

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, February 19, 1976

The SPEAKER (Hon. E. Connelly) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITIONS: SUCCESSION DUTIES

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN presented a petition signed by 136 residents of South Australia praying that the House would amend the Succession Duties Act to abolish succession duties on that part of an estate passing to a widow.

Mr. MILLHOUSE presented a similar petition signed by 247 residents of South Australia.

Petitions received.

PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENTS) BILL

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN (Premier and Treasurer): I have to report that the managers for the two Houses conferred together but that no agreement was reached.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (GENERAL)

The following recommendation of the conference was reported to the House:

That the managers for the Legislative Council should recommend to their House that its amendments Nos. 2 to 4 and No. 6 be not further insisted on.

Later:

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the recommendation of the conference.

LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

The following recommendations of the conference were reported to the House:

That the Legislative Council do not further insist upon its amendment but make the following consequential amendments to the Bill:

Clause 4, page 2—

Line 14—Leave out “three” and insert “two”.

After line 15 insert subsection as follows:

(1d) No application for reassessment shall be made where the fee in respect of which reassessment is sought was fixed before the first day of July, 1974.

and that the House of Assembly agree thereto.

Later:

The Legislative Council intimated that it had agreed to the recommendations of the conference.

Consideration in Committee of the recommendations of the conference.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN (Attorney-General): I move:

That the recommendations of the conference be agreed to.

The conference met, and there was considerable goodwill on both sides. There were real attempts on both sides to offer compromises and to seek to reach agreement. We were finally successful in doing that, and in doing so I believe we have been able to meet the principal objections of the Legislative Council, and at the same time we have been able to secure a Bill that will carry into legislative effect the intentions of the Government. The amendments are aimed at ensuring that the retrospective activity of this Bill will be kept to a minimum. We were prepared to accept that suggestion, which came from the Legislative Councillors, because we thought it went some

way towards settling the fears that they had in this matter whilst at the same time not destroying the intention of the Bill. This amendment provides that no reassessment of licence fees can be made where the original assessment was made before July 1, 1974. The effect of that in real terms will be that the retrospective provisions will apply to the extent necessary to ensure that the wrongs that this Bill seeks to right at this time will be righted. It will ensure that the undesirable practices that were wreaking such havoc in the hotel and liquor trade in this State will be abolished and prohibited and, at the same time, it will ensure that the legitimate rights of the hotel industry are protected. The other amendment simply reduces the time for the retroactivity of this Bill from three years to two years.

Mr. GUNN: I agree with what the Attorney-General has said about the conference being lengthy, but from the outset there was an earnest desire on the part of members of both Chambers to reach a suitable agreement. I am pleased agreement has been reached. It would have been a pity if the Bill had been lost, because that would have had a detrimental effect on the hotel industry. My support of this motion is qualified by the hope that in no way will it be used as a test case in future for this Government or any other Government to introduce retrospectivity when dealing with taxation or penal clauses.

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Will the retrospectivity be for about 10 months? I want to know the limit of retrospectivity in months.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: The limit of retrospectivity will be July 1, 1974. When the fees were paid on an assessment made on or before July 1, 1974, it will not be possible to proceed to reassess them. The retrospectivity runs back to that time.

Motion carried.

QUESTIONS

The SPEAKER: I direct that the following written answer to a question be distributed and printed in *Hansard*.

PAY-ROLL TAX

In reply to Mr. DEAN BROWN (February 17):

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: As a result of the recent wage decision which will lead to an increase of 6.4 per cent in all salaries and wages, Revenue Account is expected to receive additional pay-roll tax receipts this financial year of close to \$2 000 000. This should be considered against the background of the additional cost to the Government of paying the 6.4 per cent increase in its salaries and wages bill. The additional cost this financial year is estimated at about \$17 000 000, of which about \$15 000 000 will be a charge to Revenue Account and about \$2 000 000 to Loan and other accounts. Wage increases such as this affect the Government's costs, its pay-roll tax receipts, and its financial assistance grants (by virtue of the present formula) at different times. Ignoring that complication of timing, it can be said that the automatic recoveries in a full year from pay-roll tax and financial assistance grants are only about 70 per cent of the direct additional wage costs to the Revenue Budget in a full year. Of course, there are further costs to the Government arising from the subsequent increases in prices of supplies and services. If recoveries on account of the non-metropolitan railways and under Medibank arrangements are taken into account, the direct wage costs to the Revenue Budget are recovered to the extent of about 88 per cent.

MAIL STRIKE

Dr. TONKIN: Does the Government see any further difficulty or embarrassment being caused as a result of mail being held up by the postal dispute and, if so, what action does the Government intend to take to help people who may be affected? Yesterday the Minister for the Environment told the House that people who had made a genuine attempt to obtain hunting permits but who had not received them because of the postal dispute would not be prosecuted. Can the Government outline what is the situation in the case of driving licences, car registrations and compulsory third party insurance renewals, when renewals have been posted but have not been received because of the dispute? What action is the Government able to take in any of these situations?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The Leader has obviously not caught up with the fact that the Government has already decentralised offices of this nature. It is therefore easy for people to get to local offices. In fact, there are offices in the Leader's own district.

