

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, October 27, 1977

**The SPEAKER (Hon. G. R. Langley)** took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

## LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

His Excellency the Governor, by message, intimated his assent to the Bill.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: FLINDERS MEDICAL CENTRE

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN (Minister of Works):** I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** Yesterday the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised questions in the House about the fire safety of Flinders Medical Centre. The Minister of Health has supplied the following report, which has been compiled jointly by the Project Architect, the Safety Officer and the Equipment Officer of the centre:

There is absolutely no truth in the allegations made by Dr. Pressley that the Flinders Medical Centre is a potential fire trap. At a seminar in Melbourne this week Dr. Pressley made a number of allegations concerning fire safety at the centre. These allegations have been investigated. There appear to be five main criticisms, which are as follows:

1. The use of acrylic carpet within hospital ward areas: I am advised that the carpet installed within the ward areas conforms to current Australian wool testing authority standards for flammability of materials. In conjunction with other fire safety measures, existing at the centre, it is considered that no undue fire risk exists.

2. Absence of fire sprinkler systems: It is true that no sprinklers exist; however, this is in line with current practice in modern hospital construction. However, in order to maximise fire safety within the hospital more than adequate fire detection and alarm facilities have been installed which provide automatic and direct notification to centre personnel and the S.A. Fire Brigade in the event of any fire emergency. A number of other fire safety measures also exist which provide for the containment and minimising of risk to occupants in such a fire emergency.

Furthermore, under the guidance of our experienced Safety Officer at Flinders Medical Centre, internal staff fire teams have been organised and trained to rapidly respond in the event of fire emergencies. The leader of each fire team has received training and has been certificated by the South Australian Fire Brigade in accordance with current legislative requirements.

3. Single entry to accommodation flats and absence of fire stairs: I am advised that entrances and exits from the accommodation flats conform to current building regulation requirements. In addition, during planning stages the South Australian Fire Brigade was consulted on all aspects of fire safety relating to these buildings. Continual liaison is maintained with local South Australian Fire Brigade personnel to ensure the maintenance of a high safety standard.

4. Flammable fabrics in the flats: The flats referred to in the House yesterday are within one block out of a total of seven such blocks. This one block was furnished separately from the others as a matter of urgency in order to provide temporary residential and office accommodation for

School of Medicine staff. Due to the urgent nature of the accommodation requirement, the choice of carpeting was not subjected to the same selection processes as carpeting in other areas of the centre. However, the carpeting in question was of an acceptable commercial standard. The remainder of carpets in other blocks of flats conform to the A.W.T.A. standards for flammability.

5. Cotton blankets used within wards: These articles are standard South Australian Hospitals Department issue and are common to all Government hospitals in South Australia.

I am assured by the Flinders Medical Centre that it has kept abreast of all reports and developments in the field of standards of equipment for hospitals and intends to maintain this practice and indeed already has introduced some improvements in equipment and materials in anticipation of the acceptance of current draft standards.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: MIGRANT EDUCATION

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD (Minister of Education):** I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** In the House yesterday, the member for Mount Gambier quoted certain figures in relation to Commonwealth support for adult migrant education in South Australia. I assume that the honourable member's source of information was none other than Senator Carrick, the Commonwealth Minister for Education. In the Senate on October 25, Senator Carrick said:

In regard to adult migrant education in South Australia, the actual expenditure in 1976-77 claimed as reimbursement by the Further Education Department was \$349 820. The allocation in the 1977-78 Budget is \$423 000, an increase of \$73 180, or 20.9 per cent. So, talk of a cut is nonsense.

Senator Carrick's figures were incorrect, and in this respect I have the support of the Auditor-General of South Australia. I refer honourable members to page 96 of the current report of the Auditor-General which shows that for this area advances from the Commonwealth amounted to \$425 590, and the State contribution was \$32 195. The State contribution includes a part year salary for one of the officers of the department involved in both the migrant and language schemes. If this salary, \$8 000 in round terms, is subtracted, we come up with a figure of \$24 000 as the State contribution.

The initial 1977-78 Commonwealth Budget allocation of \$423 000 was therefore, according to our Auditor-General's Report, a cut in money as well as in real terms on the last financial year's allocation. My officers inform me that this initial allocation represented a short fall of \$145 000 in the funds required to maintain the 1976-77 level of activities.

In order to go anywhere near a maintenance of effort, it was therefore necessary for the State to increase by several times over its contribution to the scheme, a scheme to which it contributed nothing until about 12 months ago. The recently announced \$159 000 will compensate for this \$145 000 deficit to which I have referred and allow \$14 000 for new initiatives.

As I have already explained, the State last year spent \$24 000 on the migrant scheme and \$32 000 on the combined migrant and language schemes, the \$24 000 being included in the \$32 000. This year it will spend from its resources something in excess of \$100 000, the uncertainty arising because as yet we are not sure exactly how the Commonwealth will allow us to spend that additional sum of money. The recently announced

Commonwealth increase is welcome, but it still does not represent in relative terms an increase equal in magnitude to that being contributed by the State.

Honourable members opposite have placed great stress on the contents of the Auditor-General's Report in their various comments in Budget and Loan Estimate debates during this Parliament. I assume that they will accept the Auditor-General's figures in this matter with the same enthusiasm as they have accepted other aspects of that report and, in particular, that Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mount Gambier will admit that in asking their questions of the last two days in the way they have they were sadly misled by their Commonwealth colleague.

## QUESTIONS

### PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

**Mr. TONKIN:** Will the Deputy Premier say why the Government did not investigate and take action on the serious and critical remarks made in the 1975 and 1976 annual reports of the Public Works Standing Committee identical to those made in this year's report, which the Deputy Premier yesterday said he regarded so seriously that he intended to see to it that the committee and the people responsible for the report could stand up to everything said in it? When the comments in this year's report were raised yesterday, the Deputy Premier said he had not seen the report but regarded the matter very seriously. He said he had called for urgent preliminary reports from all his Directors, which supported his view that none of his departments had ever, to his knowledge, withheld any evidence from the committee. He then intimated that he should have heard from the Chairman of the committee in relation to any of his own departments, and by implication was highly critical of the Chairman and of the committee. Far from being something new, the trenchant criticism of Government departments has been contained now in three successive annual reports, and it is quite apparent that the Deputy Premier and his departments have either failed to read the reports or chosen to ignore them. Either course of action demonstrates gross incompetence.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** I should like to pose a question to the Leader of the Opposition and ask him what is the seriousness of this matter in relation to the operations of Government. I was made aware only yesterday that the report that was tabled just recently in this House, in which a committee made all sorts of loose allegations (and I say loose allegations advisedly), was virtually the same as that published the previous year. I had not read the report, and it had not been drawn to my attention. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I do not read every report that is tabled in this Parliament, and I challenge him to say that he does. Of course he does not.

**Mr. Tonkin:** I would have thought you would read the Public Works Committee report.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** My attention was not drawn to it and, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I am very busy. Usually, my attention is drawn to these things but I do not have time to practise anything outside the work I do. I repeat what I said yesterday—I will treat this seriously. If these allegations made by the committee concern it, why did it not use the powers available to it to seek the evidence that the committee states was withheld? As I said yesterday, to my knowledge up to this time, no evidence has ever been withheld by any of my departments, either deliberately or otherwise, from this

committee. If the committee thinks that its work is being impaired by lack of evidence, surely it has a duty to call for this evidence and, if it fails to do so, the recommendations it has made to the Government are inadequate. That is what I said yesterday. The committee has said nothing about the inadequacy of its recommendations. I told the Leader yesterday that I am having a detailed investigation made by all my departments into the allegations. I expected to have something by now, but I have not received it. If I receive it later this afternoon, I will let the Leader have a full explanation.

**Mr. Tonkin:** How can the committee use its power—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Leader has already asked his question.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** The committee has power to inquire and ask for any evidence it may desire in relation to any project placed before it. I hope that the Leader is not saying that the committee is denied that power?

**Mr. Tonkin:** It's been given wrong information.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** That is the allegation that has been loosely made. The committee has given no specific examples. If that is the allegation, it has not shown the courtesy of getting in touch with me, if one of my departments is concerned, and drawing my attention to it. If that was the case and if it were so serious that the attention of Parliament should be drawn to it, I would have expected the Chairman to draw my attention to it. As a matter of courtesy I would have expected the Chairman to notify me of the inadequacy on the part of any department. I believe that, if these allegations are put under close examination, they will not stand up. I am saying that without any reports from my departments, but I am certain that, if what is alleged is as serious as the Leader is trying to make out, we would have heard about it much sooner than this. As usual, the Leader is certainly trying to make a mountain out of a molehill, and trying desperately to drive a wedge between me as the Minister and members of the committee. He will not do that, because if that committee has the right to make a report and the Government does not stop it from doing so, I have the right to defend my position and that of my departments, and I will do that without any help from the Leader.

### EVENING BUS SERVICES

**Mr. SLATER:** Can the Minister of Transport say whether additional publicity can be given by the Bus and Tram Division of the State Transport Authority to the extended weekend and evening services from the city to Dernancourt and from the city to Felixstow? These extended bus services have operated from September 18 of this year, but some people have told me that they were not aware of these services. I understand that new time tables were distributed to regular passengers before the extended services began operating. As some members of the public—

Mr. Goldsworthy interjecting:

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Kavel is out of order.

**Mr. SLATER:**—living near the bus route were not aware of the revised time tables covering the weekend and evening services, can the Minister say whether further publicity can be given to the extension of the service to ensure that all interested people are aware of it?

**The Hon. G. T. VIRGO:** Because of the chatter from the other side of the House, I have not caught all of the points that the honourable member raised, but I will check with *Hansard*, whose staff is very accurate in recording what

actually happens, not what some members think happens, and I will then discuss the matter with the Bus and Tram Division to see whether the problem the honourable member refers to can be solved.

#### ADELAIDE MAGISTRATES COURT

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** What action does the Attorney-General intend to take to relieve the situation in the Adelaide Magistrates Court, where Mr. Grieve, S.M., has described the situation as farcical?

**Mr. Millhouse:** It should go to the Premier, who is in charge of the magistrates.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Mitcham is out of order.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** I do not mind who answers, but I hope someone in the Government will. A press report today indicates that Mr. Grieve, S.M., had asked for some matters before him to be transferred to another courtroom, only to find that other magistrates wanted some of their cases transferred to him. The court congestion results in people having to wait for long periods before their cases are heard. It is reported that the number of magistrates available has decreased from eight to five. This situation appears to be completely unsatisfactory.

**The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN:** The Government is currently considering the recommendation of the working party on staffing of the magistracy.

**Mr. Millhouse:** Who are the members of that working party?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Mitcham is out of order.

**The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN:** There was a panel consisting of Mr. Justice Walters, Commissioner Stevens (now Judge Stevens), Mr. Cramond, S.M., and Mr. Manos, S.M. The working party from the department consisted of Mr. E. McLaughlin and Mr. R. Geddes. The recommendations of the working party were for a reduction of two in the staffing of the magistracy.

**Mr. Millhouse:** Maybe—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Mitcham is out of order and I do not want to have to warn him again.

**The Hon. D. A. DUNSTAN:** I cannot say that immediately. It would appear from the investigation that has been made that Mr. Grieve is perhaps not on the most solid ground in the complaints that he makes. It appears to be not so much a matter of staffing as of organisation, but that will be investigated.

#### LADYWOOD ROAD

**Mr. KLUNDER:** Can the Minister of Transport say what are the plans for the reconstruction and widening of the section of Ladywood Road between Montague Road and Milne Road, and its intersections with Montague Road and Milne Road, and the replacement of the existing bridge on Ladywood Road?

Ladywood Road is a main feeder road from the rapidly developing suburbs of Modbury North and Modbury Heights to the North East Road. Both the intersection and Ladywood Road are having to cope with an ever-increasing volume of traffic. The bridge on Ladywood Road is especially dangerous as it will permit the passage of only one car at a time and thus creates quite a bottleneck.

**The Hon. G. T. VIRGO:** I do not recall exactly what the position is at the moment. This matter has been subject to

much investigation. I think I can best serve the honourable member by getting a full reply to the question he has asked, and I will bring that down to him.

#### HOUSING LOANS

**Mr. EVANS:** Can the Minister of Mines and Energy as Minister in charge of housing say whether he or his department sees some merit in the minimum deposit deferred mortgage house and land package deals available in Adelaide, which have helped many people into homes much earlier than if the schemes had not been available? The *Advertiser* of October 11 contains a rather strong report, under the heading "House-buyers claim rip-off in package deals", as follows:

Some low-income house buyers claim they have been "ripped-off", albeit legally, and "railroaded" after entering into minimum-deposit, deferred-mortgage house and land package deals.

I have been concerned at some of the recent publicity. The Minister would no doubt recall that about a year ago I briefly raised this subject with him in private. At about the same time, I had an appointment with the directors of two companies operating in this field, and I went through the whole scheme with them. I thought that, as a result of the inflationary trend at that time, there was some merit in the schemes, and many people were buying houses much more cheaply than if they had had to wait until they had saved a higher deposit, when they could have been on the losing end. The \$18 000 minimum deposit, which I know that we cannot alter, because of the lack of finance, is one of the retarding factors. It now represents only about 50 per cent of the cost of a house, whereas originally it represented between 80 per cent and 85 per cent of the cost. I am led to believe that, during the past year, at least one of the companies has had discussions with an officer of the Minister's Department (Mr. Mant) and with Mr. Bakewell to ascertain the Government's attitude towards establishing a housing policy to handle this scheme or some other kind of scheme. This scheme has been operating for some time, and there have been some unfortunate incidents recently, but I point out to the Minister that one of the firms has given me a guarantee that, under these schemes, it has never foreclosed on or evicted any client. Rather, the company has entered into some arrangement until the client became more affluent or was able to cope with the situation. Can the Minister say whether his department is aware of the facts in this matter?

