a bit that way here.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member knows perfectly well that that is not so, and it is not so in his district. The fact is that what happened was not, as

the Leader knows, the result of stimulation by the Opposition. Frankly, the Leader does not stimulate us very often. It was not as a result of stimulation by the Opposition that we increased the amount in the limit of loan under the Home Builders' Account to those people under the means test. We did that as soon as we received \$1 000 000 from the Commonwealth Government.

We have received far more housing assistance from this Commonwealth Government than we received from previous Commonwealth Liberal Governments, which put housing at the bottom of the list. I point out to members opposite that the greatest condemnation of the previous Commonwealth Governments with regard to housing policy came not from me but from Liberal Housing Ministers. When I went to conferences then, I thought I was at home: it was like a meeting between the Liberal Movement and the Liberal and Country League. Now the position is similar, because I hear the Leader saying that I am to be condemned because I have not got enough money from the Commonwealth Government, having regard to some newspaper headline that the Leader said was the basis of our submission. The member for Mitcham interjected earlier, saying we had received so much money that we should remove the petrol tax. The point is that the Opposition cannot make up its mind about what it wants to say in condemning the Government; all it wants to do is condemn the Government, because that is politics—nothing else.

Mr. CUMBE (Torrens): I listened with interest to the Treasurer making his statement earlier this afternoon. The more he said, the more I became bemused by what he was saying. I concluded that he was really fascinated by the announcement of the Governor-General last evening and was looking to be the first recipient of the Order of Australia, with or without glosses. I listened intently to what the Treasurer said in reply to the Leader. At first, I thought he was being extremely patronising and that that would be his tone. However, it soon became apparent that he was being defensive. He seemed to gloss over some of the points that had been made, as though they were of no account whatever.

I will now analyse carefully what the Treasurer really said in his first statement and in reply to the Leader. The Treasurer did not get from his Commonwealth colleagues the sum he wanted. Despite what the Treasurer said a few moments ago and despite the slur he cast on the media in this regard, I believe the Leader's point is correct, so I maintain that the Treasurer did not really get the sum he should have got and expected he would get, because he glossed over *en passant* the reference to the franchise taxes. We all know that these taxes will be the subject of another conference between the State Treasurer and the Commonwealth Treasurer.

Last year, when explaining the petrol and tobacco franchise taxes, the Treasurer stated clearly (in fact, I thought he was going to burst into tears) that he regretted having to impose the taxes; however, he stated that he would repeal them if he could get additional funds from Canberra. His words are in *Hansard* for all members to see. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that that is what the Treasurer said he would do; that was his hope and aspiration. We all welcome the additional money from Canberra but, now that the Treasurer has it, we do not believe it is enough. According to the Treasurer, though, he cannot repeal the franchise taxes.

On his return from Canberra last Friday evening, the Treasurer is reported as saying that he finished the day's dealings with a smile on his lips and \$24 000 000 in the

State Treasury. If he is so happy why can he not remove the franchise taxes, which are a direct impost on the people of this State? The taxes are a scandal: they are sectional.

Dr. Eastick: They will increase our cost of living.

Mr. COURCE: Yes. They are directly inflationary and will generate further inflation. Not a word has been said by the Treasurer about the early lifting of the franchise taxes, particularly the petrol tax. Slight reference was made by the Treasurer to this matter, but that was almost an apology. The Treasurer should come straight out and say whether or not he intends repealing the taxes because, if he does not, his credibility, which has been suspect for some time and is more so after today's performance, will be completely shattered.

The second fact we gained from today's Ministerial statement is that much of the funds, particularly the Revenue allocation and Loan Account money, will be absorbed in overcoming inflated prices and costs in the community for services, the payment of salaries and wages or public works. Who caused the current high inflation rate? It was the Treasurer's colleagues in Canberra. For the Treasurer to say so glibly that he has completed a wonderful deal for South Australia is just so much poppycock because, unfortunately, much of the allocation will be absorbed not in productive work but in simply trying to reduce much of the inflation caused by his Commonwealth colleagues. The Treasurer made an interesting comment when talking about Loan Accounts and contracts; he said that much of the money for contracts will go to the Public Buildings Department, the Engineering and Water Supply Department, and other Government departments. When referring to contracts that would stimulate the private sector in public buildings, the Treasurer said that these funds will allow deferred contracts to proceed. These were contracts that were deferred because there was no money available for them.

Not even one word was said about expansion. The sum provided for Loan and capital grants was \$1 800 000, which will not go far in these inflationary days in providing public works for South Australia. I cannot see any funds being provided for the expansion that is so urgently needed. One must realise that in Australia, particularly in South Australia, the private sector has had its confidence knocked completely out of it. Once its confidence goes the effect permeates throughout the community. In South Australia the private sector is the largest producer of goods and the largest employer of labour. Figures indicate that unemployment in Australia is at its highest in South Australia. Surely that is the area to which money should be directed to control the high unemployment figures facing us today.

What funds are to be provided to help control unemployment? The sum of \$3 500 000 has been provided for this purpose. Who has created the highest rate of unemployment since the depression? Once again, it is the Treasurer's Commonwealth colleagues, members of the Australian Labor Party, who are in the unenviable position of having the highest inflation rate and the highest unemployment rate in—

Mr. Crimes: I suppose you blame us for the United States situation, too?

Mr. COURCE: Never mind the Socialist member for Spence. It is under the Treasurer's scheme that unemployment has reached its peak.

Mr. Crimes: You should look at capitalist countries overseas.

