

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday 28 February 1980

The SPEAKER (Hon. B. C. Eastick) took the Chair at 2 p.m. and read prayers.

PETITION: PORNOGRAPHY

A petition signed by 448 residents of South Australia praying that the House would legislate to tighten restrictions on pornography and establish clear classification standards under the Classification of Publications Act was presented by Mr. Russack.

Petition received.

PETITION: SPRINGBANK ROAD

A petition signed by 457 residents of Mitcham praying that the House would urge the Highways Department and Road Traffic Board to reposition the pedestrian refuge and "No parking" signs on Springbank Road was presented by Mr. Millhouse.

Petition received.

PETITION: SUNDAY TRADING

A petition signed by 44 residents of South Australia praying that the House would oppose any legislation to permit hotels opening their bars on Sundays was presented by Mr. Russack.

Petition received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: EDUCATION EXPENDITURE

The Hon. H. ALLISON (Minister of Education): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: During Question Time yesterday I was asked by the member for Hartley to inquire of Mr. Tom Sheridan, Assistant Under Treasurer, whether he could recall having been instructed over the telephone by the former Premier to increase the spending on education by an amount of \$1 900 000 just prior to the last election. I have sought Mr. Sheridan's advice and the situation is as follows:

The original budgetary provision for the Education Department totalled \$322 500 000. The Education Department itself had requested a commitment of \$324 515 000. Mr. Sheridan recalls that he was instructed to increase the original budgetary provision by \$1 900 000. During the Budget debate, members will recall that the member for Baudin claimed that an additional \$2 000 000 had been added to the Budget for education. This \$1 900 000 comprised \$500 000 to cover the salaries of those teachers who were employed at 30 June 1979 but who were not included in pay-roll totals. This was the basis for calculating the new financial year provision. It also included \$1 400 000 to cover a number of relatively small adjustments which were agreed upon by the previous Government.

The significant fact, however, is that during the Budget debate and again yesterday in the House, I pointed out that the present Government's allocation for education was higher than that allocated by the previous

Government. This is quite correct. The figure finally approved by the former Government prior to the election was \$324 400 000. That approved by the present Government was \$324 750 000, an increase of \$350 000 over the previous base allocation.

It would appear that, while the memory of the member for Hartley is quite good, both he and the member for Baudin had forgotten the base figure to which that \$1 900 000 was added.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT: WHEAT INDUSTRY

The Hon. W. E. CHAPMAN (Minister of Agriculture): I seek leave to make a statement.

Leave granted.

The Hon. W. E. CHAPMAN: Last night, during the debate on the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill, the member for Salisbury raised a number of questions to which some answers were given in the concluding stages of that debate. One of his questions related to matters which are found to be clearly within the Commonwealth sphere. At the time, I gave him an undertaking that, if his specific queries could be answered today, that material would be made available to his colleagues in another place so that the material could be taken into account during the debate there.

He sought information on the effects of overseas forces on the cash flow requirements, particularly of the Federal Government. That material is currently being examined by Federal authorities, particularly the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. I think that he and his colleagues would appreciate that the information sought in this instance could not be obtained this morning, as was hoped, but as soon as it is available, it will be passed on.

I point out, in conclusion, that while it was a matter of interest to me, and indeed important in the long term in relation to this subject, it is rather irrelevant in relation to the passage of the Bill. Accordingly, I hope the passage of the Bill will not be disrupted as a result of the temporary delay in getting that specific information.

QUESTION TIME**EDUCATION SERVICES**

Mr. BANNON: Does the Premier stand by his statement that education services are being delivered too expensively, and that a 3 per cent cut is a fair target to aim at? If so, will these cuts be applied to the salaries line and, more specifically, to the primary teachers salary line?

During the last election, the Government promised to increase the number of staff appointments to primary schools. On 29 January 1980 the Premier was quoted in the *Advertiser* as saying that he was looking for a 3 per cent expenditure cut in the next financial year, and that there were a number of areas where services were being delivered too expensively. He specified education as one of those areas.