Mr. Millhouse: I think you've missed the point of his question.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: I am sure that people can easily make the necessary contact without relying on the postal services. If the honourable member has a suggestion about how the Government can settle a Federal strike, perhaps he will come forward with it, but I have not noticed a constructive suggestion from him yet.

SEAT BELTS

Mr. WHITTEN: Can the Minister of Transport furnish any information concerning the wearing or non-wearing of seat belts? Lately, I have been concerned to see people, both drivers and passengers, travelling in cars without seat belts attached. I consider that the wearing of seat belts is an important safety factor. If people continue not to wear seat belts they will create danger for themselves.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: In South Australia about 10 per cent of vehicles are fitted with seat belts which occupants are not by law required to wear, because legislation making the wearing of seat belts compulsory was not introduced until after seat belts, in some instances, had been fitted in vehicles. The Road Traffic Board estimates that about 83 per cent of vehicles on the road are fitted with seat belts. The disturbing feature is that it has come to light that only about 70 per cent of seat belts in cars are being used by the occupants. This is certainly something that we will have to discuss with the Commissioner of Police to see whether more rigorous application of this law can be undertaken by the Police Department. I realise that it is a difficult law to police but, nevertheless, it is a desirable law, because it certainly is an important factor in the saving of lives and in the lessening of injuries that would otherwise be sustained.

THEBARTON DEPOT

Mr. GOLDSWORTHY: Can the Minister of Works say when the Government intends to return to park land the 4-hectare site occupied by the Engineering and Water Supply Department's Sewerage Branch depot in the west park lands at the corner of West Terrace and Port Road, Thebarton? The department is commencing to rationalise its workshops, as was recommended, I think in 1970, in the report of W. D. Scott & Company, the consultants retained to report on the department's efficiency. It was recommended that the Thebarton workshops be vacated.

Since 1970, the department has established three new sewerage-operating centres, namely, a 2-ha depot at Lonsdale to service the southern metropolitan area, a 20-ha depot at Regency Park to service the central area, and a 1.6-ha depot at Salisbury South to service the northern part of the metropolitan area. In view of these facts, and after reading the fourth, as well as the latest (I think the tenth) report of the Public Accounts Committee, I believe that there are no valid reasons for the department's retaining the park lands site.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I take it that the honourable member is no longer a member of the Public Accounts Committee, but it seems to me that his question coincides with a reply that I sent recently to the present Chairman of the committee regarding the recommendations made by the committee in the reports to which the honourable member has referred. In my reply, I stated that certain of the recommendations would not be proceeded with. The honourable member said that, in 1970, W. D. Scott & Company acted as consultants to the department, and it seems to me that the committee, in examining this matter, considered that every recommendation made by that company should be accepted, but that is not the case. I have said before in the House that the department's rationalisation of workshops will eventually take place, but it must take place according to the priorities set by the Government, because much money is involved.

The honourable member's specific question was, "When does the Government expect that the 4-ha area of park land currently occupied by the sewerage depot at Thebarton will be returned to park land?" The answer is that it will be about another 20 years before that happens. We expect that probably within the next four to five years the land which is occupied by the Kent Town workshops and which was originally park lands will, in fact, be returned to park lands when the move to Ottoway is completed. I have received from the Engineer-in-Chief a long report on this matter in which he refutes a number of the claims made by the Public Accounts Committee. If I had the opportunity, I could give some of the points made by the Engineer-in-Chief in his report to me that would show that some of the conclusions that were drawn by the Public Accounts Committee were based on false assumptions. I will examine the matter to determine whether or not I should provide the honourable member with more information in that respect.

MANGROVE SWAMPS

The Hon. G. R. BROOMHILL: Can the Minister for the Environment tell me what are the department's future intentions in relation to additional purchases of mangrove swamp areas? I know it has been the policy of the Agriculture and Fisheries Department and the Environment Department to preserve as many of these areas as possible. It has been only in recent years that their importance to the general ecology, and fish breeding particularly, has come to the notice of the department. As I know that several areas are not protected, I am interested to learn whether action is being taken to see which of those it may be possible to preserve.

The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS: As my colleague well knows, it is the policy of the department to preserve these important areas and a number have already been named as aquatic reserves. As I am not sure of the present

position, I will get a report for the honourable member and let him know. I do know that further areas are being considered.

WATER CHARGES

Mr. EVANS: Will the Minister of Works arrange for an independent investigation to be conducted into the charges made by the Engineering and Water Supply Department for mains extensions and, if the report of such an investigation shows that the department was unable to operate on reasonable charges will action be taken to allow private contractors to do this type of work? On November 27, I received a letter from the Minister in which he stated the extension of mains to a Mr. Birrell's property at Eden Hills would cost \$1 375 for a 100 m asbestos cement class F main, 70 m long. I have checked the price that the Government would pay for the asbestos cement pipe for this job, and it is \$246.40 delivered. This leaves \$1 129.60 for labour, overheads and other small amounts of materials that are needed. I checked with a private contractor, and for such a small task he quotes between \$400 and \$500 (\$500 would be the maximum) for the overhead and labour cost. This means that the job could be done by a private contractor for \$750. The frightening aspect of this matter is that housing allotment and new subdivision prices are increased considerably by these high charges. I have been concerned about this matter for a long time. The department has a monopoly, as private contractors are not allowed to do the work, even if a private subdivision is involved. I believe that a private investigation would show that the department's charges were far too high and that there was a cheaper method of doing the work. My constituent makes the point that he believes there is a real rip-off to the department in this field when it is charging double what the amount should be to carry out the work and supply the material. If the Minister wants other examples, I have them. I can prove that a man could dig the drains himself, without a machine, at less than half the cost the department is charging. I ask the Minister whether he will carry out a private and independent investigation, using outside consultants, so that we can check why the department is charging such high rates.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The statement made by the honourable member that private contractors are not employed in this work is wrong; they are used extensively. Private contractors have been involved this financial year in reticulation of sewer services to at least 1 100 separate allotments about which I know.