Mr. COURCE: It is the South Australian Government and its friends in Canberra that have brought about this situation. The Treasurer did not get the funds he should have got or the funds he expected to get, because he has been unable to honour the undertaking he implied last year when explaining the franchise Bills. At that time he said, "If I get funds from the Commonwealth Government I will try to remove these taxes." Well, he has the additional funds and he has not removed the taxes. Therefore, the Treasurer is completely unreliable in this regard and the Leader's motion is correct in condemning the Government in general and the Treasurer in particular. Many people in the community are beginning to doubt the Treasurer's credibility and reliability. Today, by his statements, the Treasurer has proved these doubts to be justified and his credibility now lies shattered.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works): I join with the Treasurer in refuting claims made by the Leader this afternoon when he said that the Treasurer had failed dismally at the last Premiers' Conference to do what he set out to achieve.

Dr. Eastick: Have you been hoodwinked, too?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I certainly have not been hoodwinked by the Leader or his Deputy this afternoon. I want to put it squarely to them, particularly to the Deputy Leader, that the Premiers' Conference was directed towards stimulating employment across the nation. That was the whole purpose of the Premiers' Conference. The Premiers went to that conference with the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth Treasurer with a view to doing that very thing.

Mr. COURCE: That's not quite what the Premier said.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Treasurer would have been very happy to be given sufficient not only to stimulate employment but also to remove the petrol tax and the cigarette tax. There is no question about this, and the Treasurer made perfectly clear to the people of this State that, if he was placed in the appropriate position, he would be pleased to remove the taxes. That promise still stands. The Treasurer is still negotiating with the Australian Government with respect to obtaining funds that may enable us to remove the tax soon. The Treasurer made that clear. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Torrens have said that we should do it now, and that we should not stimulate employment.

Mr. COURCE: Rubbish!

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Treasurer said, "We want to stimulate employment, too." How can we do both things? How can we, on the one hand, stimulate employment and, on the other hand, remove the tax that the Leader of the Opposition declares to be obnoxious?

Mr. COURCE: That's why I said the Treasurer did not get everything that he said he would get.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The Treasurer did not claim he would: he said he would try. The prime purpose of the Premiers' Conference, as the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Torrens know, was to stimulate employment. The Treasurer has already clearly and concisely outlined the results of that conference. He has clearly shown how the additional funds will bring our budgetary situation back to that which was forecast at the beginning of this financial year. In addition, the funds will enable us to pump additional funds into public works and the private sector. The Treasurer clearly stated that \$7 500 000 would be going to the Public Buildings Department. That sum will be spent on minor projects and

maintenance work; that is, short-term contracts to the private sector. We will not be using day labour: we will be using private contractors to do this work, and I assure the honourable member that this money will be spent before the end of this financial year and it will directly assist the private sector, because the Government recognises that it has a responsibility not only to protect its own work force in the existing situation but also to assist the private sector wherever possible to maintain its work force.

A classic example occurred recently, when the Government entered into two major contracts in connection with buildings for the Motor Vehicles Department and the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science. Those contracts would not normally have been let prior to the Premiers' Conference if we had not recognised our responsibility to help the private sector maintain its work force. The expenditure of the \$7 500 000 will be aimed directly at the private sector. It will be earned by the private sector on Government short-term works. In many cases contractors will be involved in the allocation of \$5 000 000 to the Engineering and Water Supply Department. The member for Torrens knows what type of work contractors carry out for that department. The main purpose of the Premiers' Conference was to gain funds to stop all the States from getting themselves into a financial situation where they were in danger of becoming bankrupt. The Leader of the Opposition has used scare tactics and, now that our financial situation is better than it was, he is disappointed.

Mr. Coumbe: How did you get into this position?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Inflation has been the major problem.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Who brought that on?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I suppose we are responsible for the unemployment and inflation in America, Europe and England! It is an international problem. The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Torrens know full well that, as a major trading nation, Australia is inevitably influenced by what goes on in the rest of the world.

Dr. Eastick: Less than 5 per cent is imported.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Evidently, I am expected to believe the figures of the Leader of the Opposition. I can show clearly that that is not the case, but I do not intend to go on with it this afternoon. The Leader of the Opposition was tempted into this motion today because he was afraid of what someone else sitting on the same side would do. The Leader of the Opposition was obviously ill prepared. His facts were not in hand; he did not prove his case to anyone on this side, and I do not think he proved it to many of his followers on the other side. The Leader tried to say, because some reporter had added two figures together, that that was the Treasurer's figure. The Treasurer explained this point, but the Leader did not accept the Treasurer's explanation because it did not suit his argument. The Leader of the Opposition and his Deputy need have no fears in connection with this State: it is in very good hands. Of all the Premiers who attended the conference, the Premier who made an outstanding contribution and was more successful than was any other Premier was our own South Australian Premier, Don Dunstan. Whether the Leader likes it or not, they are the facts. It was through our Treasurer's initiative that more money was forthcoming from the Commonwealth Government than was initially offered.

Mr. Dean Brown: The facts are the opposite of that.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The honourable member would know, because he was there! Negotiations are still proceeding with the Commonwealth Government in relation to the petrol tax and the cigarette tax, about which people are complaining bitterly. We would like to see those taxes disappear. However, the prime purpose of the Premiers' Conference was not to do that: it was to gain funds to stimulate employment and, in our case, to get the State's finances back to the situation that had been forecast at this stage last year.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY (Kavel): We have heard a rather belated attempt by the Deputy Premier to support his Leader.

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: The Deputy Premier spoke as soon as he could.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: He did not make any points, except that he said that the Leader of the Opposition was trying to hoodwink someone.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: He said that.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: In this game of politics, the important thing is what the public thinks about a question. The propaganda from Canberra and the South Australian Government has not hoodwinked the public, and it is the public that will be the final arbiter on the question of who is competent to run the affairs of the nation and of this State. The Deputy Premier talks about stimulating employment and then, by some confused mental process, he says that the petrol tax will stimulate employment.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I did not say that.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: That was how it came across. It was difficult to follow what the Deputy Premier said, except that he claimed that his Government was the greatest. He claimed that, if it had not been for the Treasurer, we would not have got such results from the Premiers' Conference. When the petrol tax legislation was introduced, the Treasurer said:

Whilst that is the invidious situation that now faces the State, the Government is nevertheless concerned at the clear inflationary effect of this Bill, and is deeply conscious of the anomalous position into which it is being forced, in that it must introduce legislation of this nature at a time when all available evidence suggests that some relief from indirect taxation is one of the more important methods of stimulating the economy.