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** In principle, this kind of scheme can work quite effectively, and it is the basis, if you like, of the rental-purchase schemes of the Housing Trust that have operated successfully for years. I think that the danger in the schemes relates to the possibility of an individual committing himself to too high a proportion of income for the repayments that have to be made; when circumstances change, so that the individual can no longer maintain those payments, trouble arises. In relation to the Housing Trust, if the circumstances of the home buyer altered, the particular individual's case would be considered sympathetically. I understand that this morning the Attorney-General had discussions with one of the companies that has been involved in these matters, and it has assured him that, so far as any individual is concerned, if he is in difficulties the company will see what can be done, and look at the individual's position sympathetically. Having said that, I point out that there is a danger in any kind of house purchase, whether under this arrangement or under any other arrangement, that an individual may over-commit himself. Some companies

have on occasions not been careful enough in relation to sales to prevent that kind of situation from occurring. Admittedly, a company that sells a house cannot be held responsible for all the future changes that take place in the individual purchaser's circumstances. Nevertheless, I think that those who are involved in financing home purchases have an obligation to be careful in the way in which they sell financing propositions to prospective customers.

They should recognise that if they oversell they may create an adverse situation for those buyers and ultimately even for themselves as a company. The Government appreciates entirely that inflation, particularly the consequences of inflation in pushing up interest rates, has quite drastic consequences on the repayment of mortgages and the costs associated with house purchase. I believe I said in the House the other day that, of the increased costs in repayments to which individuals have committed themselves, the interest component is responsible for more than 50 per cent of that increase.

I will further discuss this matter with the Attorney-General and, if more specific information can be given regarding arrangements with the company or companies concerned, and if they are willing to give publicity to that information, I will see that that is done. I would ask the companies involved in selling houses to be careful not to oversell, and individuals who are purchasers should consider very carefully the percentage of income committed to the house purchase and not get into a situation where they over-extend themselves.

Everyone should be aware that, when a house purchase situation goes bad, nothing more soul-destroying for the individual and his family can possibly be experienced. Suddenly a family that had some assets has them virtually wiped out, the whole basis of family life could be destroyed, the break up of the marriage could occur, and so on. That is a serious matter of which the community must take cognisance and about which those involved in the building industry must also be concerned.

#### LIBRARY FACILITIES

**Mr. WHITTEN:** Can the Minister of Education say whether the Woodville and Hindmarsh council districts may be included with those districts that are so well served by mobile library facilities provided in Port Adelaide and Henley Beach? My question is prompted by a report on the front page of the *Weekly Times*, a throw-away paper that circulates in my district. The report, which is headed "Seniors in call for library boost", is credited to John Treagus, and is as follows:

Many local senior citizens are frustrated by the lack of adequate library facilities in the western suburbs. Our survey results show there is urgent need for better library facilities in the Woodville and Hindmarsh areas. Our aged people should be catered for with transportable libraries, specialised transport facilities so that senior citizens can be taken to existing libraries and the employment of trained staff to visit aged people in their homes. Further, more libraries should be established and existing libraries could be upgraded to serve the needs of the aged.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** What is at issue is not whether the area to which the honourable member has referred will get library facilities, but whether those facilities will be static or mobile library services. Members will be aware that the Government now has a committee chaired by the Chairman of the Libraries Board considering closely the whole provision of library services in the north-western suburbs.

Members will also be aware that a significant proportion of, I think, the 40 per cent increase in money terms of the State's vote to libraries this year will go in to the north-western suburbs of the metropolitan area. I am not yet in possession of specific information from the committee whether the initiative in the Woodville-Hindmarsh area will be a static library, probably of the shop-front variety, or whether it will be a mobile extension of a static library in another part of the north-western suburbs, possibly Port Adelaide or the parks. I hope to have such information soon, and I will ensure the honourable member is the first to have it.

#### MIGRANT EDUCATION

**Mr. ALLISON:** Is the Minister of Education ready to admit his personal failure to handle effectively funds for adult migrant education programmes in South Australia in the years 1976-77 and 1977-78? This question is supplementary to the questions asked on Tuesday by the Leader of the Opposition and by me yesterday and to the Ministerial statement made today. I believe I can throw some further light on the subject to flocculate the murky waters. The Federal Government tells me that normally South Australia is paid on a reimbursement basis monthly in arrears for adult migrant education spending.

Interestingly enough, by the end of 1976-77, South Australia had underspent its allocation for adult migrant education by \$75 000, so that South Australia's claim for reimbursement from the Federal Government was \$75 000 below its actual allocation for that year. I understand that in September, 1977, the Federal Government proposed that South Australia accept that \$75 000 on account to ensure that the balance of money for 1976-77 was actually used in South Australia and to avoid its disappearance into the Federal Treasury. There is generosity! I believe this is probably the reason why the Auditor-General included this amount in his 1977 report. It was also argued that this would avoid cuts in allocations in future years, but at the same time, there was a clear understanding that the—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is now commenting.

**Mr. ALLISON:** Very well, Sir; I will refrain in future. There was a clear understanding that the \$75 000 in question—

**The Hon. G. T. Virgo:** He's going on.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Minister is out of order.

**Mr. ALLISON:** I believe this information was forwarded to the State Minister in the letter from the Director-General of Education (Mr. Jones), a letter that the State Minister referred to the House yesterday. I believe that the information contained in that letter would confirm what I say and what I was prevented from saying by way of comment.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is still commenting. Does the honourable member wish to continue with his question?

**Mr. ALLISON:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am informed by the Federal Government that the responsibility for claims for reimbursement rests with the South Australian Government, and it is therefore the responsibility of the State Minister to explain why there was no adequate claim in 1976 for the unspent amount.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope the honourable member will cease commenting. This is the third occasion I have had to draw this matter to his attention.

**Mr. ALLISON:** The Federal Government believes it has done all it can to recognise—

**The Hon. G. R. Broomhill:** Who tells you all this?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Henley Beach is out of order.

**Mr. ALLISON:** I am informed by the Commonwealth Education Department that it believes that it has done all it can to recognise the special problems of migrants in South Australia but that it has been hindered from doing so by the apparent incompetence on the part of the South Australian Education Department.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member is still commenting. I ask the honourable Minister to answer the question.

**Mr. EVANS:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe the honourable member, in explaining his question, said he had been informed, and he was mentioning the fact—

**The Hon. Peter Duncan:** By his—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable Attorney-General is out of order.

**Mr. EVANS:** The honourable member said he was relating information that had been given to him. I do not believe he was commenting. He said that he had been informed, and he was using that as the basis of his explanation. It was not his comment; it was information passed to him by a Government department.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The honourable member for Mount Gambier, in the opinion of the Chair, was commenting. He continued to comment, and that is why I rose to my feet for the third time. Each time, I gave him an opportunity to refrain from commenting but, in the opinion of the Chair, he continued to comment. The honourable Minister of Education.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** I wonder how much credibility Senator Carrick has in this matter when in fact he is not aware that his own department made subventions to this State in the last financial year over and above what he claims it made. Do Opposition members believe the figures in the State Auditor-General's Report? Senator Carrick has entirely different figures which, of course, support his case. I am happy to rest on the evidence which comes forward from our Auditor-General, and I do not want to go over that territory again, because I explained it in my Ministerial statement. Obviously, the honourable member's question was drafted before he heard that statement. Why is the honourable member prepared to be an agent for the Commonwealth in these matters instead of being an agent for the State of South Australia? Is he aware—

**Mr. Gunn:** That you're not telling the truth.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** —that we are not even getting a per capita share? The honourable member says that I am not telling the truth, but really he is claiming that the Auditor-General of South Australia is not telling the truth, because my figures are his. I have quoted straight from the page of the Auditor-General's Report. It is necessary, for the honourable member and his Commonwealth colleague to have any credibility, to attempt first to reconcile the figures they have with the figures in the Auditor-General's Report, which clearly show that the \$243 000 mentioned in Mr. Jones's letter of September 5 represents a cut in money terms on what came to us last year.

As I was saying, the additional money which is made available for us is not our share in per capita terms. As a State, we are to get 5 per cent of the total amount of money made available, but of course on a population basis we should be entitled to twice that amount. Finally, I ask Opposition members to keep in mind that there is an extremely large increase in the State's subvention to this area. Two years ago—and again I refer to the Auditor-General's Report in this matter—the State did not have to

fund this area at all. I quote from page 96 of the Auditor-General's Report, as follows:

Language and adult migrant education scheme: In previous years this scheme was administered by the State on behalf of the Commonwealth. During 1976-77 the scheme was funded by both the Commonwealth and the State.

So it was only last year that it was necessary for the State to find any money for this scheme. This year, the State will be spending about three times the amount of money that we spent in the past financial year. No-one can pretend that the State has not lived up to its responsibility in this matter.

#### CIRCLE BUS ROUTE

**Mr. BANNON:** My question, which is directed to the Minister of Transport, is supplementary to that asked by the member for Gilles. Will the Minister inform the House what steps are being taken to ensure that the introduction of the new circle bus route is adequately publicised? The new circle bus route will make an enormous difference, particularly to people who are dependent on public transport and to those who have not used it in the past but will now find it much more accessible. I refer particularly to people in the western region, where my district is located. Their accessibility to Government services and other areas will be improved greatly by the existence of this circle bus route. My concern is that the frequency of the service, the location of the route, the type of bus, and so on, will not be known adequately among the people who can make use of it and that, as a result, the service will be under-utilised and will not provide the benefit it clearly has the potential to provide.

**The Hon. G. T. VIRGO:** Steps have been and are being taken to publicise the new service, which will operate as from Monday next. The media had a session at Railway Road this morning, when its members were shown the bus and given a run-down on the route that will be followed. The suburban papers of the Messenger Press are carrying advertisements this week, and radio stations are carrying what I think is quite an intensive publicity programme, although whether it is intensive or not would depend on one's opinion. That will be continued next week on radio and in the Messenger Press.

In addition, copies of the brochure that have been produced have been made available to those members who have approached me, and I think many members whose districts are served by this service have taken advantage of the fact that I brought those brochures to the House. To any member who has not received them, I extend a cordial invitation to avail himself of those brochures. Also, the circle line bus has been taken to some of the educational institutions and to shopping centres, and copies of the brochures and time table have been made available. I am not sure how far one goes to publicise this service: I think it will publicise itself, and I think that will be helped by the colour of the bus. In determining the colour that thought was in our minds and, as a result, I think the service will receive the support from the public that it is justly entitled to get.

#### McNALLY TRAINING CENTRE

**Mr. MATHWIN:** Can the Minister of Community Welfare say how many areas in McNally Training Centre are operating group treatment programmes and, in particular, group guided interaction? The Minister will be aware that it is more than possible that this sort of

treatment does not work, neither should it be experimented with in particular institutions. Indeed, he would know that many of the recent problems at McNally could be attributed to G.G.I. He would also know that it is stated in the Althuizen report, placed before Judge Mohr of the Royal Commission, that this scheme has been abandoned, particularly at "Winlaton" in Victoria.

**The Hon. R. G. PAYNE:** I suppose in spending time in this House, when being asked questions by members, we experience all sorts of approaches, but I reckon that that is about the roughest one that I have heard for some time. The member who asked the question answered it by saying that the Minister would know these things. It is an unfair tactic, and the information allegedly provided by the honourable member is totally wrong. To suggest that a form of treatment may not be successful is quite correct, but to suggest that a particular form of treatment may not be successful and present it in such a way that it seems that it is the only treatment that will not be successful is entirely wrong. It does the honourable member little credit to approach the question in that way.

G.G.I. is one of several forms of treatment used for some years with considerable success in treating juveniles. That does not mean that it is 100 per cent perfect, nor does it mean that it will always work, nor does it mean that it is wrong. The honourable member knows this. However, he was stuck for something to ask me today about McNally, and fell back on the book he had been reading when he had some spare time. It would be quite possible for several authorities to put forward opinions that would be quite different from those being quoted by the honourable member and have equally supporting evidence to show that it had a certain success ratio. It is like the old argument about statistics: those who have learned anything in this place (and I give even the honourable member credit for having learned something) know that statistics can be used to present one case and the same statistics when put forward in a different way will often give a different result.

I am suggesting that the one thing the honourable member has not learned in his years on earth, or in his years in this House, is some degree of tolerance and humility. I do not stand here and claim to be an authority on everything to do with juvenile treatment, but the way in which the honourable member keeps waltzing up with these bold statements that so-and-so is what is right (presumably because he says it in the House) with no other authority than that—

**Mr. Mathwin:** It's in the report. Read the report.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Glenelg has asked his question.

**The Hon. R. G. PAYNE:** The report is the opinion of Mr. Althuizen. He is a respected person who works for the Community Welfare Department. His assistance, which was requested by the Royal Commissioner and was freely made available by the Government through me as the Minister, was recognised. However, I think that, if the honourable member knew Mr. Althuizen, he would find that Mr. Althuizen would be the first to say that he did not know everything and that he would not claim to be 100 per cent correct in everything that he writes or says. He is an honest person, and we have many of them in the Community Welfare Department. This may be a little hard for the honourable member to understand.

**Mr. Venning:** We want a few of them in the Government.

**The Hon. R. G. PAYNE:** I am not putting any connotation on this other than to say I am not resorting to the tactics used by the honourable member.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. MATHWIN:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am not taking on the Minister or the department, and saying that they are knowingly giving wrongful information. It is wrong of the Minister to charge me with such an offence.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order, but the answer is becoming lengthy.