Mr. Evans: Why wouldn't they allow this man to have them?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: The honourable member first raised a general question. I will look at the specific problem he has raised—there is no question about that. However, he has alleged that private contractors can do much more cheaply the work done by the department; he said that in a general way. I refute that, because I can show the honourable member that over many years the department has not only been able to compete with private contractors in the reticulation of sewer services to subdivisions but it has also been able to undercut them. The honourable member indicates that he does not believe me. I will show him proof of that. The honourable member should also take into account that, until recently, private contractors engaged by the department were short-cutting safety standards, and we have had to insist on the proper standards. Where we would normally

wall up excavations, they have not done this, at the risk of the people working for them, but that problem has been solved. We have had to have work done again because it has not been done properly, and that is never the case with the Engineering and Water Supply Department, which does quality work as the honourable member knows. It is difficult to make comparisons because, as the honourable member also knows, often the ground is undulating or rocky, and all sorts of situations arise that add extensively to costs. I do not know how we can make a strict comparison of costs, but I make the claim that on such a comparison the department can beat the private contractor because of the equipment it has and the expertise it has been able to acquire over many years. I will have examined the specific matter that the honourable member makes a great song about, but it will not be done by an outside body: it will be done by the department because I am willing to trust the department's estimates in these matters.

BLUE ARMY

Mr. KENEALLY: Will the Attorney-General authorise an investigation into the activities of an organisation calling itself the Blue Army? A constituent of mine at Port Augusta (a migrant from the United Kingdom), who is on workmen's compensation from the Australian National Railways (Federal compensation, not State compensation), in an effort to rehabilitate himself answered an advertisement in the *Advertiser* of January 2 calling for roof demossers and building cleaners. My constituent has considerable expertise in these fields and developed his own chemicals when in business in Scotland. An appointment was made for Tuesday, January 6, at which interview my constituent was advised that plenty of work was available in places like Sydney, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Whyalla, Port Augusta, etc., and that he could expect contracts up to \$150 000 in value.

The interviewer, who advised that he represented the Blue Army, offered my constituent \$3 000 to set himself up with equipment, chemicals, and so on, but, before confirming this offer, he picked up the telephone, dialled three digits (there was only the one office), appeared to speak to another person, and then said that, unfortunately, the \$3 000 could not be made available immediately but that, if my constituent would pay a registration fee of \$650, work would be provided immediately at Whyalla, Port Pirie and Port Augusta at \$300 a week, the Blue Army providing the machinery and the chemicals. A cheque form was provided, and my constituent, who had only \$750 in the bank, signed for \$650, returned to Port Augusta and waited for the work to roll in—and waited, and waited. There was no contact from the Blue Army, and no work. Frequent telephone calls and expensive journeys to Adelaide were fruitless. Eventually, in frustration, my constituent asked for his money back. He received a sympathetic hearing. The refund was readily promised but not honoured, and the cheque has still not appeared. I have made several attempts to contact the Blue Army representative to no avail. For obvious reasons I did not advise the receptionist that I was a member of Parliament: perhaps I should have. My constituent realises that he was naive in what he did, but desperate men are liable to be naive. I ask the question in the hope that the Attorney-General may be able to use his offices to have the money refunded, and with the desire that other prospective clients of this organisation may be warned to look before they leap.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I am able to go further than the honourable member seeks, and I am pleased to advise him that my department has already

been investigating this organisation for several months. In saying that, I pay a tribute to the member for Ross Smith who asked questions some time ago concerning this matter. I think it was as a result of his initial action that the inquiry was instituted. That inquiry is continuing into this matter, and to date six persons who joined the Blue Army have been interviewed. Their statements all follow the same pattern. Advertisements in the tenders and contracts columns of the *Adelaide Advertiser* each day seek tradesmen of various kinds for work, said to be immediately available. On ringing the telephone number 223 4170, given in the advertisement, the tradesman finds that he has phoned the Blue Army. Interviews with various officers of the Blue Army follow, after which the tradesman pays a fee of \$650 to join the Blue Army. Each one is told this is necessary if he is to avail himself of the work that is available and future work that is said will be sufficient to keep the tradesman actively employed for at least a year.

In each case, persons so far interviewed by the section of my department, have paid the \$650, believing that work was then available for them. In each case the promised jobs have not eventuated, and appeals by the tradesmen to the Blue Army for work have met with a negative response or they have been given some small unprofitable job, usually outside the trade of the tradesman, for example, rubbish removal or tree felling. A particularly pernicious aspect of this whole sorry event is that in several cases the victims were unemployed at the time of joining the Blue Army, and were taken by Blue Army officers to finance companies where forms were filled in to obtain a loan to assist in paying the \$650 joining fee.