In other words, this petrol tax will do exactly the opposite of what I understood the Deputy Premier to say. I may not have understood him correctly and it may be that I missed the point, if there was one. The Treasurer was saying that this tax would have the opposite effect and depress the economy and employment. He also stated:

In this regard, I would make quite clear that, even at this late stage, my Government would not proceed with this Bill, and also a Bill to be introduced later this session to license retail tobacco sales, if Australian Government assistance were made available to the extent contemplated by these taxing measures. However, in the absence of that assistance we are left with no alternative but to proceed with these measures.

Assistance far in excess of the expected \$9 000 000, which I think the Treasurer has stated as the amount to be received from the petrol tax, has been received, but a line of propaganda has been fed to the press since the Treasurer got back to the effect that he will try to get these taxes removed. The fact of life is that the Government of this State and the Government in Canberra are in open competition with the private sector. We heard Mr. Crean, the former Commonwealth Treasurer who has since been sacked, state during the most recent Budget debate

in Canberra that the time was then ripe in Australia for the transfer of resources from the private sector to the Government. That is reported in the Budget debate in Canberra.

It is difficult to find what direction the Commonwealth Government is following at present, but at the time of the most recent Commonwealth Budget debate, that Government was in open competition with the private sector and was trying to transfer resources from the private sector to the Government. What line has been adopted by the Government of this State? This Government has been the pace setter and, in setting the pace, it has made it extremely difficult for the private sector in this State to pursue a viable, profitable enterprise, in many instances. I think that the Government's moves were ill advised, and I can think of all sorts of measures it has introduced to enhance the lifestyle of what it refers to as the workers of this State, although everyone must earn a living as a worker. We think of pace-setting legislation in regard to leave loadings and workmen's compensation. These measures have been pace-setting legislation that the Government was confident it could adopt in the Government sector. Of course, the competitive position of those in the private sector is made more difficult, but that matter carries little weight with this Government. This is the price that must be paid by a pace-setter Government.

This Government is proud of its record in education. We have heard the Treasurer speak on the Government's record in education, health and hospitals today, but its record has been possible because of funds made available in the first instance on a sound economic basis by a Commonwealth Liberal Government. The Minister of Education has had, since he has come to that office, increased funds, not only from his State Government but also as a result of grants from the Commonwealth Liberal Government. When that Government was in power, he received more money than did any other Minister of Education previously in the history of this State.

In those circumstances, it is not difficult for the Minister to make a good fellow of himself. He can negotiate salary settlements, and generally make himself a good fellow in the teaching service. I am not criticising him for this, but the State has been committed to continuing expenditure. The Treasurer, in his Ministerial statement this afternoon, has said that, in the schemes the Government is developing to try to overcome the crisis situation (and the word "crisis" is in fashion in this State) in employment, we must be careful that we do not commit the State to continuing expenditure in the long term. That was the gist of what he said this afternoon, but it may be that the Treasurer is learning a lesson.

In the four years that the Government has been in office, the increase in the number of people in the Public Service has been more than 20 per cent. The Government is committing the State to a continuing expenditure, and it is traditional that, once people enter the Government sector, any Government is loath to retrench them. Unfortunately, the private sector has not that course open to it. Government enterprises can be unprofitable, and few of them are profitable. Most of our Government departments are service departments and we would not expect them to make a profit. The private bus operators, for instance, are not allowed to increase bus fares, but the Municipal Tramways Trust can obtain subsidies if it is unprofitable. The Government is in competition with the private sector. The Treasurer may have meetings with business leaders on Monday evenings and turn the charm on, but this Government has depressed the private sector.

The Government has spoken about taxing the wealthy and it was going to raise revenue by taxing the wealthy. Suddenly, the Government has gone quiet about that, because everyone knows that the revenue needed for its grandiose schemes is not raised from the wealthy. Now we get the story that this State was under-taxed for years. However, what other State levied both a petrol tax and a tobacco tax? No other State did that.

If the Treasurer talks to some of the people who face increased water charges and land tax bills (some facing these for the first time), as well as to people facing some taxes that are not levied in other States, I wonder whether they will concede that we in this State have been under-taxed. The Treasurer should speak to people in the District of Gouger or in other rural areas that recently have had a revaluation for land tax. The people of this State are grossly over-taxed and all this depresses the private sector in the economy. We have had one of these complete back flips that we experience in Canberra, not weekly but daily.

The private sector now, according to Mr. Cameron, provides about 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the employment in this country. In the lengthy Ministerial statement that he has made this afternoon, the Treasurer has termed himself a conservative Treasurer. The word "conservative" suddenly has gained in respectability. The trend-setting Treasurer has now become conservative! Well, he is not a conservative taxer. From being under-taxed, as the Government likes to put it, we are now the highest taxed State. Let us look at the taxes. When the present Government was in Opposition and it was contemplated that there would be an increase in stamp duty on motor vehicles, the then Leader of the Opposition said that this struck at the very life blood of our State. When the Commonwealth Liberal Party Government contemplated, in one of its Budgets, increasing sales tax, the Treasurer here was up in arms, saying, "Get on to your Commonwealth colleagues. This strikes at the very basis of our State's economy." Since the present Government has been in office the stamp duty on motor vehicles has increased greatly and now runs into hundreds of dollars on the ordinary family motor vehicle.