However, yesterday in the House the Minister of Education said that the Premier's statement was not a definite one applying to every department. Three times in his reply to that question to the member for Ascot Park he clearly suggested that education was not to be subjected to the cut.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Once again, the Leader of the Opposition seems to be making the most ridiculous assumptions. That is fairly well in line with the sort of statements that he has been making over the last few

weeks. I have never heard such a farrago of nonsense as the Leader has been responsible for during the last few weeks. To suggest that salaries should be cut by 3 per cent is utter nonsense, and he knows it.

The Hon. R. G. Payne: He was referring to the line.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: No, he was suggesting by implication that it would be a cut of 3 per cent in salaries, and that is absolute nonsense. From the point of view of delivering education services and honouring the promises—

Mr. BANNON: On a point or order, Mr. Speaker. The Premier clearly did not hear the question that I asked, and he is misrepresenting the position. I asked whether there would be a cut in the salaries line, which meant a reduction in the number of staff, not in the salaries themselves.

The SPEAKER: It is not a point or order. When a question is asked of the Premier or any other Ministers, they have the responsibility to answer it in the manner in which they see fit. If there is any question as to the understanding of the question by the Minister to whom it is directed, it is completely competent for another member, or subsequently for the member who first asked the question, to rephrase it or ask the question again.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: I would simply say that the 3 per cent cut which has been referred to is a goal towards which all departments have been asked to work. Indeed, as the Minister pointed out most capably in this House yesterday, all Government departments are addressing themselves to this task, and are doing so extremely well, with total co-operation.

I have already gone on record on a number of occasions in thanking the permanent heads and their staffs for the efforts made prior to the preparation of the next financial year's Budget. The Leader referred to primary staffing. Primary staffing has indeed been increased by 30—certainly not a large number, but, when one considers the reduction in enrolments for this year of between 4 500 and 5 000, as far as I understand it, that seems to me to put a pro rata level on it which is higher than existed before.

The Hon. R. G. Payne: We heard that yesterday.

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Yes, and I am surprised that the Leader did not listen to the answer given to him yesterday. I repeat: there is no way that the 3 per cent will apply to specific salaries, and there is no way that it will apply to the salaries line by itself. The 3 per cent saving is to be aimed at across the entire spectrum of any department's expenditure. As far as primary education is concerned, we intend to keep on honouring our promises to put more emphasis on primary education.

May I say that I was very much taken with the suggestion which was made recently by the teachers of a school—I think it was Trinity Gardens school—in a letter to me which stated that those teachers would be prepared to forgo their 17½ per cent holiday loading if this money could be used to help education and to keep more teachers in employment. I think that was a very responsible suggestion. Unfortunately, I doubt very much whether it would be accepted. Another factor comes into this, and I think we ought to get the record straight once and for all. This whole campaign which the Leader is now following through today is usually associated with a list of promises made by the Liberal Government before the election—a large list setting out promises made and action taken.

It goes to some length to show that the promises made have not been fulfilled in total. Indeed, it makes some play of this, and I have received a number of demands wanting to know why the Government has not yet honoured its election promises. If I may, I would liken this to the parent who takes a child along to school to enter year 1, who then appears at the school demanding to see the principal 5½

months after the child starts school (we have been in office 5½ months) and complaining because the child has not reached the attainment of the end of year 3. The whole point is that that cannot be expected to happen. We do not propose that all of our promises will be honoured in the first five months, or indeed in the first two years, but those promises will be well on the way at the end of this Parliamentary term, and will have been achieved to such good effect that I have no doubt at all that the people of South Australia will entrust the Liberal Government with a further term, and another again.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

TOURISM

Mr. EVANS: Will the Minister of Tourism say whether an inquiry into tourism has been conducted in this State in recent times; if so, is the report available, and is she going to make it public? I have received representations for many years from people saying that tourism in this State is not flowing as well as it should. Persons in the industry have expressed concern that perhaps there is not enough Government participation, pointing out that the amounts allowed for tourism in the Budgets of this State in the past 10 years have been the lowest per capita in Australia. If a report is available, I would not like to see it kept back in the department where only public servants, the Minister, and Cabinet are aware of it.

The Hon. R. G. Payne: Are you commenting?