Another unsatisfactory aspect is that in some cases the Blue Army has continued to advertise for tradesmen while its existing members of the same trade were appealing unsuccessfully to the Blue Army for work. An examination of the tenders and contracts columns of the *Advertiser* shows that the Blue Army advertises for about four different tradesmen each day, and has done so for at least the past two months. A long and detailed investigation will be necessary before any charges could be considered against the persons conducting the business of the Blue Army. Meanwhile the advertisements for the Blue Army are continuing and no doubt people are still paying the \$650.

This is a difficult and complex matter to deal with, because it is necessary to obtain many examples of the sorts of misrepresentation involved so that the falsity of the misrepresentation can be proved to a court. I think honourable members will appreciate that fact. In the meantime, I intend to approach the managements of Adelaide's metropolitan newspapers to ask them to refuse to accept further advertisements from this organisation, because it seems to me in the short term that this is the only way we can protect the public from the activities of this organisation.

ILLEGAL FISHING

Mr. BLACKER: Will the Minister of Works ask the Minister of Fisheries what action the Government intends to take following the reporting to the South Australian fishing authorities of a vessel from another State allegedly fishing in South Australian territorial waters without a licence? On the front page of this morning's *Advertiser*, a report by Keith Martyn, headed "Prawn boat boarded in gulf", states that officers of the *Warrenai* boarded a trawler from another State that was operating north of Kangaroo Island, in St. Vincent Gulf. The report goes

on to state that it is understood that a quantity of prawns was seized. This morning I received a telephone call from a member of the Prawn Advisory Committee querying some of the statements made in the report because he believed that no prawns were seized and that, in fact, about 2 720 kilograms was landed on shore. However, the initial problem is not so much about the individual as about the managed fisheries as a whole and, consequently, I am concerned, as are all genuine fishermen in the State, about the future of the total prawn industry. I understand that the Minister of Fisheries was told on or soon after December 18 last year, following a meeting of the Prawn Advisory Committee, of the potential danger of having trawlers from other States coming to South Australian gulf waters. Two months have elapsed since then, and those warnings issued by the Prawn Advisory Committee are seen to have had foundation. I also understand that two other vessels are being fitted out in South Australia for the specific purpose of illegal trawling. I consider that the matter is of extreme urgency and I believe that the Government's actions in the next week will determine the future of managed fisheries in this State. I ask the Minister of Works to treat the matter as one of extreme urgency.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I share the honourable member's concern about this matter. Of course, he would be aware that the recent High Court decision clearly spelt out that the South Australian laws would apply to our gulf waters. That is perfectly clear: there is no dispute or doubt about it. Therefore, these people who were allegedly fishing in these waters for prawns were doing so illegally, if in fact it can be shown that that was the case.

Mr. Chapman: Is that the Western Australian case?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: No, I am talking about South Australia, and surely the honourable member would have listened carefully enough to know that I referred to gulf waters.

Mr. Chapman: Is the High Court—

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I am talking about the High Court decision as it relates to South Australia, not Western Australia. I am not interested in what happens in Western Australia. That is an entirely different matter, and I acknowledge that it is a serious one.

Mr. Chapman: I didn't realise there had been a High Court decision in South Australia.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I did not say it was in South Australia: I referred to a High Court decision as it affected South Australia. It was clearly spelt out in that decision that the gulf waters are the province of South Australian laws, and belong to the State. I understand that the Minister ordered the patrol vessel back from the South-East, where it had been. I see from the report in the *Advertiser* to which the honourable member has referred that, evidently, a prawn vessel was boarded, I think yesterday. Doubtless, the normal procedures will apply. The Crown Law Department will examine the matter to find out whether there is a case for prosecution, and I am sure that a prosecution would proceed on those grounds. I think it must be made clear to people who have any idea of trying to muscle in, if you like (and that is not a pun), on the controlled fisheries that they are forewarned that there will be trouble for them. I will refer the honourable member's question to my colleague, pointing out the concern that he has expressed and also the urgency of the matter.

RAILWAY CROSSINGS

Mr. ALLEN: Will the Minister of Transport say whether any agreement has been reached between the Highways Department and the Australian National Railways Commission regarding the level crossings in this State? I understand that for some time the South Australian Railways, part of which is now operated by the Australian National Railways Commission, has insisted that, where a road crosses a railway line at an angle of other than 90 degrees, flashing lights and median strips, with overhead lights, shall be installed. I think most members have travelled north and have crossed the railway line just north of Auburn, where recently these facilities were installed. I think most people agree that it is a good crossing, with a median strip with flashing lights, and flashing lights on the two outer edges of the road as well as the overhead lights, but unfortunately not sufficient space has been provided on the outer edges of the road and, consequently, agricultural implements and vehicles carrying transportable homes have insufficient space to enable them to go over the crossing. The media has given extensive publicity to this matter, and I understand that what I have said has been involved in the cause of the delay in this work. At present the Hanson-Clare Road is under construction. In fact, the road has been under construction for about eight years, and it is almost complete now, but work is being delayed because of a railway crossing where the road crosses the railway line at an angle of less than 90 degrees. I also understand that no agreement can be reached between the Highways Department and the railway authorities. I have further been given to understand that work at several other crossings in South Australia is delayed for the same reason, and I ask the Minister whether he can use his influence to have this matter finalised.