The Treasurer says, "We have a good record in housing," in defending his Government. Are Government members not approached by their constituents with regard to housing matters? The Housing Trust's waiting list gets longer every time I ring: it has gone from months to "indefinitely". The Government talks about the amount of money, but what is more important is what the Government does with the money. The Minister of Education knows that, whereas a school might have cost about \$1 000 000 four years ago, he must now think about a couple of million dollars. We were told to expect that, when our State Labor Government was wedded to a Commonwealth Labor Government, this country would really leap ahead. I recall the Treasurer's many press releases in which it was said that he and his colleagues were going to take us places. When we had a Commonwealth Liberal Government this State Government got away with it, but when we have a Commonwealth Labor Government in Canberra we are gone a million. Much fuss was made about the cost of living being slightly lower in Adelaide, but let us examine the effect of these taxes.

The Treasurer softens up the public with his speeches to expect the worst, but that is only a tactic so that, when the blow comes, it will not appear so bad. Before the last State Budget was brought down, the Treasurer said that there would be no increases in State taxes. For all the

Treasurer's oratory, acting finesse and ability, the people will not be hoodwinked. The Prime Minister and the Treasurer can put on as good a show as they like, but the hip-pocket nerve is the most sensitive nerve in the body. Look at the number of youngsters who have left school and cannot find employment. Look at the household budget and what the housewife can buy with her house-keeping money. These are the people the Government seeks with its fancy phrases and press releases to delude, but it will not delude them, or the school leaver who cannot find a job, the young married couple trying to buy a house or obtain even the deposit money, or the housewife whose allowance will not buy what it would have bought two or three years ago. These are the people the Government is seeking to hoodwink. I support the motion.

*At 4 o'clock, the bells having been rung:*

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (BOUNDARIES)

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO (Minister of Local Government) brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with minutes of proceedings and evidence.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I move:

That the report be noted and adopted and the Bill be discharged.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Hear, Hear!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I appreciate the honourable member's remark. I hope that he will continue to support the whole of the Select Committee's report.

Mr. Goldsworthy: I support the Bill's being discharged.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The presentation of the Select Committee's report is yet a further step in the attempt to get local government restored to the sound basis it needs to discharge successfully the many and varied functions required of it. The first step members will recall is that the views of local government were sought on whether or not it agreed there should be a revision of local government boundaries, and 58 per cent of local government bodies in South Australia supported that move.

Mr. Mathwin: A somewhat tricky question, though.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: As a result of that majority decision, the Government then appointed a Royal Commission. No doubt all members have received the Commission's first and second reports and have taken the trouble to read the Commission's findings. The Commission stated in clear and simple terms that it found that there was both a real and an urgent need for the rearrangement of local government boundaries. The Select Committee, which this House appointed last October, has in its deliberations found no reason to doubt the accuracy or authentic nature of the Commission's findings; rather, it had considerable evidence presented to it to support and completely justify the Commission's findings. In fact, it would be an understatement to say that the Select Committee wholeheartedly supports the Royal Commission's findings.

I will now deal with the Select Committee's report paragraph by paragraph, because I think that that is the best way of addressing myself to the various matters contained therein. The Select Committee, as the report shows, held 37 meetings, examined 249 witnesses, and received and considered 157 written submissions. I think that those statistics indicate the sincerity of purpose displayed by the committee throughout its considerations.

Ample opportunity was given to people who wished to submit themselves personally or to make a written submission to the committee. The extensive publicity given to the committee's activities is amply displayed by the many witnesses it examined and the written submissions it received. About 1 150 pages of transcript were recorded, and this again shows how carefully the committee considered the views put forward by the various witnesses and the questioning to which the witnesses were subjected. I am grateful that at least two members of this House (the member for Rocky River and the member for Alexandra) saw fit to appear before the committee and give evidence.

Paragraph 3 of the Select Committee's report states that, as a result of a decision made in this House, the committee was able to avail itself of the services of the Secretary for Local Government, Mr. K. T. Hockridge. The committee found that this was invaluable in relation to its activities. There was, of course, a situation that could have been embarrassing, in that Mr. Hockridge was one of the three Royal Commissioners. However, it is indicative of Mr. Hockridge's standing for me to tell the House that, before any person commenced giving his evidence, I told him that Mr. Hockridge was present in his capacity as Secretary for Local Government and that, if this embarrassed the witness, I would ask Mr. Hockridge to withdraw. However, not one witness availed himself of that invitation. This is a clear indication of the high standing in which Mr. Hockridge is held by those in or associated with local government. I know I would be speaking for all members of the Select Committee in expressing full appreciation of the work that Mr. Hockridge did for, and the advice he gave to, the committee.

As paragraph 4 of the report shows, the transcript of the evidence taken before the Royal Commission was made available to all members of the Select Committee. The transcript covered almost 6 500 pages, and the information contained therein was invaluable to the members of the Select Committee, as it informed them of the problems experienced by and the attitude of witnesses who gave evidence to the committee. I should like now to deal briefly with the evidence presented to the Select Committee. It is fair for me to say that, in the main, the evidence was of a fairly high standard, although I regret that (as members will see if they care to read through the transcript) some witnesses apparently believed that the Select Committee had been established for the purpose of putting the Royal Commission on trial. Of course, that was not the case, and the witnesses were told, whenever appropriate, that the Select Committee was not interested in criticisms that they might have of the findings of the Royal Commission but that they should confine themselves solely to their attitude to the Bill.

The other important point that must be borne in mind is that, almost without exception, witnesses tended to oppose the provisions of the Bill, but not on the basis that the changes were necessary for the benefit of local government as a whole. Witnesses generally confined themselves to the alterations that were proposed for the area from which they came. Rarely did the committee find witnesses who were willing to say whether the Bill as a whole was for the benefit of local government. Rather, they concerned themselves with a narrow, parochial view affecting their own area. In other words, the general principles contained in the Bill, and indeed in the Royal Commission's reports, were never seriously challenged by any witnesses who gave evidence before the Select Committee.