Mr. EVANS: No, I said I would not like that. Will the Minister make the report available, if it has been completed?

The Hon. J. L. ADAMSON: Yes, the review, which I asked to be conducted in January, has been completed. It was released today, and I propose to make it available to anyone who wants a copy. That review is, basically, a statistical review, but the figures in it provide most interesting reading. They provide the most devastating indictment of the previous Government's neglect of tourism that anyone could wish to read.

The review was based on the following areas: value and economic benefits of tourism and its present level in South Australia's economy; comparisons between the level of expenditure on tourism in South Australia and in other States; and comparisons between visitor nights spent in this State (on an intrastate, interstate, and international basis). On every level the statistics show that, since 1973-74, South Australia has progressively lost its share of the national total. One of the most worrying things about the review is that the extent to which South Australia has fallen behind other States is so great that it will take a very long time, a great deal of effort, and an increased expenditure in order for us to catch up on that backlog. The House may be interested to know some of the figures. Expenditure on promotion over the past five years has increased in the various States by the following percentages: South Australia, 80.6 per cent; Tasmania, 408.6 per cent; New South Wales, 178 per cent; Western Australia, 144 per cent; Victoria, 128 per cent; and Queensland, 94 per cent. The same story is apparent in the intrastate visits where the figure for South Australia fell over the years 1973-74 to 1978-79 from 9 per cent of the national total to 7.3 per cent.

Mr. Keneally: But you want the Government to get—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable Minister to resume her seat. I have on previous occasions this week drawn to the attention of the House, and more particularly to the attention of the member for Stuart, that constant

and consistent interjections are out of order. I do not want to hear the honourable member for Stuart again this afternoon.

Mr. Keneally: I have a question.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member for Stuart believes that this is funny, or something of which fun can be made, I will have great pleasure in naming him. I ask him to refrain from idiotic comment.

The Hon. J. L. ADAMSON: The interstate visits to South Australia have fallen over the past five years from 30.2 per cent to 10.4 per cent of the national total. International visits have fallen from 9.1 per cent to 8.4 per cent of the national total. All of this has profound implications for the economic development of the State, because tourism is a growth industry and has the capacity to provide jobs and prosperity for South Australia. In fact, those who read the review (and I would be pleased to make available copies of the review to members opposite, because it will make constructive reading for them and should make them feel thoroughly ashamed of the way they have neglected an industry of such importance to South Australia) will see that the figures, and the statements backing up those figures, show the possibilities for employment, particularly in regional centres which need additional employment and which are not able to achieve that through decentralisation of other industries. This can be achieved through the promotion of tourism, particularly in areas where there is high unemployment, namely, amongst the unskilled and particularly among women.

Certainly, it will be my aim to make recommendations to Cabinet to help reverse this situation. It cannot be done quickly because the State has been allowed to fall so far behind, but it can and must be done if we are to regain some reasonable share of the national tourist dollar. The Director of Tourism and one of his senior officers are at present in Berlin at the International Travel and Trade Fair. South Australia has taken a stand at that fair as part of the Australian Tourist Commission stand. When the Director comes back, I will consult him about submissions that I will make to Cabinet. They will need to be in the areas of increasing our promotional capacity, increasing our information services and possibly increasing our staff levels so that we can at least compete on a reasonably equal basis with the other States that have put resources into tourism. In saying that, I am not suggesting that the Government should carry the full load; the private sector should be encouraged, by incentives, and I will put proposals to Cabinet in that regard.

As I said, this cannot be done overnight. I have made quite certain that the basis on which we can act is sound and that is why this review should be promulgated widely, as it will be. Any member who wishes to look at the report will find copies available from the Tourist Bureau. I will consult members of the tourist industry on a regular weekly basis as far into the future as I can organise it, and I will ask for their comments about the review and the actions that the Government should take as a result of it.

AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Hon. J. D. WRIGHT: Will the Minister of Education say whether the Government intends to apply its 3 per cent reduction in funding to private schools as well as public schools, and what contingency plans has the Government developed in consort with the Commonwealth or otherwise against the possibility of the High Court's declaring Government funding aid to private

schools unconstitutional?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: In response to the second part of the question, it is not the job of the State Government to pre-empt any decision made at the Federal level and no contingency plans are envisaged as being necessary at present.