**The Hon. R. G. PAYNE:** The honourable member called into question a method of treatment. I shall be as brief as I can, and my brevity would be assisted if the honourable member sat and took it like we all have to do on occasions and did not try to promote an argument. In defence to your wishes, Sir, I will wind up by saying that the last time I had information on this matter I understood that G.G.I. was still being used in one section. The honourable member knows, or should know, that one of the points made by Mr. Althuizen was that the personnel concerned with G.G.I. need to be well trained and that there is some shortage of persons with the necessary capability, so some reduction was applied. I think the honourable member raised this matter in a previous session and received that answer. I will undertake to check for him to find out what is the actual situation and bring down a report.

#### HOLLANDIA HOMES

**Mr. DRURY:** Is the Attorney-General aware of the extent of difficulties in which purchasers of Hollandia Homes find themselves regarding deferred interest payments on bridging finance? If he is, can he say what Government assistance can be given to such purchasers?

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** A number of complicated matters has arisen resulting from the purchase of low deposit homes from a number of companies. I know that the Minister in charge of housing referred to some of them earlier today and I do not want to canvass that ground again, because that would be quite improper. This morning I had a discussion with one of the companies concerned, and the executives of that company are well aware of the problems that have arisen in some instances, largely in isolated cases, where people have become unemployed or found difficulty in making the payments required of them. The company has indicated that it will treat any request for assistance with sympathy.

I think that covers the situation at the moment. People who have sought assistance from the Prices and Consumer Affairs Branch are having their matters processed at present, and anybody who is in difficulty will be able to approach this company for a sympathetic hearing and some assistance.

At present, the kind of assistance the Government is giving anyone in these circumstances is that the Consumer Affairs Branch has been directed to provide advice and assistance to people to ensure that, where they want to pay out their third mortgages, they are given appropriate advice and told where to go to obtain cheaper finance. That kind of assistance is being provided but, to my knowledge, no other assistance has been requested from the Government, and, for that matter, no other assistance would be properly forthcoming from the Government in these circumstances.

#### UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** Although I will direct my question to the Minister of Education, I warn him that the Minister of Mines and Energy might want to take the answer from

him if he can. Can the Minister of Education say whether it is proposed to introduce amendments to the University of Adelaide Act and, if it is, when? I guess that I am not the only member in the House to have read in today's *Advertiser* and in yesterday's *Advertiser* two articles by Stewart Cockburn reporting the views of Mr. Walter Crocker, the Lieutenant-Governor of this State, on the working of the University of Adelaide. As a graduate of that university, it is rather perturbing to me to hear the views expressed by so eminent a person, whose eminence is agreed by all members on both sides. I will quote several sentences only from the report in this morning's paper, as follows:

Not to mince words, the Act of 1971-72—  
introduced into the House by the Minister of Mines and Energy, and that is why I thought that he might want to spring to its defence—

carries literal-mindedness about democracy to exaggerated lengths.

He then goes on (and I guess that it is because of this comment that we have had no questions from either side of the House from members of the other Parties) to say:

Members of Parliament could be useful in council deliberations. But apart from two or three (notably Mr. Simmons)—

the Chief Secretary—

they attend little and take no part in debate.

He then goes on to pay members of Parliament a compliment that not one of them deserves, by saying:

They are almost certainly too busy to do so.

The answer is that our representatives are too lazy to do so, and the Lieutenant-Governor (Mr. Crocker) is simply being flattering to members of Parliament. He then goes on to say:

That is why university councils—

**Mr. Gunn:** We attend sittings of Parliament—

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** I have never been—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I do not want the honourable member for Mitcham to answer the interjection.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** As part of my explanation, I go on to say that I have never been a member of the university council. The only opportunity I had was when the Premier of the day, Sir Thomas Playford, thought that he should put someone on the council whom he thought would stand up to those university people, so I was not elected.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** That was a long time ago. He goes on to say:

That is why university councils must assert their sovereignty and they must be reshaped into bodies of size and composition that can make their sovereignty effective . . .

All this means a new university Act. To this there will undoubtedly be strong resistance; and judging by the time needed to produce the present Act—

and we have to discount that comment a bit by remembering which Minister it was—

it could take some years.

The overall purport of the article is that the university council is too big and unwieldy, and has just lost control of what is going on there. We all know that it is not only the University of Adelaide in which academic politics are practised, because every university has its problems. If we can do anything about it, we should.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope that the honourable member will not continue to comment. I gave him great latitude, and I hope that he will not comment any further. The honourable member for Mitcham.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** This time I freely acknowledge that you have given me some leniency, which I appreciate. This

is a serious matter that is within the competence of this Parliament to redress. It is for those reasons that I put the question to the Minister.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** I heard someone ask, "What was the question?" I explained to the Committee in the Public Purposes Loan Bill debate last evening that I did not have total recall, but I believe that my memory is up to this task. The two questions were: "Will amendments be introduced to the University Act?" and "When?" The replies are: "Yes" and "Later this session."

## ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR

**Mr. WOTTON:** Can the Minister for the Environment say when it is likely that a new Director of the Environment Department will be appointed, what were the reasons for the recent transfer of the previous Director to another department, and why was the move made to transfer the administration of the Museum and the Botanic Garden to the control of the Education Department with the subsequent setting up of a new post of Deputy Director-General of the Museum and the Botanic Garden? Certain confusion has surrounded the change of the Minister for the Environment and the Director simultaneously, with speculation regarding the possibility of further changes in the department and the fact that the transfer of the previous Director was possibly a demotion.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** I wonder who is speculating? I wonder what mischief is involved in this question? Does the honourable member agree that it was a demotion?

**Mr. Wotton:** I am asking you the question.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** As the shadow Minister for the Environment, I would have thought that the honourable member would have something positive to say about the matter. I presume that the honourable member is the shadow Minister? The Government is perfectly entitled to arrange departments or divisions in departments as it sees fit. That was done on this occasion. The honourable member will be aware that Dr. Grant Inglis is an eminent scientist. The two divisions that were taken from the Environment Department were placed in the Education Department because they entailed scientific and educational components. Dr. Grant Inglis was made the head of that division. I am looking forward to Dr. Inglis getting back to the type of work in which he is really expert. The department has been reduced deliberately because of the tremendous amount of work involved in the remainder of the department.

**Mr. Dean Brown:** Wasn't he suitable?

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** Of course, the member for Davenport would have a barb to put into this. He would read the worst possible circumstances into anything that happened. It would be impossible for the honourable member to see merit in anything this Government did. We accept that.

**The Hon. D. A. Dunstan:** If he couldn't find anything he would invent it.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** True, if the honourable member could not find anything to comment about, he would invent it. The honourable member suggested that further alterations might be made in the department. I categorically and unequivocally say that that is not the case. He is mischievous in suggesting it. I have spoken not only to the divisional heads of the department but also to every member of the department who was available. I explained to them that no further changes were contemplated in the department. I also explained to them

what I believed was to be the future of the department, but I will not give the honourable member the benefit of that, because it would be too much for him all at once. I also told those officers where their new home would be, and I expressed my attitude towards this portfolio, because it has been said (and I do not know whether the honourable member has been involved) that my attitudes are incompatible with this portfolio. Let me disabuse his mind about that if he believes that is the case, because that is not so.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** Do you think there should be a sadistic colonel in charge of this?

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** As I said the other day, the Deputy Leader is poison. The only colonel is the Federal Minister for the Environment, Housing and Community Development.

**Mr. Wotton:** When is he likely to be appointed?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Murray has asked his question.

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** If he gives me the time I will reply to it. If the honourable member reads Saturday morning's newspaper (although he might not read the advertisements, which is where they usually appear)—

**The Hon. G. T. Virgo:** He might even apply.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** I do not know whether he would have the necessary qualifications, but he is eligible. Applications have been called. I am not sure when the applications close, but I believe it is in about a week. When applications close, no doubt the Public Service Board will examine the list of applicants. I hope it is a big list and that there are many applicants. The board will then decide on a short list of applicants, and then I will become involved because, as the honourable member would know, the Minister has a say in the appointment of the Director of the department. I am anxious to have installed as quickly as possible a new permanent head of the department because, as the honourable member would understand, things cannot tick until that happens.

#### PORT GERMEIN JETTY

**Mr. KENEALLY:** I will resist the opportunity to ask the Minister of Community Welfare what price G.G.I. is running at in the Melbourne Cup.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I hope the honourable member will ask his question.

**Mr. KENEALLY:** I will content myself with asking the Minister for the Environment a parochial question that is, nevertheless, of much importance to some of my constituents. Will he ask the Coast Protection Board to investigate the cost is of retaining a six-metre section of the Port Germein jetty as being a further option available to the Port Germein District Council? A well attended public meeting was held at Port Germein on Friday, October 21, to ascertain the public attitude to the options provided by the Environment Department on the future of the jetty.

The meeting appreciated the generous offer contained in option No. 1, which was to repair for a uniform width up to bent 298 and demolition of the remainder. The total estimated cost is \$180 000, of which the council would be required to contribute about \$30 000. Annual maintenance thereafter has been estimated at \$25 000, of which the council would be required to contribute 20 per cent and the Coast Protection Board 80 per cent. The State Government would also meet 100 per cent of any storm damage repairs. That is a very generous offer.

The meeting voted to accept that option. However, it

was apparent that general disappointment existed that the jetty was to be reduced to three metres in the deep-water section, as this limited width would restrict severely the activity of the swimmers and fishermen using that part of the jetty. Will the Minister consider the further option?

**The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN:** The honourable member has already expressed the appreciation of the people of the Government's generosity so far. He would realise that the further option he has raised will cost more. He would also appreciate that there are many jetties throughout the length and breadth of this State. Therefore, I am reluctant to indicate to him that we can go further than we already have gone. I appreciate the magnitude of the problem that we have throughout South Australia, and we must treat everyone as equally as we can. I will consider the matter for the honourable member.

#### APPRENTICES

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** My question is to the Minister of Labour and Industry.

**The Hon. G. R. Broomhill:** I can't hear you.

**The SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** I admit that I have lost my voice.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Davenport has the floor and he should have a fair chance to ask his question.

*Members interjecting:*

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** I know I have lost my voice, unlike the cretins on the opposite side of the House.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I appeal to the House concerning interjections. The honourable member has strayed away from the question. I want him to ask the question.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think the honourable member should withdraw his remark about "cretins" on this side. I think that is contrary to Standing Orders, and it should be withdrawn.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The honourable member for Davenport must resume his seat. He knows as well as I do that when the Speaker is on his feet the honourable member must resume his seat.

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** I withdraw the comment. I was simply going to point out to the House—

**The Hon. G. R. Broomhill:** What is the question?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Henley Beach is out of order. I want the honourable member for Davenport to ask his question.

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** Will the Minister of Labour and Industry amend section 28 (2) of the Apprentices Act and any other section necessary in order to remove the upper age limit of 23 years of age on apprenticeships, and will he do so immediately so that older people may apply to take up apprenticeships from the beginning of next year? On September 28 this year, the Minister announced that he intended to remove the upper age limit on apprenticeships. I support that move; this has been Liberal Party policy for some time. Having looked at the Act, I believe the amendments necessary would be simple. I ask the Minister to do this as quickly as possible, as I believe it is important that these people be allowed to take up apprenticeships at the beginning of next year. Because of the evidence I presented to the House only last Tuesday, I have grave fears that the Further Education Department may not be able to supply adequate positions, at least in certain sections of apprentice training, owing to staffing



deficiencies. I hope this is not the reason why the Minister is deferring any legislation to amend the principal Act.

**The Hon. J. D. WRIGHT:** I do not know why the honourable member had to ask me whether I will legislate. I have already announced that I intend to legislate, as the honourable member knows. I do not see why he had to phrase his question in that way. Regarding his other question about when I will do it, I point out that it has always been the business of the Government to decide that, and that position will remain. I am as anxious as is the honourable member to get rid of this discrimination, otherwise I would not have initiated the programme in the first place. I am opposed to all forms of discrimination. It will be done this session, but whether it will be done before Christmas for finalisation this session, I doubt, because there is much legislation of higher priority than this legislation.

The honourable member stated on Tuesday and again today that a lack of tutors within the Further Education Department is causing a delay in some apprentice students being able to get into classes. That is not the case at all. The problem is room—facilities are not available. Last year the Government made an effort to promote the intake of apprentices. We employed an extra 120 apprentices in Government departments and, as a consequence of talking to industry and discussing the problem of unemployment, it also decided to help, with the result that we had a record intake of apprentices. That is the difficulty. The Government subsidised more tutors, and my department tells me that the problem is lack of room. That involves capital costs, which the Government is not able to meet at the moment. When the Minister of Education gives his detailed information next week perhaps he will mention some other problem, but as far as I know the only problem is that of space.

I do not think the situation will be as acute next year. Because of the comments of private industry and from the Government's own viewpoint, I do not think we will have as large an intake as we have had this year. I hope I am wrong about that and that the intake is larger than it was last year and that we are faced with the same problem in relation to facilities, but I think that will be the case in the present economic climate.

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*At 3.15 p.m., the bells having been rung:*

**The SPEAKER:** Call on the business of the day.

#### **PUBLIC PURPOSES LOAN BILL**

In Committee.

(Continued from October 26. Page 483.)

First Schedule.

Public Buildings, \$113 755 000.