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I will have the matter investigated.

LIQUOR LICENCES

Mr. BECKER: Will the Attorney-General say whether the Government has considered introducing bring-your-own liquor licences for restaurants in South Australia and, if it has not, will he tell the House why? Recently much publicity has been given to the economic problems in some licensed restaurants and other restaurants in South Australia. Suggestions have been made that perhaps there ought to be bring-your-own liquor licences for restaurants in South Australia, similar to the licences issued in Western Australia and in Eastern States. I wondered whether the Government, in considering a way to assist licensed restaurants in South Australia, has considered granting a moratorium of, say, 12 months in respect of licensing restaurants; in other words, it would not license additional restaurants during that period. I also wondered whether, to improve the viability of restaurants, the Government would introduce legislation next session for this type of licence.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: The reply is that the Government, having considered this matter carefully, has decided not to introduce any legislation covering it. When I hear the suggestion made frequently that we should introduce bring-your-own liquor licences in South Australia, it amazes me that this type of licence often is referred to in the context of solving the problems of some restaurants here. It seems to me that that argument is quite fallacious, because the very difficulty that was sought to be removed would only be compounded by a situation where the restaurants were not selling the liquor but were merely charging a

corkage fee. That certainly would not overcome the financial difficulties of restaurants. I have investigated the matter carefully, and I think it would be useful to place several facts before the House, because I think there is misunderstanding in the community about the matter. On a per capita basis, Adelaide has more restaurants than any other capital city in Australia, and I have no doubt that on that basis our restaurants are far better than those in any other capital city in Australia.

Mr. Becker: Some are.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: Some are better and some are not but, on balance, the restaurants here are better, in my view, than those in any other capital city. One of the main reasons for this is that bring-your-own-liquor facilities do not operate in South Australian restaurants. I have had the opportunity to eat at bring-your-own-liquor restaurants in Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales. Certainly, the custom has some attraction. However, if the effect of such a system in Adelaide resulted in many fewer restaurants where one could take wine or beer, it would be a most undesirable situation: it would not be a system that I would wish to see promoted. It is for those reasons that the Government does not intend to introduce legislation on the matter.

IRON ORE PRODUCTION

Mr. DEAN BROWN: Can the Premier say what is the expected production pattern for iron ore from the Iron Knob region in the next 10 years? If iron ore production continues to decline, will a severe reduction be necessitated in the current labour force employed at Iron Knob and Whyalla? In reply, will the Premier say whether the Government has had discussions with Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited on the long-term future of iron ore production from Iron Knob and the shipbuilding facilities at Whyalla and, if it has, can he say what was the outcome of those discussions? I understand that discussions are taking place today at Whyalla between B.H.P. and the United Trades and Labor Council about the future of the shipbuilding industry. The recently released annual report of the Mines Department indicates that, in 1974, iron ore production fell by 1 000 000 tonnes and that the value of production dropped to \$9 600 000, which represents a 17 per cent drop in production. The important fact is that in four years since 1970-71 (when the Dunstan Government came into office) the production of iron ore has fallen by 2 000 000 tonnes, or by 26 per cent. It is disturbing to see such a long-term decline in the production of iron ore from Iron Knob.

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: The honourable member has asked not one but a series of somewhat complex questions. The Government has discussed with B.H.P. the long-term future of the Whyalla steelworks and the iron ore project at Iron Knob and Iron Baron. We are satisfied that the long-term viability of the field and the steelworks is assured. I do not have figures to quote offhand, but we are satisfied that there is no difficulty about maintaining the viability of those works. Regarding the decline in production, I point out that decisions relating to production levels relate not merely to the potentiality of ore bodies in the area but also to the international market for steel. There is no doubt that the competitiveness of B.H.P. steel on the international market has, in recent years, somewhat changed, and, consequently, the company has not been able to sell on such favourable conditions what was previously the cheapest steel on the competitive market.

Mr. Goldsworthy: Is that part of our pacesetting?

The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN: No. There have been no significant changes in economics of the industry internally, but changes in exchange rates and in the oversea steel production have affected the international competitiveness of the steelworks. That does not mean that the steelworks are not, in the long term, viable—they are. It is still the cheapest steel in Australia. The international market for steel has fluctuated in such a way that, with the change of exchange rates (for which this Government has not been responsible), there has been a change in international competitiveness. The shipbuilding yard is an entirely separate matter. The problem for shipbuilding in Australia is that there is an over-supply of ships on the international market and it is not possible for Australian shipyards, which are not nearly as modern as shipyards in Japan and Korea, to produce ships at the same cost. Generally, Australian shipyards (and this does not relate only to Whyalla) are not internationally competitive. This is a problem that severely faces Australian shipbuilding. I have recently discussed with the Federal Minister several ways in which the Whyalla shipyard might be assisted. However, that is an entirely separate matter. The future of the Whyalla shipyards has been openly debated in Whyalla for some time. However, that does not affect the viability of the iron ore and steel works at Whyalla. I do not pretend to have an answer about the future viability of shipbuilding in Australia, which is obviously facing a difficult situation, because the equipment in our shipbuilding yards is not nearly competitive with that in international yards elsewhere. We are also faced with the fact that other shipbuilding countries, which have been building ships for longer than we have and which have similar wage structures to that which applies in Australia (countries such as Sweden), are now getting out of international shipbuilding. It is a world-wide problem and a serious problem for Australia. I do not pretend that I have the answer, nor does B.H.P. or the Federal Minister who, following my representations, took the opportunity a couple of weeks ago to discuss the matter with me.