Regarding the 3 per cent cut to private schools. I point out that the Premier's instructions were not only to Government departments but also to any other organisations associated with Government departments and in receipt of Government funding. A letter has been sent out to the Independent Schools Organisation requesting it to address its mind to the possibility of there being a 3 per cent cut.

BUILDING COSTS

Mr. OLSEN: Has the Premier's attention been drawn to a report in this morning's press relating to the increased costs of building supplies, and can he comment on the current position with regard to building costs generally?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: I saw that report in the press this morning, and it is absolutely true that building costs in both the housing and non-housing sectors of the industry are continuing to rise at an unacceptably high level. At the same time, there is convincing evidence that the rate of increase is beginning to moderate in South Australia, compared to the other States.

For a complete appreciation of the present position regarding building price increases, it is necessary to look at the long-term movement in prices which, in itself, is a telling indictment of the previous Government's total ineptitude in this field. If we go back to June 1970, when the former Government took office, we find that, in the housing sector, Adelaide's building costs were rising at an annual rate of only 2.9 per cent, which was equal to the rise in Brisbane and Perth, and considerably lower than the annual rate in Hobart.

Within two years, however, Adelaide's annual rate of increase in home building costs had risen to 8 per cent, which was considerably higher than the comparable rate in any other capital city. Under Labor, being worst amongst the States was the position that South Australia stayed in very solidly for the rest of the decade; in fact, throughout the entire period of the previous Government's administration from June 1970 to September 1979 the annual rate of price increase of home building in Adelaide rose by a massive 187 per cent, which was 20 per cent higher than in New South Wales, 25 per cent higher than in Victoria, 8 per cent higher than in Queensland, 17 per cent higher than in Western Australia, 13 per cent higher than in Tasmania, and 17 per cent higher than the national average.

With respect to the price rises in the non-housing sector, the position is even more lamentable. In June 1970, South Australia had the lowest rate of any State, by far. At that time, our annual increase in building costs was being kept down a full 10 per cent below the national average. Over the period of the previous Government's office, we moved from being 10 per cent behind the national average to being 8 per cent ahead of it. What is worse, in September last year, the gap was still widening and the situation was becoming worse. As at September last year, prices in the non-housing sector in Adelaide were increasing at an annual rate of 14.4 per cent, compared to the national average increase of 11.7 per cent.

In other words, South Australia's prices were rising at 23 per cent faster than national prices when the former Government lost office. Therefore, we can take some

heart from the latest figures issued only yesterday (they are Australian Bureau of Statistics figures), which show that the rate of annual increase in South Australia has moderated considerably, compared to the rest of the country. Instead of being 23 per cent of the national averages, as we were just four months before, we have narrowed the margin down to 14 per cent. In the house building sector, the margin has been reduced from 45 per cent to 21 per cent in only four months. Costs are still rising at a pace that I find unacceptable, but substantial improvement has been made under the new Government to bridge the high extra costs forced on South Australia by the previous Government. There has been a marked upturn in confidence in the building industry, as shown by a number of statements in public articles recently. In the words of a housing industry spokesman, "The situation has bottomed out and we are beginning to climb up again." That is one of the results for which we take credit: a total restoration of confidence in South Australia.

EDUCATION STAFF

The Hon. D. J. HOPGOOD: Can the Minister of Education say whether the Government intends to reduce the time worked by ancillary staff in schools by 2 000 hours a week, that is, the equivalent of 50 full-time positions? Will there be scope for schools to refuse such rationalisation on the grounds of need? Is the Minister aware of the Karmel Report recommendations which call for an additional allocation of ancillary staff hours to all South Australian schools?