**Dr. EASTICK:** I am interested in the line relating to the Police Department, where the indication of the work to be undertaken does not include a new police station for Clare. When he opened the Clare show in 1976, the Premier announced that a new police station costing \$575 000 would be built at Clare. That information was subsequently given in the local paper as a direct result of the announcement made by the Premier. The leading article on page 1 of the *Northern Argus* on Wednesday, October 20, 1976, under the heading "\$575 000 Clare Police Station", stated:

A new police station and residence is to be built at Clare at a cost of \$575 000, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, has announced. The Premier, who visited Clare to open their 112th show, said tenders for the new building would be let in the 1976-77 financial year, \$280 000 the following year, and \$265 000 in 1978-79. The building should be finished by October, 1978.

The Premier went on to indicate that the new station would be an important Government centre for Clare. Under the decisions taken in the CURB report, Clare will become a regional centre. That being so, this lack of action following an announcement made by no less a person than the Premier is causing a degree of embarrassment to and much questioning by the people in the area.

Like many other country towns recently, the Clare district has suffered many serious burglaries, and one of the important issues recognised by the authorities is the urgent need to update the police station so that night patrols can take place. Evidence has shown that wherever night patrols occur, whilst they do not necessarily preclude burglaries, they do reduce the incidence. Clare is a regional centre, with an anticipated growth rate and general upturn in industrial development based on the wine industry. People are concerned that land that has been proclaimed for this purpose is still virgin land.

The people in the Clare district expected that \$280 000 would be made available this year for the construction of the police station, but no mention is made of this project in this line. Members opposite might claim that people are being cynical when they ask whether this was a bit of one-upmanship undertaken by the Premier on this occasion. People took the announcement at face value, and believed that they could expect the project to commence within close proximity to the announcement made by the Premier. However, no such action appears to be forthcoming. Can the Minister say why there has been a sudden reversal of decision or, if that has not happened, whether the project is to be financed by some other means and, if so, what other means? I trust the Chief Secretary will be able to supply the detail I seek.

**The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS (Chief Secretary):** I am sorry that I cannot give the honourable member the information he seeks. The developments to which he referred took place before I recently assumed the portfolio, and I am not aware of the facts surrounding the matter. I am well aware of the value of the presence of the police in the area as a most important deterrent to crime. An extensive rebuilding programme is going on at various centres, and I think one station is to be opened in about three weeks time at Nuriootpa, in the District of Kavel. I cannot give an answer offhand, but I shall be pleased to get the information.

**Dr. EASTICK:** I look forward to receiving that detail at the first opportunity. I do not think the Premier would want it believed, as is being said, that the announcement was an attempt to buy favour, as it does not seem to have blossomed in any way.

**Mr. GUNN:** The sum of \$210 000 is proposed for accommodation for the Publicity Branch of the Premier's Department. What is contemplated? I hope that we will not see more people appointed to that branch of the department, which is overstaffed at present. Its sole purpose, as far as I can see, is to promote the Labor Party at the expense of the taxpayers. I do not believe the taxpayers should be spending another \$210 000 to provide extra accommodation so that this group can be expanded. It would appear that the Government is spending the money to have taxpayers provide a service which its own organisational wing should be providing. I suggest that this money could be far better spent. There is, for instance, a

chronic shortage of accommodation in this building. The amount already spent on it was long overdue. When I came to this place, at the same time as you did, Mr. Chairman, the facilities were a disgrace and needed upgrading. However, the \$210 000 could be better spent in providing additional accommodation for members who share offices. In many cases, there is insufficient room for two members to move in the offices they share. I am concerned that Governments are intent on providing themselves with massive facilities, purely to keep themselves in power. This seems a most undesirable aspect of the spending programme.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before the Minister replies, I must point out that the question has been asked by the member for Fisher and that a report has been promised.

**The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS:** I was about to draw your attention to that fact, Sir.

**Mr. DEAN BROWN:** Is any money to be allocated for the Belair Primary School? I understand that work was due to start this year on that school. I hope money has been allocated: I suspect that it would be the only money provided in these Estimates for the whole Davenport District.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD (Minister of Education):** This matter was raised last evening, I think by the member for Fisher, and I undertook to get information for him on that occasion.

**Mr. BLACKER:** What progress is being made with the provision of air-conditioning and upgrading of offices in Port Lincoln? Is the air-conditioning allocation related to the Agriculture Department building or to other offices?

**The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS:** I am sorry but I do not know the answer. I shall undertake to get a reply for the honourable member.

**Dr. EASTICK:** A number of dental clinics have been listed, and I notice particularly a provision for a dental clinic at Evanston. However, that clinic has been functional for 18 months to two years. Is the sum now allocated to be for a major upgrading?

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** They probably haven't paid their bills.

**Dr. EASTICK:** I would not be so uncharitable, but it looks as though there will be some activity in the parish, so to speak. I should appreciate an indication from the appropriate Minister of the nature of the projects to be undertaken at Clare and at Evanston. Other areas do not have access to dental clinics, and therefore I am especially interested in why there appears to be a duplication of an existing facility when other areas are not yet serviced.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** I shall get the information from my colleague. Obviously, we are not going to give Evanston two clinics, so there must be some other explanation.

**Mr. GUNN:** The Minister of Education has said that the proposed new area school for Ceduna was approved recently by the Public Works Committee. Can the Minister give a complete breakdown of how the programme will be carried out?

Much discussion has taken place on the need for this school. The Minister has visited Ceduna and knows of the unsatisfactory state of the establishment at present. It is one of the largest area schools in the State, and consists of rows of timber-frame buildings, making administration most difficult. What has the Government in mind? If the Minister does not have all the information, I hope he will bring down a detailed report so that my constituents can be told what the Government has in mind.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** It depends how much detail the honourable member wants. If he wants detailed sketch plans, I could make them available to him. We are talking

about a scheme for which there is Public Works Committee approval. The target availability is November, 1979, and the estimated unescalated cost at present is \$3 936 000. I can get more precise details for the honourable member.

**Mr. GUNN:** The sum of \$41 000 has been allocated for the single men's quarters at the police station at Oodnadatta. This provision is small compared to the cost of \$267 000 for the new Penong police station. However, I am pleased that the Penong project is nearing completion, because it was long overdue. Will the Government build the facilities at Oodnadatta in stages over the next two financial years?

**The Hon. D. W. SIMMONS:** That may well be the explanation. However, I cannot confirm it, but I will obtain that information.

**Dr. EASTICK:** What is the Government's policy in relation to building Government offices in areas in which they now do not exist, and also the Government's attitude to undertaking joint projects with councils, so that, in providing civic facilities, public offices that may be required could be integrated into the scheme, or an undertaking given by the Public Buildings Department that various Government departments already established or about to be established would use those facilities if they were provided by the council? I refer to Clare. I understand that the council has written to the Minister indicating that, in an upgraded programme to provide civic facilities and office space for the council, economies could be effected if the facility was built now for future requirements. This area will be a regional centre for CURB, and perhaps various arms of government could lease some of these facilities, or the Government could lease them so that the whole project could proceed. The Clare project is at a stalemate because no guidance has been given, and the longer it takes to decide, escalating costs will cause a more difficult problem for the authority.

**The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD:** The reply to the first proposition by the honourable member would be that, as and when the need arises, the Government provides capital facilities in various parts of the State. The CURB scheme is an attempt to have some clustering of Government facilities in close relationship to each other, so that they better serve each other and also the general area. I shall obtain further information concerning co-operation with councils, but I understand that an agreement exists now between the Corporation of Henley and Grange and the Community Welfare Department to lease space being provided by the corporation. The Coast Protection Board is partly funding this arrangement.

The typical problem is that councils lack the ability to service capital development which, in the short term, may be surplus to a council's requirements. It is more likely to have the reverse situation, in which councils ask the State Government for assistance to lease capital facilities erected by the Government. There would be a good opportunity for this to occur in the Noarlunga Regional Centre, because in the next couple of years Government offices will be built there as part of the Housing Trust's plans for that area. As these are matters of concern to the Minister for Planning and the Minister of Works, I will try to obtain information from them.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** I move:

That the line "Public Buildings Department, \$113 755 000" be reduced by \$100.

Everyone knows that this amounts to a vote of no confidence in the Government. I move this motion for reasons concerned with adverse references made to the Government's activities in the Auditor-General's Reports, and because of the attitude, particularly of the Minister of

Works, in relation to the reports of committees of this House that are from time to time laid before the House. I quote from the Auditor-General's Report when this Labor Government first came to office in 1970. The then Auditor-General (Mr. Jeffery) stated:

In terms of the Audit Act, I am required *inter alia* to report upon all matters relating to the public accounts. My review goes beyond that of a commercial audit and is designed to ensure that Parliament's control of public money is maintained. Last year I commented that the problem facing government is to keep the growth of public expenditure under control and at the same time discharge its responsibilities to the public. There is pressure from some sections of the community for greater expenditure on particular functions but governments must, with Parliamentary authorisation, apportion available revenues or borrowings to, in its judgment, the best overall advantage. In recent years there has been an increase in the cost levels of various projects, such as schools, hospitals, and other Government buildings. The costs of functions of government has also increased because *inter alia* of improved wages and conditions for employees. In spending, the criterion should not be how much has been spent but the value that is received for that expenditure, to ensure the provision of projects of adequate standard at a minimum cost. Too much emphasis is placed by some on the amount spent rather than the effectiveness for a given cost. It is obvious that, if costs are minimised, more projects can be undertaken.

I contend that the Government, since coming to office in 1970, has paid scant attention, if any, to those strictures laid before us by the former Auditor-General.

These sentiments have been repeated in one way or another each year since 1970, and again in 1977 we find adverse references to the performance of Government departments, responsibility for which must be accepted by the appropriate Ministers. Mr. Byrne, the present Auditor-General, in this year's report states:

For several years I have expressed concern at the quality of financial management in many departments, without which one cannot be satisfied that the maximum value is being obtained for each dollar of public moneys spent. Steps are being taken in some departments and in the Treasury towards this end but I would emphasise that there is a continuing and urgent need for improvement in this direction, particularly in view of the financial constraints which are now apparent and the continuing demands for greater financial involvement on the part of governments. My concern extends to the management of large capital projects in which it is necessary for responsibility to be clearly established and financial control exercised at all stages.

Concerning internal audits, the Auditor-General also states:

An internal audit section has been established in the Public Buildings Department but, during the year, the performance of that section was affected by the transfer of personnel to other duties. Internal audit staff were appointed, during the year, to the Lands Department and the Highways Department but, as yet, internal audit in those departments is still in the early stages of development. I consider that the establishment of internal audit in Government departments, especially some of the larger departments, is overdue and I am concerned that, although some departments have included internal audit positions on their manpower budgets, those positions remain unfilled.

I do not believe that the South Australian taxpayer is getting value for money spent under the present Administration. The growth in the public sector has been tremendous. If one looks at the line for the Public Buildings Department, to which I have moved a reduction as a motion of censure against the Government, one finds

criticism about the way it is operating. The Minister of Works is responsible for that department. I hope he will not take the remarks made here too much to heart, but I have found in the past that the Minister of Mines and Energy and the Minister of Works are good at dishing out the nasty medicine but when they get it back they are found to have paper thin skins: that applies particularly to the Minister of Works. The Auditor-General, in relation to expenditure by the Public Buildings Department in excess of approvals, said:

The matter of excess expenditure was again referred to the department in respect of over-spending on minor and major projects. At April, 1977, expenditure in excess of approved funds on major projects was \$18 000 000 and preliminary expenditure on major projects where approved funds had not been sought was \$6 000 000. This indicated a lack of adequate monitoring for expenditure control; however, the department is taking action to correct the situation.

From year to year, when the department is confronted with that criticism, it gives that stock reply, but nothing is done. The next matter to which I refer concerns \$500 000 rent paid for premises that were not occupied for periods of up to 11 months. At page 266 of the Auditor-General's Report appears the following:

At June 30, 1977, accommodation was rented in 30 privately-owned city buildings at an annual rate of \$5 419 000.

The public of the State is paying a heavy rental bill for the accommodation of the Public Service. The Auditor-General continues:

A number of instances have occurred where accommodation was vacant for protracted periods of time.

The departments are not identified. The Auditor-General then mentions building A, which had two floors vacant for 10 months at a cost of \$132 000 while they were being prepared for occupation. For all we know, that building is still unoccupied. Another floor in building A was vacant for eight months at a cost of \$63 000, and occupation is in the planning stage. Lord knows how far advanced that is. Examples of planning by this Government leave much to be desired, as instanced by plans for electrification of the railways.

The report also stated that in building A there were two half-occupied floors that had been vacant for 10 months at a cost of \$70 000. That is a greater cost than the Migrant Education Programme that the Minister complains about. In building B, seven floors were unoccupied for an average period of six months, at a cost to the public of \$134 000. Another floor in that building has been vacant for four months at a cost of \$11 000. In building C, three floors have been vacant for periods varying between five and 11 months at a cost of \$29 000. In building D, one floor has been unoccupied for seven months at a cost of \$15 000. That is a total amount of \$454 000, and it is money poured down the drain. When the Minister of Works was confronted with this information in a question, he said that that was nothing and that it takes a while to move a department from one place to another and set it up. That is not good enough. Nobody in private enterprise would incur that sort of expense for office space they were not using.

**Mr. Tonkin:** If they had built a building on the Victoria Square site and spent \$14 000 000 in 1972 they could have put all the offices in the one building and none of this money would have been wasted.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** I agree, but there is no excuse for hiring space that is not used. The Auditor-General's Report is replete with adverse references. On page 265, the Auditor-General, under the heading "Preliminary Investigations", states:

During the year costs on projects not proceeded with and amounting to \$550 000 (\$209 000 in 1975-76) were written off by transfer from Loan to Consolidated Revenue. A further review of investigation and design costs revealed that additional projects totalling more than \$1 500 000 would appear to require similar action. This matter was referred to the department.

That is a total of more than \$2 000 000 spent on projects that have not been proceeded with. The amount has been written off against the Revenue Account.