TIMBER INVESTMENTS

Mr. CHAPMAN: Can the Attorney-General report the results of a Crown Law Department inquiry into the viability and credibility of North Australia Consultants Proprietary Limited, Mr. David Miller, previously of 203 Greenhill Road, Eastwood, and the operations of Hardwood Plantations (Queensland) Proprietary Limited, being the company Mr. Miller was representing before I raised my original question in this House on September 17, 1975? It is five months since I asked the Acting Attorney (the Premier) for an urgent investigation to be conducted into affairs of these companies. At page 834 of *Hansard* the Premier agreed to investigate the matter. I had a progress report on the investigation from the Premier on October 14, 1975, wherein he said that investigations were continuing. That reply was of little relief to the constituents who had raised the matter. Furthermore, it seems that the whole situation, as a result of the delay, is unfair to the companies being investigated. My constituents do not know whether they should follow their original investment or whether they should invest at all, nor do the companies concerned know what is happening. The matter should be cleared up publicly, thereby removing any stigma that may have hung over these ventures as a result of my raising the question in this place. I seek the Attorney's co-operation in obtaining a reply on this matter.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: This matter has been under continuing investigation. Some difficulties are involved, and I will refer to them later. For the honourable member's benefit and that of his constituents who have raised this matter with him, I point out that the results so far have been somewhat inconclusive, the reason being that such companies are what are known as foreign companies in South Australia, although this company's agents are trading in our State selling pine trees.

Mr. Allison: Spotted gums.

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: The company is not registered in South Australia and, therefore, we have little control over its activities. We have been able to ascertain that the company has some assets. It is not a totally fly-by-night operator by any means, and I do not wish to imply by saying that, that it is. The results so far have been inconclusive, because of the difficulties involved in the fact that the company is not registered in South Australia. The people involved in this company have co-operated with my departmental inspectors: in fact, on several occasions they have readily agreed to come to South Australia to discuss and to see whether the matters of concern could be resolved. At present, we do not intend to take any further action against the company, subject to any further reports about its activities.

Mr. Chapman: The investment is secure?

The Hon. PETER DUNCAN: I am unable to say whether or not the investment is secure. As the company is not registered in South Australia, we are unable to make a reasonable assessment of it. I suggest, if the company is concerned that its name has, through the Parliamentary process, been smeared in any way, the solution to that is that it ought to obtain registration in South Australia so that it can avail itself of the facilities of the law in this State and so that the people who trade with it can do likewise. I think that that is good advice for anyone who is intending to invest in any companies offering this type of attraction. Although I made that point in the House some weeks ago, I again emphasise that people should be cautious in dealing with companies which are not registered in South Australia but which are operating in our State as companies. People in South Australia would be well advised to heed that good advice.

RIVERLAND PLANNING

Mr. ARNOLD: In the absence of the Minister of Mines and Energy, can the Deputy Premier, in view of the opposition expressed by residents of the Riverland and the Riverland Local Government Association to the Riverland area development plan, say whether the Government will withdraw the plan and redraft it in conjunction with local government? Last Tuesday, I presented a petition to the House signed by 3 368 residents of the Riverland area praying that the House would reject the proposed Riverland planning area development plan in its present form; that all questions of policy, planning and development within the Riverland area and all proposals be referred to local authorities within the planning area; and that the role of the State Planning Authority in planning development within the Riverland area be restricted to consultation, advice and assistance in the proper implementation of policy. I refer to the meeting of the Riverland Local Government Association held on February 9, at which considerable time was taken up in discussing this subject, as a result of which the following motion was carried:

This association is of the opinion that the principle of centralised control by the State Planning Authority contained in the Planning and Development Act and the

Riverland planning area development plan is not in the best interest of local government and residents of the State as a whole.

The resolution contains the reasons for the motion. The motion was carried, thus clearly indicating the concern of local government throughout the region and that of the people as a whole. Can the Deputy Premier say whether the Government is willing, as a result of the expressions of concern from that area, to withdraw the present draft plan and resubmit it to the people after it has been redrafted in conjunction with local government?

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: I shall be pleased to pass on the question to my colleague, but I think that the honourable member put his finger on the button when he said that it was a draft plan: that is all it is. The draft plan has been circulated throughout the districts that will be affected, in order to give those persons who will be affected the opportunity to comment, criticise, and make suggestions on how it should be amended. That is the reason why the draft plan has been circulated, and it has been done in accordance with the Act. The honourable member requests that we withdraw it and amend it, but that will take place in the ordinary course of events. No doubt, the State Planning Authority will examine all the criticisms and suggestions that have been made and will try to modify the plan to accommodate, where it can, any objections and suggestions that may have been made. Therefore, I do not see what would be gained by withdrawing the draft plan now. For how long is the plan open for public inspection?

Mr. Arnold: The end of the month.