The two factors which emerged clearly and which exercised the minds of committee members were, first, the

need or otherwise for a revision of local government boundaries and, secondly, the wishes and attitudes of councils and ratepayers in relation to them. Members will note that the Select Committee's report deals separately with each of these matters, on which I should like to say just a few words. One thing emerged crystal clear from the Select Committee's deliberations: it wholeheartedly endorsed the Royal Commission's view that there was an urgent and real need for a revision of boundaries in South Australia.

Mr. Venning: In all areas?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: No, there is not an urgent and real need for change in all areas. Indeed, I do not think the Royal Commission said there is, and the Bill does not say there is. However, there is certainly a real and urgent need for change in many areas, some of which are probably the ones of which the member for Rocky River is thinking at present. The Royal Commission made a couple of pertinent comments regarding matters that it thought were worth drawing to the attention of this House again. The committee does so in paragraph 8 of its report where it states that the Royal Commission noted that a readjustment of boundaries was a matter of urgency and that, in fact, some people held the view and argued strongly that it was perhaps already too late for this to happen. Although I do not want to debate that aspect, certainly the Select Committee wholeheartedly supports the view that the matter is urgent and that no time should be lost regarding it. This is evidenced today in our tabling this report over one week ahead of the scheduled time.

The second comment that the committee considered should be drawn to the attention of the House was the Royal Commission's observation to the effect that, if the erosion of power from local government continued, the time would fast approach when local government, if it existed, would be nothing but an empty shell. I have been asked a few times to explain that statement: how can local government ever become an empty shell? Does that mean that it will not exist? I think the Royal Commission was implying that, unless local government was restored to the broad, firm foundations that it must have to discharge its responsibilities, it would cease to be a local governing authority in the sense of the term and would simply be a means of disseminating decisions made in other areas. It will be an empty shell as far as decision making is concerned: simply a post office to carry to the four corners of South Australia the decisions that are made in other areas, because local government would not have the basis to justify the making of those decisions. That is an important aspect, and one that should not be lightly discarded as the attitude of someone who does not know what he is talking about. I ask members to look carefully at paragraphs 8 and 9, which are inter-related. The Royal Commission has made the observation that local government could become an empty shell if the erosion of powers were to continue. Let us consider the erosion of powers. What has happened to the authority local government used to discharge?

Mr. Goldsworthy: You have taken it away.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The member for Kavel suggests the Government is taking it away, but the State Government has had to assume authority because local government has not had the base on which to discharge its responsibilities. There is no better example than that of the legislation covering swimming pools. For many years local government had authority to protect the public in

relation to swimming pools, but how many of the 137 local governing bodies did anything about it?

Mr. Mathwin: How often did we have swimming pools until recently?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: There were swimming pools when I was a boy, long before the member for Glenelg knew where Australia was. Local government has had the power to control the building of swimming pools and to introduce safety measures, but it has done nothing; the member for Glenelg, when a member of the Brighton council, did nothing. That is typical of how the power is being eroded. What has happened regarding the weights and measures legislation that was formerly administered by local government? When we reached the point where 96 of the local government bodies had voluntarily handed over their authority to the Lands Department, the Government considered that, if 96 bodies were not prepared to discharge their responsibilities, the Government should get some degree of unanimity. So we can go through these matters, one by one, to see the erosion of powers. Why has there been this erosion?

Mr. Mathwin: What about the—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Instead of getting up-tight, the member for Glenelg should sit and think for a while about why this erosion of powers has occurred. The answer is simple and obvious: local government has not got the base or the manpower to discharge its responsibilities, and it has not been doing so.

Mr. Mathwin: A financial problem is involved.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The member for Glenelg knows that what I am saying is true. If he will not face that, he is like the ostrich with its head in the sand, and his sort will see the death of local government. As a Government, we are trying to prevent that, and we will do all in our power to prevent it.

Mr. Mathwin: Finance—

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I hope the member for Glenelg will later take the opportunity to speak intelligently to this report; interjections such as those he is making at the moment are quite unintelligent and do nothing for local government. Paragraph 10 refers to the fact that local government is community government. We are talking here particularly (but not exclusively) of rural areas. We believe that local government should carry with it the symbol of the community and that it is quite unreal to think that local government boundaries should divide communities.

However, that is exactly what is happening at present. Surely no-one living six kilometres or eight kilometres out of Naracoorte would say he did not live in Naracoorte. He would go to church in Naracoorte; he would send his children to school in Naracoorte; yet such people do not want to be part of the Naracoorte corporation. The same situation applies in Mount Gambier. Do not tell me that anyone living 5 km out of Mount Gambier would say, when asked, that he lived 5 km out of Mount Gambier; he would always say that he lived in Mount Gambier. So it goes on, yet we have this artificial barrier dividing communities. To me, it is quite unreal, and one of the extremely serious problems that must be overcome if we are to have communities in harmony and representative of all the people, providing facilities for all the people.

Mr. Venning: May I ask a question?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The honourable member can speak, if he wishes, in this debate.

Mr. Venning: If that is the case, and if you do not want to divide communities, why did you agree to an extra member for the council at Crystal Brook?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am trying to talk about communities. I am not quite sure what the member for Rocky River means, but if he objects to something I have done in relation to the Crystal Brook council he will have ample opportunity to speak in this debate and express his view. I cannot do better than that for him at this stage. Paragraphs 10 and 11 deal with the need for a review. Submissions were made to the Select Committee that local government itself should determine its own future and that, when it had been found desirable and in the interests of ratepayers, it had taken such action. Unfortunately, however, research does not lend much weight to that rather rash claim; as will be seen from reading the report, only six or seven such changes have taken place in the past 45 years, although the need has been there for most of that time and certainly still is there.