When we are talking about \$2 000 000 spent on projects investigated, and when none of them has come to anything, we are dealing with large sums of taxpayers' funds. The report continues:

Late finalisation of contracts: A number of contracts where work was virtually completed were found to be overdue for finalisation. This matter was referred to the department for attention.

At all levels in this department there is a sad lack of control over the sense of accountability for taxpayers' funds, and the Leader has mentioned this matter several times recently. I recall a press report of a day or two ago in which attention was drawn to this fact. I repeat the Leader's call that it is time we got some private economic consultants to examine some of these Government departments and spruce them up a bit.

The Government suggests that it can do work more profitably to the taxpayers by employing day labour than by giving the work to private contractors. I do not believe that any private enterprise company would tolerate the kinds of practice that are obviously commonplace in Government departments, such as the Public Buildings Department, to which I have been referring. The Leader said:

Private economic consultants should be appointed by the State Government to investigate the accounting systems of Government departments. This would not be necessary if the Government was concerned with its responsibility to get value for money when spending the taxpayers' dollar, but if the Government is going to ignore the advice and recommendations of the three watch-dog bodies, the Auditor-General, the Public Works Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, drastic action must be taken. I entirely agree. Having referred to the Auditor-General's Report, I will now turn my attention briefly to the report of the Public Works Committee. We heard a petulant display today by the Deputy Premier in which he cast aspersions on the committee's competence and on the Chairman, who is no longer a member of Parliament but who will carry on as Chairman for another month or two. The Deputy Premier saw no harm in casting aspersions on the committee, which was set up by the Parliament to investigate projects such as are mentioned in the lines. Any project in excess of \$500 000 should, by Statute, be referred to the committee for investigation.

In answer to a recent question, the Deputy Premier, in a rather blustering response to the Leader, said that he had not heard about the criticism. For his information, this criticism has been made in the annual report of the Public Works Committee for the past three years. I will quote the reference in the forty-eighth annual report, two years ago. I believe that this is important, and it appears over the name of Mr. R. W. Groth, who was the temporary Chairman of the committee at that stage. So, I suppose that the Deputy Premier will include him in his criticism of the present Chairman (Mr. J. J. Jennings). The following appears over Mr. Groth's name:

The committee places considerable weight on expert evidence received from departmental witnesses and consultants when arriving at a decision in regard to a public work.

Whilst most Government departments construct their particular public works at a cost in keeping with the evidence submitted to the committee after making appropriate adjustment for cost escalation, it has come to the attention of the committee that some public works have incorporated major modifications involving substantial increases in expenditure. Other public works, whilst not involving modifications to the initial proposals, have involved costs which bear little relationship to the original estimates presented to the Governor, to Cabinet and to the committee. These variations have the effect of placing substantial extra charges against the forecast budgets which in turn has the effect of the Government being unable to maintain the programme it has set itself. This matter has been referred to on several previous occasions in both periodical and annual reports but the situation has not improved.

**Mr. Tonkin:** They said that in the following two years.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** The next part stands out in heavy type. What I have just quoted is reproduced the next year word for word. The report continues:

Another matter causing concern is that, when the enabling legislation was passed it was the intention of the Government that any project which required an appropriation of funds in excess of \$500 000, it was a prerequisite that the project be investigated by the committee. By far the majority of the departments operate in accordance with the intention of the Act by including all details of the work, as well as advising the committee whether part of the funds are anticipated to come either from the Australian Government, local government authorities or private organisations. In this way the committee is enabled to get the overall picture of the public works in question. Recently, however, some departments have not included some highly specialised and expensive equipment in their submissions to the committee. Their reasoning is, apparently, that "equipment" does not need to be investigated but the committee is at a loss to see how it is possible for it to adequately report on a proposal unless the total cost of the scheme is submitted to it in the first place. Some of this specialised equipment is extremely expensive and could have a substantial impact on anticipated expenditure commitments by the Government.

A further matter causing the committee some concern is in relation to the definition of a public work. Reference is made to extracts from an opinion by the Crown Solicitor in 1937 as follows:

"... public work is defined in section 3 as 'any work proposed to be constructed by the Government . . . out of moneys to be provided by Parliament . . .'. The definition does not refer to a work proposed to be constructed partly out of moneys to be provided by Parliament . . ."

It seems clear that when this Act was passed Parliament did not contemplate a case of a public work being constructed partly out of Government money and partly out of money provided privately and, consequently, no provision has been made for such a case. It seems to me that is a *casus omissus* and that the definition should be amended by inserting after the word 'moneys' in the third line some words such as 'in excess of £30 000' (now \$500 000), for it seems to be the policy of the Act that if Government money in excess of £30 000 (now \$500 000) is to be spent on a public work the matter should be referred to the committee."

The committee finds it most difficult to carry out its obligations under the Act if all public works are not referred to it because of a legal technicality or omission and it strongly suggests that the appropriate amendment be made to its Act.

The Deputy Premier said that he knew nothing about it. That criticism was repeated last year, and this year there

was a further addendum over the name of J. J. Jennings, Chairman, and I quote from it as follows:

Some witnesses when appearing before the committee have stressed the urgency of their particular public work and have requested especially prompt decisions in order that the projects might proceed without delay. With all public works referred to it the committee works in the closest co-operation with the Government departments and carries out its investigations and issues its reports as soon as possible. With some of the special cases referred to above, the committee has carried out its inquiries with the utmost despatch and good faith and, on occasions, with considerable inconvenience, only to discover subsequently that the works which have been described to it as especially urgent have not been proceeded with when the committee has issued its recommendation. Sometimes the urgent need for the work has seemed to disappear altogether.

It appears to me that, as the department's names are not specified in the committee's report, the time has come to stop pulling punches, although I suppose that has been done in the interests of discretion.

I guess that it would be rather unfortunate to have to name specific departments in a report to this Parliament from the Public Works Committee, but it seems to me that it is time to spell out which departments are involved. I am quite sure that the departments concerned must know that they are involved. If they are unwilling to take note of what a committee of this Parliament says, the Administration of this State is, in my judgment, in a parlous situation.

It ill behoves the Minister to denigrate the committee and say that this is the first time that this matter has come to his attention. If the Minister was half awake he would have been aware that for the past three years reference has been made to that matter.

**Mr. Tonkin:** His staff must have been aware.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** Someone must have been awake to the situation. I remember clearly that, when the Public Accounts Committee confronted the Highways Department about estimates put before the Public Works Committee for projects, it was clear that the Public Works Committee was being treated with what amounted to contempt. The Public Works Committee was simply being used as a sounding board for public opinion on the proposed works. As has been pointed out, the Highways Department did not have any statutory necessity to report its proposed projects to the Public Works Committee. The department put up completely unrealistic estimates to that committee. I believe that the Highways Department got a salutary lesson from its encounter with the committee.

This is one of the committees which is referred to in the Leader's article and which is charged with ensuring that we get value for each dollar of the taxpayers' money that is spent in this State. There is a sorry lack of accountability. From the present Administration this week we got a statement from the Premier when we queried a statement in the Auditor-General's Report in relation to the Jam Factory; two people undertook an oversea trip at a cost to the taxpayer of about \$34 000 for a nine-week jaunt around the world. The Premier admitted that the cost seemed excessive and said that he had taken steps to see that it did not recur.

**Mr. Venning:** What did they do when they got back?

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** They resigned from the authority and have since opened a print shop. However, that does not concern me. What does concern me is the admission from the Premier that he believed this expenditure to be excessive, and he said that he had taken steps to see that it did not recur. Why did it occur in the first place? From memory, we voted that authority about \$600 000.

**The Hon. Hugh Hudson:** What has that to do with the Public Buildings Department?

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** It has to do with public accountability, which is what the motion is all about. The Public Accounts Committee is another committee of this Chamber in relation to which determined attempts have been made by the Government, especially the Minister of Works, to muzzle the committee. The Minister tried to downgrade and denigrate the Public Works Committee again today. A running battle has occurred between the Government, and particularly the Minister of Works, and the Public Accounts Committee. For some time I was personally involved with that committee. The Minister wrote to the committee and told it that Cabinet believed that it was exceeding its authority.

**Mr. Tonkin:** That's a different story from the one we heard today about the Public Works Committee, which he said wasn't exercising its authority.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** That is what he said. As soon as the Public Accounts Committee started to dig into the affairs of some Government departments that involved the Minister of Works, he got on his high horse and wrote on behalf of Cabinet to the committee telling it that it was exceeding its statutory authority. To its credit, that committee responded and pointed out to the Minister the constitution of Public Accounts Committees around Australia (and, indeed, the Public Accounts Committee of Australia), explaining their charters and pointing out that they had a statutory right to make these inquiries. I believe the Minister of Works then began to see the error of his ways.

However, it did not end there. I asked a question in this Chamber about departments under the control of the Minister of Works. This line concerns his responsibility, too. A witch hunt was conducted to run down the Secretary of the Public Accounts Committee. That matter has not before been raised in this place. I believe the Minister far exceeded any authority he has to interfere with a committee of this Chamber.

The Public Accounts Committee, like the Public Works Committee, is set up by the authority of this Parliament, and no Government Minister has authority, in my view, to initiate an inquiry into a committee of this Chamber without the sanction of this Chamber.

The Public Service Board investigated the Secretary of that committee, but no report has been given to the Chamber about that matter. The board called the Secretary up before it. My understanding is that the Chairman of the Public Service Board even appeared before the Public Accounts Committee. It was a real witch hunt to run down the Secretary of the committee, because that committee was making findings that bear out my point that we are not getting value for money spent in South Australia by Government departments under the present Administration.

That is a disgraceful state of affairs. I use the word "disgraceful" deliberately, because Ministers of the Crown are not interested in accountability and seek to shuffle off their responsibility and denigrate and downgrade committees set up by Statute. I refer particularly to the two committees of this Chamber, the Public Works Committee and the Public Accounts Committee.

It is obvious that officers of the Minister's department, if they knew, did not pass on to him criticism that has occurred for the past three years in reports of the Public Works Committee. Deliberate attempts have been made to downgrade the other committee to which I have referred.

**Mr. Tonkin:** You don't believe it was a deliberate cover-up again?

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** I do not know. I judge that it was not a deliberate cover-up: it was just a case of incompetence and ignorance, a deliberate attempt to hamstring the work of the Public Accounts Committee and stifle its operations. The present Chairman of the committee even waxed eloquent in the local press recently, lauding the present Administration for its competence. He also spoke about the efforts of the Public Accounts Committee, of which he is the Chairman. I know that the Chairman of the committee has been sick, but he has attended only four of the last 13 meetings of the committee (at least that is what I ascertained from my last inquiry). This is what the present Chairman of the committee said in the newspaper:

I am the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and was well aware of the extreme antagonism towards the Opposition for its unwarranted and unethical attack upon the staff of not only Northfield Hospital but, in fact, by innuendo, the employees of all public hospitals, who were placed under suspicion of theft in their respective places of employment.

This was a disgusting slur to cast upon reliable, honest and conscientious employees and the voters obviously demonstrated their disapproval at the criticism aimed at them.

The Chairman of the committee does not mind going into the public press, but since he has been Chairman no report in relation to the matter I have raised has seen the light of day. We saw a change of Chairman at short notice, and we have discussed that matter previously in this place. It was part of a deliberate campaign which has been waged since then and which started with the original letter of March 20, 1975, from the Minister of Works that stated that the Public Accounts Committee was exceeding its statutory authority. The campaign included a witch hunt into the Secretary's affairs.

It is an alarming situation where committees of this Chamber that are set up by Statute can be subject to persecution in this way by Ministers of the Crown. I have referred to three aspects that I believe amply justify the motion.

The Auditor-General's Report this year commented on the waste of money that had occurred in some departments. The examples I referred to involved sums of \$3 000 000, \$2 500 000 for projects launched and not completed, which have had to be written off against Revenue Account, and \$500 000 for rent for space not used in buildings. Other examples could be given. I have mentioned the attempts of the Government to downgrade and denigrate the committees of this Chamber, the Public Works Standing Committee and the Public Accounts Committee. I believe this is poor administration. The public of this State is not getting value for its tax dollar, and the sooner the Government accepts its responsibilities the better for South Australia.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Mines and Energy):** I am not in a position to reply in detail to the matters raised by the Deputy Leader but many points can and should be made. If whenever there is any criticism of any kind made by the Public Works Standing Committee or the Public Accounts Committee the Opposition seeks to turn it into a Party political matter, inevitably the effectiveness of the committees in the long run will not be as great as would otherwise be the case.

The work done by the two committees can involve controversy as to the extent of their powers and the relevant recommendations they are entitled to make. One case in point relates to the Paringa Park Primary School project which was referred to the Public Works

Committee when I was Minister of Education. As members are aware, the Public Works Committee recommended against the building of a portion of that school, I believe on improper grounds.

A portion of that school was burned down in 1964 when Sir Baden Pattinson was Minister, and he promised at that time on behalf of the Government of that day that the school would be rebuilt on another site further along Bowker Avenue. The time came to consider replacement of that school (and there was a possibility that funds would be available) but by then, the early 1970's, enrolments at the school had declined and the question of the existing sites being inadequate was no longer entirely appropriate. The Education Department determined to do two things: first, the new site that had been purchased further along Bowker Avenue was, under a joint agreement with the Brighton corporation, developed as a recreation area with certain uses available for children at the school. The Education Department paid half the cost of that development and handed the recreation area over to the Brighton corporation to maintain and operate.