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: At that stage, it will be withdrawn and examined, and any objections that might have been raised will be considered. Undoubtedly, the State Planning Authority is aware of the petition which the honourable member has presented and which was signed by residents in the area who may be affected by the plan. I point out that other areas of the State (certainly the South-East) have gone through this experience. I am sure that the matters the honourable member has raised will be taken into consideration, together with those that have been raised by other bodies and individuals.

KING WILLIAM STREET TRAFFIC

Mr. LANGLEY: Will the Minister of Transport consider assisting pedestrians and motorists regarding safety on King William Street, between North Terrace and Flinders Street, by looking into the matter of pedestrians crossing King William Street between traffic lights? Being a user of this road, both as a pedestrian and as a driver, I have seen many near misses, and there has been at least one fatality. The facilities for drivers and pedestrians are well known, and they offer protection if used properly. It all gets down to the slogan, "It's better to be late than dead on time."

The Hon. G. T. VIRGO: I have just been looking at the Road Traffic Act, but I am unable to put my finger on the provision in the section that makes it illegal for a pedestrian to cross a road within a specified distance of traffic signals. I suspect that what the honourable member has referred to is the illegal crossing now taking place. I will investigate this matter to see whether anything can be done.

WALLAROO POOL

Mr. RUSSACK: Can the Minister for the Environment tell me the present position concerning the location of a proposed new shark-proof swimming pool at Wallaroo and say when the report of the investigation being conducted

by K. J. Lee and Associates will be released? A report on this matter appears in the *Yorke Peninsula Country Times* of January 29, under the heading, "Second Thoughts on Shark-Proof Pool Site". This report, unfortunately, has given the impression to some local people that second thoughts are being had in relation to any financial assistance. In reading the article, though, one is given confidence this is not so. I ask the Minister whether he can explain what is the present situation. The article states:

Wallaroo Corporation has plans for a \$101 500 structure next to the wharf. These plans were discussed with the Coast Protection Board in December. Board officers queried the choice of location and suggested that any possible State Government support should await an expert check on alternatives. Mr. Simmons agreed to K. J. Lee and Associates, the firm of consulting engineers responsible for the design of the pool project, being asked to explore possible alternative sites. It is understood that probably the only alternative is Office Beach, and Lee and Associates will be asked to cost an enclosure on that site.

The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS: The article in the newspaper was headed "Second Thoughts On Shark-Proof Pool Site." I am sorry people have ignored the last word "Site." There are no second thoughts on the project as a whole: the only point of issue is where the pool should be built. The Coast Protection Board looked at Office Beach nearby, because it was concerned at the possible conflict between industrial activity around the wharf and the recreation use of the swimming pool. It was thought that, since \$100 000 was to be spent, of which the local council was finding \$40 000, every possible check should be made on the suitability of the site. The board therefore commissioned the consultants, at its own expense, to report on the other position. That report has been received, and it will almost certainly be considered at the next meeting of the Coast Protection Board to be held on March 1. I do not want to anticipate the decision by the board, as that is not my job. I believe, however, from discussions I have heard that there is no doubt about its belief that the project should go ahead, and I think the board is concerned, as I am, to see that as much as possible of the coast protection funds are spent outside the metropolitan area. I can assure the honourable member there will be a sharkproof enclosure at Wallaroo. I think what is eventually decided upon will be to the general satisfaction of all the people in the area. I am sorry that I cannot be more explicit. The board will probably be making a decision on Monday week, and I do not think the honourable member will have long to wait. There is no cause for concern by the people of Wallaroo.

CAR BODIES

Mr. JENNINGS: I draw the Minister for the Environment's attention to a letter he sent me in reply to a Question on Notice on November 11 last year in which he said, in regard to Wingfield:

The dumping and burning of car bodies has also been investigated by officers of the Public Health Department. From inquiries made in the area and from officers of the local board of health, it would appear that car bodies are often dumped in the Wingfield area. Vandals are blamed for starting fires in these abandoned bodies. Inquires from Simsmetal reveal that manual stripping of the abandoned vehicles is extremely difficult, and burning is, therefore, the simplest and most economical method of removing the non-metallic components before disposal as scrap metal. The installation of an incinerator or a fragmentiser has been considered as an alternative to open burning, but it is stated that neither can be justified on economic grounds.

I am still receiving complaints about the dumping of cars on this area, and I wonder whether the Minister will further investigate this matter.

The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS: I shall be pleased to look into this matter for the honourable member. Proposals are currently before the Government that I hope will lead to a satisfactory solution of the problem regarding disposal of solid waste for the metropolitan area as a whole. This question of car bodies, which is a major one, I hope will be satisfactorily handled as a result of those proposals. In the short term I will look into the matter raised by the honourable member.

IMMUNISATION

Mr. WOTTON: Can the Minister of Community Welfare, representing the Minister of Health, confirm whether it is a general pattern throughout South Australia that residents are failing to continue immunisation programmes previously commenced against such diseases as poliomyelitis, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, etc., and if they are, what steps will be taken to remedy this unwise situation? It was recently reported in the *Mount Barker Courier* that residents in the hills and eastern districts had failed to return to continue having immunisation. As I understand there have been recent cases, and five deaths in New Guinea, as a result of poliomyelitis, I believe this matter needs to be looked into immediately.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I understand the member's concern, and I will bring the matter to the attention of my colleague.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL (FRANCHISE)

(Continued from February 17. Page 2449.)