Much evidence was placed before the Select Committee regarding views expressed, we were told, at meetings held in various locations. Almost without exception, however, we were told, when the witnesses were questioned, that those meetings had been called as protest meetings. One need not be very bright to realise that, if a protest meeting is held, anyone supporting the view against which the protest is being held would not waste his time going, because he would not get much of a hearing.

The Select Committee tried to attach to the evidence that those meetings were held the weight that the evidence deserved—not to reject it out of hand, but certainly not to regard it as overwhelming evidence indicative of the support of the people. In fact, when dealing with specific figures given to the Select Committee from time to time, it was quite clear that many of the meetings attended by 200 or 400 people were representative of the views of only about 10 per cent or 20 per cent of the people. In the circumstances in which the meetings were called, it would be improper for people to accept that they truly reflected the views of the people.

Mr. Venning: That's not so.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: Also, the Select Committee was far from convinced that, when these meetings were held, anyone was present who was competent to present the case for or against. Certainly, the opposition case was presented because it was a protest meeting, but we had no evidence placed before us to satisfy us that anyone who was competent had presented the case for the recommendations of the Royal Commission or the Bill. Also, we were not unduly carried away with the weight of material in the form of petitions that had been drawn to our attention. We all know that it is much easier to sign a petition and get rid of a person, rather than argue whether the cause of the petition is right or wrong.

Mr. Dean Brown: You are saying that people didn't sign these petitions sincerely.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: If the honourable member wants to say that, it is typical of his childish attitude.

Mr. Dean Brown: That's what you are saying.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I am indebted to the member for Davenport for telling me what I am saying: he would have such profound knowledge that he would know. That would be a joke. When the honourable member becomes older, he will realise that what I am saying is correct.

Mr. McAnaney: What about the railways!

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: The Royal Commission and the Select Committee were not concerned with the railways: that was outside their terms of reference. I refer now to the question of change by compulsion that was included in the provisions of the Bill. I use "compulsion" because, if the Bill had been passed by both Houses, it would have become law and would be compulsorily given effect to. Many opinions were put to the committee on this question that suggested that, if mandatory changes in local government were forced on the public, there would be some resentment and perhaps jealousy and ill-feeling, and we were urged that, if there was to be a change, it should be made on a voluntary basis.

It is worth repeating that time and time again we were told by witnesses that there should be change, but they admitted that if they were left to their own devices and if there was not the force of the legislation driving them towards it, it would be extremely unlikely that they would do anything by themselves. A classic example was given from the Rocky River District, from which members of three councils came before the committee and stated that, whilst they did not agree with the recommendations of the Bill, they would support the complete amalgamation of these three council areas. They were asked, "If the Select Committee recommended to Parliament that the Bill should be withdrawn, would you still go ahead?" The reply was, "Possibly, but not for at least two years." Yet in the very breath before they had agreed to the desirability (and in fact, I do not think I am overstating the mark by saying the need) for an amalgamation of the three areas, but they made it plain that they needed a motivating force, otherwise they would not do anything.

Mr. Dean Brown: You would say that the evidence was almost as inconsistent as your stand on this Bill?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: One of the important aspects that became abundantly clear was an attitude of apprehension by many witnesses about what the result of the change would be. This was evident not only from elected members of councils but also from full-time officials of councils. If the Bill had been passed, it was contemplated that the Royal Commission would have been asked to discuss with councils the problems of implementing the recommendations contained in the Bill. At this stage no-one could say whether there would be two or 10 wards; whether there would be five or 15 councillors; whether the headquarters would be in one location or in another; whether there would be aldermen or not; whether money raised in rural parts of the new council would be spent on town amenities, or whether money raised by rates in the town would be spent in rural areas. There were many grey areas, and I suspect strongly that these matters concerned many of those who opposed the change, not because the change would be bad but because they did not know what the result of the change would mean. In considering the question of voluntary change the Select Committee used a term that I think is most important, and I draw to the attention of members what has been stated in paragraph 15, as follows:

For these reasons we believe that change by voluntary process, if attainable, rather than by compulsion, would promote successful operation.

I stress the words "if attainable". I cannot say that the Select Committee is convinced that its recommendation will be successful. However, I can say that I sincerely hope that it will be successful and that it will not be necessary to introduce a Bill to provide the change that councils have failed to implement having been given the chance as a result of the action taken by the Select Committee's recommendations, assuming that they will be



adopted by this House. As I have said, it was abundantly clear that, if councils are left to their own resources, it is unlikely that any significant change will occur. As the committee believed that the witnesses who had come before it were sincere in their desire that councils should be involved in decisions and that they should not be thrust on them, and also taking into account the fact that without some sort of motivating force it was unlikely that anything would happen, the Select Committee discussed with the Royal Commission the practicability of referring the Bill to the Commission and asking it to use its best endeavours to persuade, promote, and educate, and, in any other way it could, to encourage councils to accept the need for the change and to give effect to it voluntarily. That is why we have taken the course we have taken.

If local government is willing to grasp the nettle and accept what members of the Select Committee and the Royal Commission have accepted (that there is an urgent and real need for the restructuring of local government), much can be achieved. I hope that the confidence of the Select Committee as expressed in the report is not misplaced. However, we believed that simply to refer the Bill to the Royal Commission, hoping that the Commission would be able voluntarily to give effect to it under the existing terms of the Local Government Act, was probably beyond the ability of anyone. For that reason, the Select Committee has recommended some changes to the current provisions of that Act dealing with annexation, severances, and amalgamations. We propose that, when the councils concerned agree on a proposal, apart from giving notice of that intention and the requirement for notifying the Minister requesting a poll, the Governor will be authorised to proceed with the alterations to which the councils have agreed. The important point in this connection is that agreement be first obtained amongst councils.

Mr. Wardle: Does this depend on a poll or the Royal Commission?