At the same time as the department decided that the school would be rebuilt on its existing site, a decision was taken that the timber buildings of the infants school should be replaced and a library resource centre provided. That was the particular project referred to the Public Works Committee. Apparently, the Public Works Committee determined not that this school should be replaced but that other schools had a higher priority, in its judgment. I think it came to that judgment because the former member for Heysen (Mr. McAnaney) said that there were schools in his district worse than the Paringa Park school, which was in the district of the member for Glenelg.

When we received the report of the Public Works Committee, which recommended that this project not be proceeded with, I took the view that a commitment had been made about 10 years previously to go ahead with the project, that the project involved the replacement of timber classrooms and the provision of a library resource centre, and that it was within the competency of the Public Works Committee not to determine the priority of a project but only to determine whether or not it thought that a certain project should or should not be proceeded with. I do not know of any Public Works Committee member at any time who would say that timber buildings—

**Mr. Venning:** What are you really saying?

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I suggest the member for Rocky River should listen. I know it is difficult to get something through to him and I am using words longer than the honourable member can usually cope with. I do not know of any member in this Parliament who would want to argue that, when possible, timber buildings should not be replaced. In relation to the Paringa Park school: first, the scale of the project before it ever went to the Public Works Committee was reduced substantially; secondly, it involved the provision of an additional facility and the replacement of timber classrooms; thirdly, the Public Works Committee exceeded its powers in the recommendation that it made; and, fourthly, in my view the Government, on the recommendation I made at the time, was correct in going ahead with the project which happened to be a project in a district represented by the Liberal Party but which—

**Mr. Venning:** That's a wonder.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** The member for Rocky River can talk, because the Liberal Party promised a new school for Gladstone in, I think, 1938, and it took a Labor Government to build it.

**Mr. Becker:** And it took it years to do it.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** It did not; it was completed within a year. And that was in a country area of this State. I make no apologies whatsoever for what happened in relation to the Paringa Park school. I believe that if the matter were now argued with members of the Public Works Committee they would recognise that their judgment was wrong and that they exceeded their powers, because it is not within their competence to say that a particular school does not have a priority over some other school. All they have to report on is whether a particular project is to be proceeded with or not. It is not a matter for them to determine priorities. The Government is accountable for that and must take responsibility for it. The honourable member can check with the member for Glenelg that the timber classrooms that formed the infants school at Paringa Park were grossly unsatisfactory.

A promise had been made years previously by a Liberal Government, following a fire at that school, as to what would happen. I make no apologies for that. In my view, that is one example where the Public Works Committee exceeded its powers.

**Mr. Millhouse:** You mean you didn't agree with it. How can it exceed its powers? It made you feel—

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** Its judgment recommending against the rebuilding of the school was not made on the basis that it was not a worthwhile project; it was made on the basis that other projects had a higher priority. It is not within the competence of the Public Works Committee to make a recommendation on that basis. That is not what it is required to do under the Act.

The Public Accounts Committee is a committee of some importance. I think while it remains a matter of Party political disputation the effectiveness of that committee in the kind of job it has to do will not be as good as it should be. This committee made certain reports and recommendations and did the job it was required to do after its investigations, particularly into the Engineering and Water Supply Department and into the provision of sewerage. I would be going quite beyond the bounds of this line on public buildings if I discussed the details of that recommendation. Now that the matter is canvassed, let us at least have a reply and get back to the terms of the debate.

**Mr. Millhouse:** So you are going beyond the limits.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I am going to reply to what the Deputy Leader said, and I think in the circumstances that I am justified in so doing. It seems to me that the Public Accounts Committee has a very legitimate function in investigating the accounts of the State and the operations of certain departments in their financial aspects. Then it is required to make a report and recommendations. However, it is not the function of the Public Accounts Committee to say to the Government or to the department concerned, "We now require from you regular reports on the progress you are achieving in the implementation of our recommendations."

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** Nor have they sought that.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** One could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** I will read the letters to you.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I am not concerned about the letters, but about the report.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** What about the facts?

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I am concerned with the report of the Public Works Committee that dealt with the Engineering and Water Supply Department and that led to the decisions of the Public Accounts Committee that it would require further information back from the department as to the progress being achieved. It seems to me, as a fundamental point so far as the Public Accounts

Committee is concerned, that the Public Accounts Committee's function ceases when the committee has made its recommendations and published its report. If it wishes at a later stage to come back for a further investigation, it is entitled to do that, but it is not entitled to assume an administrative or a semi-administrative role with respect to the way in which changes take place within the Government.

That has to be and to remain the Government's responsibility; it is the Government that must be accountable for that, and not the department being separately accountable to the Public Accounts Committee. If that matter had been effectively sorted out in the first place, some of the difficulties that occurred in relation to the Public Accounts Committee would not have occurred. Nevertheless, I think it is sad that it seems that the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Works Committee are now to be the subject of endless Party-political controversy. Whilst that keeps going—

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** If the Government—

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I listened to the Deputy Leader and the garbage in which he was indulging. Now he will perhaps have the courtesy to listen to me.

**Mr. Gunn:** And your garbage.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** The honourable member has a right to speak if he wants to. Surely, he is capable of giving minimal courtesy.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** You seldom are.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I point out to the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the honourable member for Eyre that these continual interjections add very little to the debate, except, perhaps, to prolong it. I ask them to cease interjecting and to allow the honourable Minister to continue his remarks.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** It seems to me that we need to create a situation in which there is a general bipartisan agreement between the Parties as to the proper role of the Public Accounts Committee and of the Public Works Committee if that is to become a matter of Party-political controversy, and to ensure that that role can be carried out without the matter being made the subject of Party-political controversy all the time. Inevitably, if there is a feeling within Government departments, particularly, that Parliamentary committees are exceeding their statutory functions and roles, attitudes will be put to the Ministers responsible for those departments. I think it is worth noting that, in relation to both of these committees, the public servants who have to go before them often come back and complain. In more recent years it is true that that has rarely been the case with the Public Works Committee, and the officers of the Public Buildings Department with whom I have contact and who go before the Public Works Committee generally comment on the very good relationship that exists. I believe, from what I know about the situation, that the Public Works Committee functions effectively and that what has been taken up on this occasion is pretty much a storm in a teacup. We should not run the risk of exaggerating the situation to such an extent that the consequence of the debate in Parliament is that the committee becomes less effective in future because it has been turned into a Party-political football. I think both sides of the Chamber need to pay attention to that question. We must avoid turning these matters into a Party-political football, or the committees will not carry out the functions for which they were appointed and for which they were set up in the first place correctly.

I turn now to one or two other matters in relation to the Public Buildings Department. To a significant extent I believe that the delay in the occupation of some buildings

is the responsibility of the client department rather than of the Public Buildings Department. For example, I believe delays have occurred in the re-establishment of the Planning Appeal Board in the new Grenfell Centre, largely because the business of providing courts within a normal commercial building that had to be rented at a certain time is not an easy matter. It requires significant planning, and that planning process can run into difficulties.

If the building had been built by the Public Buildings Department, it would not have been ready for occupation until the inside of the building was finished. However, as it is a private building in which the Government determined that it needed space and in which it was required by the owners of the building to take the space at a certain time, the planning for the partitioning and the establishment of the planning appeal courts in that building had to take place subsequently. There were difficulties in relation to that. I want to defend the Public Buildings Department, because very often the client department that is asking for work to be done is not behaving properly. The plan is prepared, it is discussed with the Public Buildings Department, preliminary work proceeds, and then the client department changes its mind.

I believe that the Government needs to give attention (and I know the Minister of Works accepts this) to the way in which client departments behave in this matter. Half the time, the Public Buildings Department is carrying the can for mistakes made by client departments, and not by the Public Buildings Department.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** It still reflects on the Government.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** It may. It is a perennial problem that exists in a client-architect relationship where the expenditure control on the client may not always be appropriate and where the architect concerned is not the appropriate body to put on the expenditure control. Let me give an example where I believe client departments can improve their performance.

It is proposed that the Environment Department will take up space in the Gateway Inn, across the road from Parliament House. When that occurs the Housing and Urban Affairs Department will be centralised in the G.R.E. Building in Grenfell Street in space now occupied by the Environment Department, so that the State Planning Office and the Policy Division will be together. This morning I inspected the facilities that we are to occupy, because proposals had been put to me about changes that may take place in partitioning. After the inspection I decided, first, that we would not request any changes in partitioning, because that would hold up the move and mean that the area had to be left vacant and, secondly, that we would not do this because we could not be completely sure that we were making the right decision until we had lived in this area. If, as a consequence of occupying the building, we discover that certain things are wrong and minor changes are necessary, that is when the changes will be made. I believe there needs to be closer control on the operations of client departments that deal with the Public Buildings Department to ensure that unnecessary delays do not occur.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** Well, that's an admission.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** The honourable member has this burning passion inside him to get into everything on a Party-political basis. If someone tries to put it on another basis, out it comes. I am pleased to see that the honourable member is now smiling. May I also point out that the total space rented by the Government, together with the buildings that are Government owned, represent a large area. My estimate (and I may not be accurate) is that at any one time, because of various changes in the

Government, about 1 per cent or 2 per cent of the total area available to the Government is unoccupied: a small fraction. I suggest that that would be true of any large organisation at any one time. I also suggest that some falling off in full occupancy will occur during a period of growth, because when further growth is expected in the Public Service, as has occurred in recent years, some provision has to be made for it ahead of time. One cannot organise the location of a department that is growing, for good and legitimate reasons about which we need not argue.

**Mr. Millhouse:** Well, someone might.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** That is not relevant to this debate.

**Mr. Millhouse:** None of what you are saying is relevant.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** I will not argue the test of relevance with the honourable member, but will leave him to his peculiar methods of ratiocination. I do not want to have to cope with that, and neither does the Leader. Where an organisation is growing it is not sensible to locate it in a space that it fully occupies. Some room for growth is necessary, otherwise the organisation will have to be shifted continually from place to place. That principle applies to private organisations as much as it does to the Government.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** But they don't have premises vacant for a year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! If the Deputy Leader has a significant point to make, he will have the opportunity to reply, and I point out to the Minister that if the Deputy Leader cannot control himself the Minister should ignore his interjection.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** A moment ago he was smiling, and I wish that he would revert to that pleasant and happy state. The other matter on which I comment is the question of projects that are planned ahead of time. This is a matter about which I have some knowledge, because one of the problems that occurred in the Education Department (and also in the Hospitals Department) was that it was often difficult to spend additional funds that had been made available, because the projects on which that money could be spent were not designed ahead of time. In the early 1970's, a concerted effort was made to have projects designed that would be on the shelf waiting to be undertaken when funds were available.

**Mr. Millhouse:** Like Monarto!

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** No, we are dealing with public buildings. Much as we know the prejudices of the honourable member, I do not think that is a public building. I point out that in the early 1970's a significant expansion in the level of Government activity in public buildings took place in education, hospitals, and in other areas. The real expenditure on buildings increased markedly, and to a significant extent it was caused by the policy of planning projects ahead of time. Since 1974, because of the effect of a much more rapid rate of inflation, it has proved more and more difficult to maintain the real level of building activity.

In addition, since 1975 we have had Federal Government curbs on funds made available in the Loan programme, and those curbs have placed further restrictions on the real level of building expenditure. Consequently, the Public Buildings Department has had a difficult time in maintaining full employment for its drafting and architectural work force. Much of the work that those people would normally have undertaken had been let to private consultants, and they were the first to feel the impact of the down-turn in public building. The impact was also felt in the department and, as a result,



there were projects that had been designed with which there were considerable delays in implementation. It is that fact which has led to the comment of the Auditor-General about preliminary investigations and which led the Deputy Leader to make such a song and dance. I reject the proposition that has been put forward by the Deputy Leader: first, because I do not think that he has substantiated his case effectively in relation to the Public Accounts Committee or the Public Works Committee, and I have explained why.

I again appeal to members opposite, although I know it will fall on deaf ears, that they should not forever raise these matters in the partisan political way they have. I think it is important to ensure that we get an effective bi-partisan policy on these matters. Secondly, the amount of unoccupied office space in either rented or Government buildings is low and no different from that which occurs in any large organisation. Thirdly, difficulties have been imposed on this Government as a consequence of the full impact of the inflationary pressures that the Federal Government has allowed to be effected in full within State Loan Budgets. This has resulted in much design work being carried out within the Government that has not yet been able to be carried out in practice and implemented.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** It is \$2 000 000 written off.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON:** In some cases, if there is a long enough delay before a project is undertaken, by the time the project comes up again for reconsideration a new look has to be taken at it and the approach to the project has to be made in a different way. That can well lead to the writing off of design work and preliminary investigation work. I point out that the risk that one runs in designing projects ahead of time is just that. That risk was a legitimate risk in the early 1970's. Obviously, where the real level of activity has fallen, there has to be a change in approach in relation to this matter. I ask honourable members, therefore, to reject the motion.

**Mr. TONKIN (Leader of the Opposition):** Whenever the Government has something to hide it puts up the Minister of Mines and Energy, who waffles around the subject and says nothing that is particularly pertinent to the subject under discussion. It hopes that by the time he has bored us all to tears we will have forgotten what it is all about. He has done exactly the same thing again today. I totally support the motion, which I believe is totally and absolutely justified.

I have pointed out on many occasions the deficiencies of the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Works Standing Committee, and the problems and grave difficulties that face the Auditor-General in the performance of this duty.

The Minister has said that there is a danger of these committees becoming Party-political and that we should adopt a bipartisan approach. What he really means is that, when his Government is not prepared to listen to the oft-repeated warnings of the Auditor-General, the comments made by the Chairman of the Public Works Standing Committee and the comments made by the Public Accounts Committee, and when his Government does not want to hear those remarks because they condemn the accounting procedures of the Government, if for some reason the Opposition brings these matters to the attention of the House because the Government turns its face away from them, in some way we are playing Party politics. What a ridiculous suggestion for the Minister to make. We should not have to bring these matters forward in the House: the Government should take account of those three watch-dog bodies.