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

That this Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

Motion carried.

Bill referred to a Select Committee of seven members, of whom four shall be a quorum, consisting of Messrs. Boundy, Harrison, Keneally, Russack, Virgo, Wardle, and Whitten; the Committee to have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place, and to sit during the recess; the committee to report on the first day of the next session.

ASSENT TO BILLS

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the following Bills:

Appropriation (No. 1), (1976),
Building Act Amendment,
Building Societies Act Amendment,
Education Act Amendment,
Fire Brigades Act Amendment,
Pay-roll Tax Act Amendment (Exemptions).

[Sitting suspended from 3.15 to 4.25 p.m.]

PROROGATION

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, March 23, at 2 p.m.

As this is the final motion to be considered in this session, it behoves me to make the usual congratulatory, thankful and celebratory remarks on such an occasion. I will not weary members by going through the whole list, because I did that in November, and I think it is a bit excessive to do it more than once in a session. I am sure that you, Mr. Speaker, all members of the staff, and those who work

for and assist Parliament and its members will accept our grateful thanks for the sterling work they do, and for the excellent manner in which they have assisted the Parliament. When the debate is completed, I have the additional duty of leading this House in singing the National Anthem. As there are now four such anthems, I intend to sing mine, and I invite members to follow me in singing whichever one they particularly choose.

Dr. TONKIN (Leader of the Opposition): I am, unfortunately, possessed of the feeling that perhaps the reason why the Premier went through his valedictory, congratulatory, and celebratory comments in November was that he perhaps considered at one stage that he might not have been able to do so now. Nevertheless, it is with pleasure that I refer first, to you, Mr. Speaker. You have now come to the end of your first session as Speaker and, in spite of one or two small disagreements, I say with every respect that we on this side (and I am sure I speak for all members) consider that you have done a remarkably fine job as Speaker.

The Hon. G. R. Broomhill: That's not what you said yesterday.

Dr. TONKIN: It has not been an unblemished record, but generally speaking we are proud of you. I pay a tribute to the Chamber officers and staff; Parliamentary Counsel; Library staff; Miss Stengert and her staff; Mr. Gordon Ellis and the messengers; the girls on the switchboard who have such difficulty in finding us at times; and Mr. Martin and the House maintenance staff and cleaners. I have a special word for the staff of the Public Buildings Department. These people have been working pretty well in the background most of the time, and I offer our congratulations to them for having been able to continue their work with so little disruption to the proceedings of this House and of the running of Parliament House generally. Hopefully, they will not have to be here next session, and we will not have to refer to them. I place on record the Opposition's appreciation of their efforts.

Finally, I make a special reference to members of the Police Force. We know that we have now a new constable (Jack Kellett) who has fitted into the proceedings of Parliament very well and is so helpful. Mick Galvin has been in the news in the past two or three days, and Big Mick will be sorely missed around these environs. He has been literally a tower of strength and a great help to all members. I now refer to Senior Constable Dolph Tamone. It has been something of a pity that Dolph has not been recognised in some way for what I regard as a gallant action he performed in this Chamber. Members will recall October 26, 1972, because on that day, in the middle of a speech by Mr. McAnaney (the former member for Heysen) on egg marketing, the *Hansard* record states:

There being a disturbance in the Speaker's Gallery:

MR. MCANANEY: I ask leave to continue my remarks. As honourable members will recall, a smoke bomb was exploded in the Speaker's Gallery, the Chamber filled with smoke rapidly, and the Deputy Premier moved the progressive adjournment of all matters on the Notice Paper with a speed and alacrity that I had never seen before. Dolph Tamone came into this Chamber, removed the smoke bomb (not knowing what it really contained or whether it was likely to be a greater danger than smoke producing), took it out of the House, and disposed of it. That was a particularly gallant and brave thing to do. It may have been in the line of duty but, if it was, I believe that Dolph carried out his duty in the best possible way and

certainly in the best traditions of the South Australian Police Force. I place on record the appreciation of the Opposition, and I hope of this Parliament, for the services he rendered to Parliament at that time. I also extend my good wishes to other members for the months that will elapse before the opening of Parliament, and hope that this period will be fruitful, particularly to the members of the Opposition.

Mr. BOUNDY (Goyder): On behalf of my Party and my Leader I, too, add my valedictory remarks on this occasion, and express our continued loyalty to you, Mr. Speaker, and our thanks for superintending the work of this House. The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition have already detailed the individual thanks that should be extended. I support their remarks, and wish members good hunting in their work during the Parliamentary recess.

The SPEAKER: On behalf of the table officers and, indeed, on behalf of all the officers and staff that serve

the Parliament, I thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and the member for Goyder for their very kind remarks. As I said just before the Christmas adjournment, I believe that we have been very well served by all the staff in the Parliament. On their behalf and on my own behalf, I hope that all honourable members will have a most enjoyable and fruitful break; that it will be a wonderful opportunity for them to spend some time with their families, and that applies especially to country members. I hope that we all come back hale, hearty and happy in the new session.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, March 23, at 2 p.m.

Honourable members rose in their places and sang the first verse of a National Anthem.