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: It can be a poll. I do not want to take that matter far, as members will recall that I have given notice today of a Bill to amend the Local Government Act whose purpose will be to deal with these matters. I assume that I will introduce that Bill tomorrow or Thursday. The recommendations of the Select Committee are contained in paragraph 23. I particularly draw attention to subparagraph (b), which is the declaration of support of the principles contained in the first and second reports of the Royal Commission. It is absolutely imperative that the Royal Commission be fortified in its task by a declaration of this Parliament to the effect that we support the desirability of those principles being implemented. If the Royal Commission does not have that support, frankly it would be a waste of good time asking it to proceed with the task I have outlined. As subparagraphs (c) and (d) are self-explanatory, I need not comment on them.

For the record, I wish to express my appreciation of the work of the members of the Select Committee, the members for Torrens, Gouger, Elizabeth and Albert Park. They all underwent a marathon task in carrying out their duties. As the report shows, the committee met 37 times, and I do not think we had more than three or four meetings without a full attendance of members. The way members applied themselves is to their credit. As Chairman, I greatly appreciated their deliberations, the way in which they engaged in their task and the contribution they made. I should also like to record in *Hansard* my appreciation (and I am sure I speak on behalf of all members of the

committee) of the work of the Secretary of the committee, Mr. Geoff Mitchell. He was lucky enough to go on holidays for one week, when Mr. Hull took over, and he was also a great help to us. I commend to the House the report of the Select Committee and its recommendations.

Mr. COUMBE (Torrens): I second the motion, supporting the adoption of the report and its recommendations. Today, I will speak for only a few minutes and then seek leave to continue my remarks tomorrow. I believe that members will appreciate the great interest that has been aroused in this subject throughout the State. The Select Committee has carried out an important exercise. As the report shows, 249 witnesses were examined, 157 written submissions were considered, and several petitions, maps and so on were put in. Therefore, members can get some idea of the magnitude of the task. From the evidence presented to the committee, two main points arise. First, the right of the individual ratepayer to be consulted must be recognised. Ratepayers who oppose compulsory amalgamation in a local area must have their voice heard. In other words, there must be voluntary proposals rather than compulsion. Individuals want to have a say in how their local area will be run. This point came out clearly.

Secondly, the need to strengthen the local government system in South Australia was also recognised. This is necessary so that local government, in all its ramifications, can grow, fulfilling its rightful place as the third tier of government in this State, so that it will not be taken over by central Government, whether State or Commonwealth. In addition, there is a genuine need in some areas of the State for some boundary adjustment. I have no doubt that this need exists in some parts of South Australia. The two main points to which I have referred have come out clearly; my Party has always fully endorsed those basic principles, and it will continue to do so. I believe that the report of the Select Committee represents a victory for the ordinary man and woman in the community, since Parliament, through a Select Committee (and shortly, I hope, Parliament itself) has heeded what individuals in the community really desire. That is true democracy. This is a most important subject. I suspect that many members, at one time or another, have been members of councils or have been connected with councils in their own areas in one way or another. Therefore, they may wish to express some views on the subject. Because this is such an important subject and because members have just received the report, I believe it would be fair for them to have an opportunity to absorb the subject matter and the ramifications of the recommendations, which I support. In view of that, and to enable members to consider this important matter, I seek leave to continue my remarks.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

#### LISTENING DEVICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL Second reading.

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

*That this Bill be now read a second time.*

This short Bill provides for forfeiture to the Crown of any listening device or record of information or material in connection with which an offence against the principal Act was committed. This course has been taken because it is undesirable that such equipment should be returned to the offender for further use. Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2, as it reaches this House from the Legislative Council, includes an amendment which was inserted in that place and with which the Government does not agree. However, that matter can be dealt with in Committee. Clause 3,

as it reaches this House from the Legislative Council, provides for the enactment of a new section 11 in the principal Act providing that a court before which a person is convicted of an offence against the principal Act may order such forfeiture and that the Minister may direct the destruction or disposal of anything so forfeited.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY secured the adjournment of the debate.

**PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL  
(CONSOLIDATION)**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 28. Page 2394.)

Mr. WARDLE (Murray): I support the Bill, which is largely a matter of consolidation under the Acts Republication Act. It is brought to us through the efforts of Mr. Ludovici, who, I was delighted to hear, is now in better health than he has been in the past. I am sure that the House will benefit from his efforts to bring about the consolidation of various Acts. The Bill makes it unnecessary for the Public Service Board to peruse and research many volumes of the *Government Gazette* in relation to the appointment of the various heads of Public Service departments to discover whether an Act has been amended. It will now be possible for the board to keep a register of departmental heads, making it much easier for the board when it is reviewing various Government departments and the heads of those departments. I therefore have pleasure in supporting the Bill and commending it to my colleagues.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clause 1—"Short titles."

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I move:

In subclause (1), after "1974", to insert "-1975".

This is a drafting amendment: consequential amendments will be made thereafter.

Amendment carried.

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the Committee that, following the amendment just made to the short title of the Bill, it will be necessary for consequential amendments to be made to other clauses of the Bill where the short title occurs. However, I intend making these further amendments as clerical amendments, and no action need be taken by the Committee.

Clause as amended passed.

Remaining clauses (2 to 17) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

**STATUTES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC SALARIES) BILL**

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from November 28. Page 2395.)

Dr. EASTICK (Leader of the Opposition): I support the Bill. As the Premier has said in his second reading explanation, this Bill overcomes an anomalous situation that sometimes arises because persons who occupy senior positions in the Public Service of this State have to wait for adjustments to be made to salaries until it is possible to fit the necessary legislation into the Parliamentary programme. The provisions applying to many other senior positions are capable of being applied to the positions dealt with by the Bill. On that basis, I find no difficulty in accepting it. The Premier said that there was some retrospectivity in the Bill. It is consistent with retrospectivity applying to other positions in the Public Ser-

vice, and is not without parallel in connection with Parliamentary salaries. I have said previously that the Opposition is opposed to retrospectivity in many instances, but this is one occasion when I find no difficulty in accepting it.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 passed.