All the Minister's baffle-gab talk about bipartisan agreements and the proper role of the committees is

absolute rubbish. It is the role of the Opposition to draw attention to these matters if the Government will not take any notice of them. The Deputy Premier has, on several occasions, blamed the Public Works Committee for not using its powers to get the information it demands. That committee, when it tries to obtain information, is given information which it has every right to expect is accurate. Why should public servants who come before it not give it accurate information?

It is only after the project goes ahead that the committee finds that the information given to it on many occasions was not accurate and that the approval given was given in respect of figures which were considerably below the total figure that was ultimately involved for the building. What is the point of the Deputy Premier's saying that the committee should have used its powers to get the correct figures if it must accept the figures given to it in good faith? That is where the Deputy Premier's argument falls down completely, and so does the argument of the Minister of Mines and Energy.

The whole problem is summed up in the two words "discovered subsequently" that are mentioned in the Public Works Committee's report. That committee has been misled but it only discovered subsequently that it had been misled. What is the point of it using its powers to do its job properly if a project is well on the way to completion or is, in fact, completed? This Government is too arrogant, too cynical, too much devoid of its real sense, its proper sense, of responsibility to the people of this State to get value for the taxpayers' dollar, to take any notice at all of these built in safeguards.

I repeat what I said a few days ago; these remarks should not have to be made and, if they have to be made by any one of these bodies, they should have to be made only once, because the Government's clear responsibility is to remedy the defects that are there. I heartily endorse and support the motion. I would think that any members with any respect for individual responsibility as members of Parliament will support the motion.

**The Hon. HUGH HUDSON (Minister of Mines and Energy)** moved:

That the time for moving the adjournment of the House be extended beyond 5 p.m.

Motion carried.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** I support this motion.

**The Hon. Hugh Hudson:** I suppose you have to go one way one day and the other way the next.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** The Minister interjects before I start. In fact, what he said fortified me in my intention to support this motion. For once I agree with what the Leader of the Opposition said about the Minister's speech. I would have put it somewhat differently, and I put it this way: if the Government wants to kill a debate it puts up the Minister of Mines and Energy to speak. He spoke at inordinate length this afternoon (for about half an hour, I think), and I suspect it might have been so that the debate would go after 5 o'clock and the Government would avoid the grievance debate which we would otherwise have had. That may be one reason, or it may just be his innate love of listening to his own voice. Whatever it is, he did speak for a long time, and what he said was utterly and totally irrelevant to the subject matter of the debate. If I had not wanted to embarrass you, Mr. Chairman, I would have suggested that you should warn the Minister pursuant to Standing Order No. 156, which is a Standing Order that is against prolixity. However, you did not choose to do that yourself, and I decided that it probably would be quicker to hear him out.

He spoke of things which were utterly irrelevant. He talked for some time about the Paringa Park school,

which, to give the Deputy Leader his due, he had not even mentioned. We had a long talk about that, and the Minister attacked the Public Works Committee for some decision that it made many years ago about that school. Nothing else he said had any relevance to the question. To me, there are far wider implications to the matter under debate even than those that have been mentioned by the member for Kavel and the Leader, and they go to the whole question of the accountability of Government to Parliament. The stance taken by the Minister (and presumably on the Government's behalf) was that the Government is always right, departments always have to be protected, and no criticism or scrutiny of Government departments will be tolerated by any Parliamentary committee.

There are three bodies (four, I suppose, if one includes the Auditor-General) which, in my view, are meant to strengthen the hand of Parliament over the Government, the Executive: the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Works Committee, and the Ombudsman. However, in my view, none of those bodies is operating effectively to strengthen Parliamentary control over the Executive. I do not want to transgress by going too much into the role of the Ombudsman, but the debate we have had reminds me that, I think in his first report, the Ombudsman, who was the Clerk of this House, reported, as he is entitled to do, that there were two cases concerning the Engineering and Water Supply Department in which he felt that redress was required by private individuals, and the department had refused to give redress. I did what I thought was the proper procedure under the Act: I moved a motion in the House that some redress be given. The Minister of Works, who was the Minister responsible, absolutely denied it and said that the Ombudsman was wrong, and nothing was going to happen—and nothing did happen! Since then, there have been no reports like that at all. To that extent, the Ombudsman and the Act we set up to protect the rights of individuals through Parliament have been ineffective.

I was reminded of that matter when I read the comments in the Public Works Committee's report, with which I will now deal. It was rather ironical this afternoon that the Liberal Party started with a concerted assault on the Government about things that the Chairman of the committee had said in his general report—ironical, because it now transpires that these things have been said before. Indeed, paragraph 8 begins by stating:

The following matters were reported in the forty-ninth general report of the committee.

That is the one last year, and nothing was done about them. Even now, it is some weeks since the report was laid on the table of the House, and I do not believe that the Liberals would have woken up to this themselves at any time if it had not been for the industry of some press reporter, who looked at the report, saw what was in it, and the Liberal Party followed on behind it. I know that this is not the first time it has happened that we, in Parliament, have missed something like this, and have been alerted to it weeks afterwards only because someone else had found it and publicised it.

One of the problems (and I can say this, particularly to the Clerks at the table) is that reports are laid on the table. They are not printed. One or two copies are available on the day that the report is laid on, and then they are whisked away to the printer. I think that only one copy is kept in the building for anyone to see, and it is weeks before they come back and are placed on members' files. That makes it difficult indeed in those circumstances for members to keep up with the reports and to examine them. I frankly admit (and this was the taunt of the

Minister of Works this afternoon) that I read hardly any of the reports that are laid on: the volume is too great for one thing, and secondly, it is too difficult to get them when they are fresh news.

I do not know whether it would be possible for the Speaker or any of his staff to work out some better system for the laying on of papers and for their availability to members of Parliament much more quickly than they are now available to us. If they were available to us more quickly, and we could see what was being reported to Parliament by various officers, perhaps, but not necessarily, we would have more effective control over what was going on and the complaints that were reported to us, because an attempt could be made immediately to exercise that control when the matter was fresh. I have talked about this matter to the Clerks over the years, and nothing has been done. Never has there been any suggestion that anything could be done about it. To me, it is a significant practical flaw in the system of Parliamentary control.

**The Hon. G. R. Broomhill:** Nothing was done when you were in Government.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** No, and nothing has been done in the seven years the honourable member's Party has been in Government. During that time, in my view (and the honourable member may think I am wrong here), the control of the Executive over Parliament has been significantly increased: Parliament is now far less able to exert any influence on the Executive than it has been able to do in the past.

**The Hon. Peter Duncan:** Owing to the Opposition's incompetence.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** No fear—it is mainly because of the rigid Party discipline exercised by the Labor Party, which makes this Chamber, particularly, many a rubber stamp for the decisions given by the Government and by Caucus in private in the Party room. Once that decision has been made, it does not matter what happens here: the decision will stand. If the Opposition is articulate, something will be said about it, and that may influence in advance, as it were, the decision made by the Labor Party in its Party room, but that is about as far as one could say it will go.

Let us now have a look at what was said by the Public Works Committee's Chairman in his report. He says (as I have said):

These things were reported last year and nothing has been done about them.

**Mr. Gunn:** It was signed by Mr. Groth last year.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** Was it? I did not know. I have not looked at that report. I do not think I need read the paragraphs. Incidentally, it is not only the Government and public servants who are remiss, because the bulk handling of grain is referred to.

**Mr. Venning:** We'll soon fix that one.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** It is the same on both sides—an immediate defence by a director. I think the member for Rocky River is a director. I wonder whether he has read what it says here.

**Mr. Venning:** I have read it.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** The honourable member is going out. He does not like it, apparently. The report states:

"Section 14 of the Bulk Handling of Grain Act, 1955-1969, contains a requirement for the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited to submit plans and specifications to the committee for report and to the Minister for approval prior to the erection of a terminal bin. The committee is aware that the co-operative has constructed terminal storage bins in recent years, but no such references have been received by the committee."

The committee has drawn attention to the foregoing matters previously and is deeply concerned that no action has been taken to remedy the position.

All we have heard in reply to that complaint is the bombast of the Minister of Works this afternoon when he simply refuted it, attacked the committee and the Chairman, and said that they were both wrong and that nothing would be done. We then had the speech this afternoon in this debate by the Minister of Mines and Energy. It is typical of the outlook of a Government that has been in office for some time. It becomes so closely identified with its public servants (and this happened with Playford as well) that it feels that the public servants must be defended at all times, whatever is said in here. The Government tends to forget that it is made up of members of Parliament, and that Ministers of the Crown are responsible to this place. The Government identifies with the public servants who have its ear for so much of the time and on whose advice it must rely so much.

**Dr. Eastick:** Are you suggesting that the Government gets caught up in the bureaucracy.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** Without doubt. It happens to any Government that has governed for a long time. I am not suggesting that it is only Labor Governments that fall into this trap, by any means. That is the problem. Under its Act the Public Works Committee has considerable power. The problem relates not to the power theoretically or legally that the committee has but the members of the committee and their personalities—the way in which they can exert their influence as members of the committee.

Again, under the Labor Government, it is obviously much more difficult for committees to be independent than it is under non-Labor Governments, because of Party discipline and rigidity. In my view a problem of the Public Works Committee and the Public Accounts Committee, and why they have been unwilling to stand up for the rights of their committees and to exercise the powers they have under their Acts, is their fear of their own Party colleagues and, particularly, Ministers. That may be an unfair thing to say. Members opposite may say that that is not right, but that is how it looks to me, and that is why the Public Works Committee and the Public Accounts Committee are ineffective.

I am glad that the member for Mallee is in the Chamber because, for a long time, he championed the idea of setting up a Public Accounts Committee which, eventually, was set up. Frankly, that committee has been an enormous disappointment and has never, as far as I know, done anything worth while or issued a report that has caused a ripple.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** You've not read the reports.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** True.

**Mr. Goldsworthy:** There have been tidal waves.

**Mr. MILLHOUSE:** Maybe I am wrong but certainly, so far as I am concerned, none of those reports has ever led to any change of course by a Government or a Government department, or had any result of which I know in this place. If I am wrong the honourable member can put me right. I do not believe that the Public Accounts Committee has been effective. Although it, too, has powers under its Act, they have not been exercised effectively. It is ironical that the Minister took the line he did, because mainly members are told what they must do and how they must act. For a Parliamentary committee to be effective it must have independence from the Government of the day. That independence is not evidenced here.

Many people believe that Parliament has become irrelevant, futile and that it does not have any powers. They ask "Why are we here?" A new member on the

Government side made what I regarded to be a penetrating and quite accurate remark on the opening day of this Parliament when he was talking about the pomp and ceremony, attenuated though it was at the opening, and said that it is not a bad idea to have that because it masks the fact that we are really only a body with local government powers. He said that it gives the impression that the State Parliament still means something when, in fact, it does not. He was right in saying that.

There is futility about Parliament, and not only our State Parliament. A world-wide debate is ensuing whether democratic Parliaments now have much influence over the Executive Government. One way in which it has been suggested they could get back that influence would be to develop a committee system. Hell, if that is right, we have a long way to go here because our committee system is completely ineffective. Unless we do something about it, the futility of Parliament will increase rather than decrease. Because we could make our committee system more effective than it is now I intend to support the motion, futile though it is.

**Mr. VENNING:** I have read the report of the Public Works Committee dealing with bulk handling. It indicated to me that that committee is not familiar with the Act governing bulk handling. The Public Works Committee deals with the public finances of the State and does not concern itself with anything of a private nature. Section 14 of the Bulk Handling of Grain Act provides for the South Australian Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited to submit plans and specifications to the committee for report and to the Minister for approval before the erection of a terminal bin. I believe that that applies to a terminal only where a terminal is being established for the first time. Any additional storage at that terminal does not come within the ambit of the Act. Public finance is not involved; it is a growers' contribution through tolls paid for storage.

Port Giles would have been the last terminal to be established in South Australia, and I am sure that the Public Works Committee took evidence in relation to that. As soon as equipment leaves the water's edge it is under the control of the Marine and Harbors Department and not the bulk handling authority. From then on it is a Government commitment. I will ask the following question of the Minister—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member will have the opportunity to ask that question on Tuesday. Now he is either supporting or opposing the motion.

**Mr. VENNING:** I support the motion. Because I am a Director of the bulk handling company, I chose to answer comments made by the member for Mitcham. We heard this week about problems at Wallaroo. I want to know whether the Public Works Committee will be asked to report on replacement of equipment there, because that will relate to the replacement of something that is already established. I await with interest that comment from the Minister.

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** I will not repeat what I have already said today. The Minister of Mines and Energy has suggested that members on this side are playing politics with this matter. That is certainly not the case. In this debate earlier I referred to three of the ways in which we in Parliament can keep a tab on what the Government is doing, and I referred particularly to the Auditor-General's remarks in 1970 and again in 1977, to the activities of the Minister in relation to the Public Works Standing Committee, and to the activities of the Government in relation to the Public Accounts Committee. Our complaint is that the Government is deliberately ignoring the structures of the committees of this Parliament and it is seeking to emasculate them. I referred to the activities of

the Government in relation to the inquisition of the Secretary of the Public Accounts Committee; I believe that is in contempt of Parliament. The relevant Act defines the power that Parliament has given to the Public Accounts Committee, power also having been given to the Public Works Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Will the honourable member show where this particular issue ties in with the motion to reduce the public buildings vote by \$100?

**Mr. GOLDSWORTHY:** Yes. These committees are charged with the responsibility of examining statements made by the Auditor-General in his report. Adverse comment has been made about the Minister's department, and the point I am making is that the Minister has set out deliberately to restrict the activities of the committee. The sovereignty of this Parliament is being completely ignored by this Government, and a deliberate attempt has been made to downgrade Parliament.

In March, 1975, the then Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee received a letter from the Deputy Premier saying that the committee was in the view of Cabinet exceeding its authority. Also included in that letter was the statement that not only did the Cabinet believe the committee was exceeding its authority but also that in fact information would be made available only if Ministers deemed it was appropriate to make information available to that committee and the Parliament. To his eternal credit, the former Chairman (now Chief Secretary) sent a lengthy reply to the Deputy Premier, pointing out the construction of Public Accounts Committees around Australia. Then there was an investigation into one of the departments of the Deputy Premier and an invitation was sent to him or the head of his department to attend a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to discuss the matter, and they refused. A letter that came back to the Chairman stated:

I advise that neither I nor the Director and Engineer in Chief (Mr. K. W. Lewis) will be available to attend the meeting of the committee.

Section 14 of the Public Accounts Committee Act provides:

The committee shall have the same powers to summon and compel the attendance of witnesses and compel the production of documents as a Royal Commission has under the Royal Commissions Act, 1917, and sections 10, 11, 12 and 15 of that Act, shall, with such adaptations as are necessary, apply and have effect in relation to the committee and its proceedings and witnesses or intended witnesses before the committee.

The Public Accounts Committee has the authority of a Royal Commission. I referred in passing to the inquisition of the Secretary. I asked a question in Parliament in relation to a matter that had been investigated by the Public Accounts Committee and this led to nothing short of an inquisition by the Public Service Board, established over the head of Parliament, into the Secretary of that committee. The Secretary of that committee is an officer of the Parliament. Section 12 of the Public Accounts Committee Act provides:

The Governor may, on the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Assembly, after consultation with the committee, appoint a Secretary to the committee and such other officers of the committee as are required for the performance of its functions and the Secretary and officers shall, if they are not already officers of the House of Assembly, on appointment become such officers.

It ill behoves the Deputy Premier, on his own initiative, to instigate a witch hunt into the affairs of the Public Accounts Committee and particularly those of the Secretary. I believe that is in complete contempt of

Parliament. The member for Mitcham made that point clearly. These are committees of the Parliament and, if the Parliament is to have any sway at all in the control of the affairs of this State, the committees of this place deserve its respect and the responsibility of the Ministry.

I believe it was a complete contempt of the Parliament to call in the Public Service Board to investigate one of the committees of this place. I hope that completely disgraceful situation will never be repeated. I have moved this motion because I believe the watchdogs of the people (the Auditor-General and the committees of this place) should be able to do their jobs. The Government should take in the right spirit the criticisms which are levelled at its departments and should seek to remedy the fault where it lies. We will get value for the taxpayers' dollar only if the Government (particularly the Deputy Premier) does not react as it has done but acts to correct the faults which exist and which have existed for some time in Government departments.

The Committee divided on the motion:

**Ayes (17)**—Mrs. Adamson, Messrs. Arnold, Becker, Dean Brown, Chapman, Eastick, Evans, Goldsworthy (teller), Gunn, Mathwin, Millhouse, Nankivell, Rodda, Russack, Venning, Wilson, and Wotton.

**Noes (25)**—Messrs. Abbott, Bannon, Broomhill, and Max Brown, Mrs. Byrne, Messrs. Corcoran (teller), Drury, Duncan, Groom, Groth, Harrison, Hemmings, Hoppood, Hudson, Klunder, Langley, McRae, Olson, Payne, Simmons, Slater, Virgo, Wells, Whitten, and Wright.

**Pair—Aye**—Mr. Tonkin. **No**—Mr. Dunstan.

Majority of 8 for the Noes.

Motion thus negatived.

Line passed.

Environment, \$1 250 000; Other Capital Advances and Provisions, \$17 490 000; Miscellaneous, \$9 600 000—passed.

First schedule passed.

Second schedule passed.

Clauses 1 to 11 and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: COMPANIES LEGISLATION

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN (Attorney-General):** I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

**The Hon. PETER DUNCAN:** On September 24, 1976, Commonwealth and State Ministers responsible for the regulation of companies and the securities industry met in Sydney to discuss a proposal with the Commonwealth Government for a co-operative scheme of legislation and administration in the field of company law and securities industry regulation.

All Ministers agreed that co-operation between the States and the Commonwealth was essential. The proposal that a national companies and securities commission be established was discussed and it was agreed that further detailed discussions would take place in relation to the proposals. Since that time a number of Ministerial meetings have taken place and the discussions for a co-operative scheme have reached the point where consideration is now being given to the details of a formal agreement.

In 1962, an attempt was made to achieve some uniformity and the present Companies Act in South Australia was enacted. Major amendments were made to the Act in 1974. However, uniformity of administration

was only partially achieved as a result of the legislation. The 1962 legislation envisaged greater activity by the Registrar of Companies in the area of investigation of companies and defaulting officers who were in breach of the Act. The 1974 legislation provided wider powers of inspection and special investigations.

Throughout Australia, Governments have become more aware of the problems associated with "white collar" crime, and over recent years greater concentration has been placed on the investigation and prosecution of offenders in this area. Much more still needs to be done.

The years of the mining boom illustrated to the business community and to society at large the inadequacies of our laws in relation to the control of dealings in securities. Much activity of a questionable nature using the corporate veil has occurred over recent years. The Government has a major responsibility in this area to ensure the protection of investors, shareholders, creditors and other members of the public who deal with companies.

It has become recognised that attempts by individual State Governments to deal with the problem in isolation are to a great extent inefficient and ineffective and are likely to be based on an application of the lowest common denominator principle. To achieve a more satisfactory situation, the previous Commonwealth Labor Government proposed a National Companies Act to ensure uniformity in the area. Although South Australia was at that time prepared to be co-operative by giving the necessary powers to the Commonwealth, this proposal did not come to fruition because of the opposition of Liberal State Governments and because of the defeat of the Whitlam Government.

In 1975, New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland entered into a formal agreement and legislation was enacted in those States forming the Interstate Corporate Affairs Commission. Western Australia, a short time later, entered that agreement. Legislation in those States is largely uniform and certain amendments made in 1975 have created the situation where there are marked differences in the legislation of those States compared with our legislation. At that time, it was this Government's view, as it is still its view, that the most effective method of regulating the companies and securities industry is by uniformity to be achieved through a transfer of State powers to the Commonwealth. This method is not attainable because of opposition from Conservative State Governments.

An alternative method of achieving uniformity is by agreement between the States and the Commonwealth for uniform legislation and administration. It has become evident that this method is the one most likely to succeed. Therefore the South Australian Government has agreed in principle to support the concept of a co-operative scheme. In support of that scheme, South Australia together with Tasmania and the Commonwealth have now been attending meetings of the I.C.A.C. as observers, and action has been taken to achieve a consistent approach in the administration of the Companies Act.

In 1975, the States of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia passed uniform legislation giving effect to the interstate corporate affairs agreement. South Australia has not amended its legislation since 1974, because at the time it was considered that the Commonwealth Bill would still be enacted. As it is now evident that in the near future uniformity can only be achieved by a co-operative scheme, the Government will be a participant in any such scheme. In the interim, it is necessary that South Australia move towards uniformity with other States.

In order to bring South Australia into line with the other

States the Government now proposes to undertake a major revision of the State's companies legislation, to introduce securities legislation, and to restructure the administration dealing with corporate matters.

The question of fees has been considered recently in New South Wales and Victoria and this consideration has led to significant increases and change of fee structure of those States as from October 1, 1977, and it is anticipated that the other I.C.A.C. States will adopt the new fee structure shortly. Fees under the South Australian Companies Act have not been revised since 1971 and, therefore, companies in this State for some years have enjoyed the advantages of very low fees. These fees are now at a completely unrealistic figure, taking into account increased costs of administration and the upgrading of the Companies Office over the years from 1971.

Accordingly, South Australia is now placed in the position where we are to some extent providing a haven for companies seeking to avoid payment of the fees under the I.C.A.C. legislation in other States. To avoid any possible development of this undesirable state of affairs, the Government has now revised the fee structure under our Companies Act, and the new fee structure will ensure that fees in South Australia are similar to those applying in the major I.C.A.C. States and soon to apply in the other States. The fee structure contained in the regulations, which I have just laid before the House, is based largely upon the fee increases in those other States and is a significant step towards uniformity. Fees under the Business Names Act have not been reviewed since 1967, and it is proposed to increase the fee to \$20 for a three-year period. This fee is realistic taking into account the fact that no increase has occurred for 10 years. Again, this fee is a step toward uniformity with other States.

The Government is aware of the problems associated with "white collar" crime. The cost in economic and social terms to the community of this type of crime is astronomical. It is essential, if there is to be public confidence in the business community, that sophisticated techniques of investigation exist so that those who are inclined to perpetrate fraud upon the community are brought to justice. The attitude of society towards white collar crime has changed over the last few years. There is no doubt in economic terms that this is the major area of crime in our society.

It is responsible to some extent for inflation, unemployment, the collapse of small businesses, and lack of confidence in investment. The Australian laws in this area, and their enforcement in the past, have been particularly weak. Small investors have been tragically ruined by the irresponsible and criminal actions of some people concerned in the management of companies, but attitudes throughout Australia are changing, and it is the responsibility of the Government to reflect these changing attitudes.

In addition, as society has become more sophisticated, so have the operations of companies, and they are being used today in a manner which is far removed from their use in years gone by. An example is the operation of businesses through trusts. In the past if one was a corporate criminal and had stolen \$1 000 000, the chances of bringing that person to justice were not nearly as high as that of bringing a shoplifter before the courts.

The incidence of company liquidations has increased dramatically in recent times. It is not always the case that hard economic times cause this problem. Take, for example, the director who becomes aware that his company is insolvent yet continues to take delivery of goods on credit knowing that the company will be unable to pay for them. The creditors are victims of a crime, and

their losses are due to crime. The cost of any investigation into this type of offence is significant, and to obtain the necessary evidence takes time and requires expert accounting analysis of the financial position of the company. This is only an isolated example of the breach of the Companies Act that should be investigated if adequate protection is to be effected in this area.

In the case of indictable offences, if effective enforcement of the law is to occur, sophisticated techniques of investigation must exist. The corporate criminal is in a class of his own. He is usually intelligent and can afford the best professional advice available. He can disguise his activity by the use of a myriad of companies and, even with the greatest expertise available, it is difficult to prove his unlawful activities.

The Government has taken action to ensure that enforcement procedures exist in South Australia to combat this type of crime. Almost 18 months ago, the Government Investigation Section was established in the Crown Law Office consisting of lawyers, accountants, and police officers, and a major part of the section's function was to investigate corporate crime. The section has achieved considerable success in the area.

The time has now come for assessment of the total area of administration of the Companies Act. In the I.C.A.C. States, corporate affairs offices exist which combine registration, investigation, enforcement, and legal personnel in one commission. As I have mentioned, the companies and securities industry has become so specialised that it is necessary to combine these functions if the Government is to be effective in the field.

It is the Government's policy, as announced at the recent election, to create a Corporate Affairs Commission which will combine the functions of the Companies Office and corporate functions of the Government Investigation Section, so that more effective control of company activity can be achieved. This will ensure a better service to the commercial community and greater protection for the public. It is my belief that, if greater scrutiny of company accounts and documents occurs, it may avoid to some degree the major frauds which come to light once people have lost their money.

It is evident that the people involved in illegal practices can in some cases be detected at an earlier stage if a proper scrutiny of companies occurs prior to liquidation. To achieve this end, a Corporate Affairs Commission will eventually be created. I am sure that this will be a step welcomed by the public and the business community who suffer at the hands of directors and others who breach the law.

It is anticipated that the current legislation will be updated, and the new Act will provide for the establishment of a Corporate Affairs Commission. The proposed commission, which will be structured along the lines of the New South Wales Corporate Affairs

Commission, will fit into the national scheme which it is hoped will be introduced in the not too distant future.

As the first step towards the creation of such a commission, Cabinet has approved the creation of a Department for Corporate Affairs, which will administer Acts presently administered by the Registrar of Companies. The new department will employ additional investigatory staff, and the whole area of registration and supervision will be upgraded. The department will consist of specialists both in the accounting and legal area who will ensure a better service to the public. This will be only an interim step pending the introduction and passage through the Parliament of legislation setting up a Corporate Affairs Commission and providing for the creation of a Corporate Affairs Commissioner.

Such legislation will be modelled on the companies legislation now in force in the I.C.A.C. States and will provide South Australia with a legislative frame work from which it can move into the uniform scheme. Since the last major legislative revision of the Companies Act has taken place, a great number of necessary and desirable amendments have come to the Government's notice and these will be incorporated into the changes now proposed.

I hope that this legislation will be introduced at an early date. When this new legislation has been introduced, South Australia will then be in a position to move into the uniform scheme once final agreement has been reached as to the terms of the uniform legislation. Regrettably, I am not enthusiastic about the chances of early agreement as to the details of the uniform legislative scheme and, accordingly, it is necessary to take the interim step of amending South Australia's existing legislation so that our administration can gradually evolve towards the ideal of uniformity.

Legislation controlling the securities industry will also be introduced as part of the national scheme, and the department will be equipped to administer such legislation. The proposed increase in fees will compensate for the additional cost of upgrading the new department. The action to be taken by the Government is in accord with the policy of this Government to ensure that the public of South Australia is adequately protected and that the service to the community is at least equal to the service provided anywhere in any other part of Australia.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

At 5.40 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday, November 1, at 2 p.m.