Progress reported; Committee to sit again.

**FAIR CREDIT REPORTS BILL**

Consideration in Committee of the Legislative Council's amendments:

No. 1. Page 2, lines 15 and 16 (clause 4)—Leave out all words in these lines.

No. 2. Page 3, line 17 (clause 7)—Leave out "as soon as practicable, notify the person to whom the report relates" and insert "at the request of the person to whom the report relates, notify him".

No. 3. Page 3, line 18 (clause 7)—After "he" insert "(the trader)".

No. 4. Page 3, line 19 (clause 7)—Leave out "of his rights under this section" and insert "of the name and address of the reporting agency which provided the consumer report".

No. 5. Page 3, lines 20 to 30 (clause 7)—Leave out subclause (2).

No. 6. Page 3, line 31 (clause 8)—Leave out "Subject to subsection (2) of this section".

No. 7. Page 3, line 36 (clause 8)—Leave out paragraph (b).

No. 8. Page 4, lines 1 to 10 (clause 8)—Leave out subclause (2).

No. 9. Page 5, lines 21 and 22 (clause 11)—Leave out "or a trader".

No. 10. Page 5, line 23 (clause 11)—Leave out "or trader".

No. 11. Page 5, line 24 (clause 11)—Leave out "or trader".

No. 12. Page 5, line 25 (clause 11)—Leave out "or trader".

No. 13. Page 5, line 34 (clause 11)—Leave out "or trader".

*Amendment No. 1:*

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

That the Legislative Council's amendment No. 1 be disagreed to.

The effect of this amendment is to strike out from the definition of reporting agency contained in the Bill the words "upon a regular co-operative basis", so that it would confine the reporting agency to which the Bill applies to an agency being a person or body of persons that, for fee or reward, furnishes consumer reports to traders. This would greatly confine the operation of the Bill, because many credit reports affecting people's lives are not made by reporting agencies supplying a report for fee or reward but are made by retail traders and finance companies to one another upon a regular co-operative basis. To confine this Bill to reporting agencies that are in the business of giving reports for fee or reward would be to confine it to the area covered by the Queensland Act and to do the very thing that, as I explained earlier, would unjustifiably confine the operation of the Bill.

Motion carried.

*Amendment No. 2:*

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment No. 2 be disagreed to.

This amends the provision in the Bill that would require a trader who refuses a benefit to furnish to the person who is refused the benefit information about credit reports that the trader has had in his hands. The Legislative Council confines this to occasions when the person concerned has

requested this information from the trader. The weakness about this and the reason why the Bill was drafted in its original form is that the person who is refused the benefit will be unlikely to know that the trader has had a report about him. So, if the operation of the Bill is confined to occasions when the consumer requests the information, we will miss the mark in many instances. The Bill was drafted in its original form to ensure that a consumer who is refused a benefit is told that the trader has in his possession a credit report, so that the consumer can follow it up.

Motion carried.

*Amendments Nos. 3 and 4:*

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments Nos. 3 and 4 be disagreed to.

The amendments confine the information that must be supplied to the consumer to the name and address of the reporting agency that provided the consumer report, rather than the rights of the consumer under the clause. It is all bound up with the philosophy underlying the Legislative Council's amendments; namely, that the trader should be relieved of all obligations other than the obligation to disclose the name and address of the reporting agency and that thereafter the only obligation should be borne by the reporting agency.

Motion carried.

*Amendments Nos. 5 and 6:*

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments Nos. 5 and 6 be disagreed to.

Amendment No. 5 strikes out subclause (2) from clause 7. Subclause (2) provides that the trader shall, at the request of any person who has obtained or sought to obtain a prescribed benefit from him, give certain information; namely, the substance of any information contained in the consumer report and the name and address of the reporting agency. The Legislative Council has retained paragraph (b) by inserting it in subclause (1), but the effect of its amendment is to say that the trader is not obliged to give the substance of the report but only the name and address of the reporting agency. In other words, the consumer would not be told by the trader what it was in the report that created the problem but would merely be told, "There is the reporting agency. You go and find out what it has on its files." I think the danger in this is that, unless the consumer knows enough about the contents of the report

to be put on inquiry about its accuracy, he will not in many cases go to the reporting agency. He certainly would have no way of insisting on the reporting agency's giving him the information he wanted if he was not armed with the information that the trader had a report in his possession that, say, related to convictions, or something of that kind, and he was not armed with sufficient information to enable him to insist on obtaining his rights from the reporting agency.

Motion carried.

*Amendment No. 7:*

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendment No. 7 be disagreed to.

This amendment removes from the reporting agency the obligation to disclose sources of information, and this is an extremely important provision in the Bill, because one of the things most important to a consumer about whom an adverse report has been made is not only to have it corrected on the records of the reporting agency but also to go further and find out from whom the mistaken information has come so that he can have it corrected there. Reporting agencies gather information from sources and, if there is incorrect information on the files of the reporting agency, probably there is also incorrect information somewhere else, namely, where the agency got its information. Consequently, this provision was put in the Bill, and I think it important that it remain.

Motion carried.

*Amendments Nos. 8 to 13:*

The Hon. L. J. KING: I move:

That the Legislative Council's amendments Nos. 8 to 13 be disagreed to.

They all arise out of the philosophy that underlies the Legislative Council's amendments, namely, to relieve the trader of his obligation, and they all have the effect of taking out of the original Bill the word "trader" in a series of provisions that imposed an obligation on traders.

Motion carried.

The following reason for disagreement was adopted:

Because the amendments weaken the effectiveness of the Bill.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.8 p.m. the House adjourned until Wednesday, February 19, at 2 p.m.