I have been told that a letter has been prepared for circulation by the Education Department advising schools of a rationalisation of ancillary staff. In this House yesterday the Minister said that his Government was not in the retrenchment game, but it has been put to me that it would appear from the circular that the Education Department is prepared to use reductions in time, which would involve cutting school assistants' hours against their wishes, or perhaps ultimately sacking them.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: This matter has had the attention of quite a few meetings in the last few days. I understand, for example, that the Public Service Association of South Australia Incorporated had a meeting, I believe, last night. I was sent a copy of the matter put before it. I know the Institute of Teachers has already addressed itself to this problem by circularising all schools in the State, possibly all members of the institute, with information, not of its own manufacturing but from the Education Department.

The Education Department has circularised all relevant unions connected with education and, probably even more significantly, it has asked the Public Service Board for a report. How the different unions addressed themselves to the problem is not really the concern of the Minister, but obviously a number of questions are being asked throughout the community. No firm decision will be made by the Education Department until responses have been received from, I think, the four major unions involved as well as the Public Service Board. The latter has not yet considered the matter and at least one of those unions has not yet tendered a reply to the department.

The question of increasing the number of ancillary staff was recommended in the Karmel Report, which was written some time ago. Since then we have had considerable changes in the numbers of students attending our schools. As I said yesterday, there has been a reduction of 5 000 students for 1980, with the possibility of 3 000 fewer students a year for the ensuing 10 years. It will

be a long-term decline, if one ignores all the other variables which may change the picture, such as an increase in the fertility rate and a change in immigration and so on. If one ignores those, there will be a decline. We have asked all schools that have suffered a decline in student numbers to feel that they might be subjected to some alteration (and this is under a formula derived by the previous Government); they may be subjected to some alteration in the number of hours of ancillary staffing to which they were entitled. Ordinary teaching staff have already been transferred from a number of secondary schools in order to provide staff for the new schools that have been erected in newly developing areas.

The honourable member is correct in his assumption that the number of hours available to staffs in schools on a *pro rata* basis in accordance with the formula derived by the previous Government will be subject to some decline. That would be fairly obvious, but equally we are conscious of the fact that in some areas it may be extremely difficult for people to transfer from one school to another. There may be a range of problems, many of which are already known to the Education Department, and the majority of which will be considered by the department after the Public Service Board's comprehensive report has been made available. No decision will be made until that time.

VICTOR HARBOR RAILWAY

Mr. RUSSACK: In view of the considerable public concern expressed in the Victor Harbor district over the closure, after tomorrow, of freight rail services between Adelaide and Victor Harbor, will the Minister of Transport say whether there is anything he can do to see whether it is possible for this cessation of service to be reversed, and for some form of rail freight service to continue? I have held discussions with the member for Alexandra, whose area this is, and I share his sincere concern and that of his constituents in this matter.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. M. M. WILSON: I believe the Deputy Leader is going to take a trip to Victor Harbor in the next couple of days. I wish him a pleasant journey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for Goyder for his question, which is an important one. Members in the House will be aware, of course, that there was an announcement in the papers some weeks ago that A.N.R. was going to curtail passenger and freight services to Victor Harbor. Honourable members will also be aware that, because of negotiations between the Government and the Commonwealth, particularly with Mr. Hunt, the Federal Minister for Transport, the passenger services are to remain, although there will be a reduction in the non-peak off-tourist season. Additional trains will be made available during the school holidays. However, that applies to the passenger services and not to the question that the member for Goyder addressed to me concerning the freight services, which are timed to cease tomorrow.

Following representations from many people in the Victor Harbor area, and from my Ministerial colleague, the member for Alexandra, I am happy to announce that, following the negotiations I had with the Federal Minister for Transport, the Australian National Railways has agreed to defer the cessation of the freight service until 31 March, to enable the Government to again negotiate with A.N.R. to see whether we can reach some compromise service which would help the people of Victor Harbor.

I am especially concerned about the jobs of, I think, the four employees at the Victor Harbor station. I believe that a stationmaster, a clerk station assistant, a junior station

assistant, and a goods shed assistant are involved. No doubt, the honourable member for Albert Park could confirm that. I am concerned that A.N.R. should look after these people and, if there are closures or a cessation, that they are not disadvantaged. I am also concerned that a service should be available to the people of that area to enable, at the very minimum, parcel traffic to be brought to Adelaide by train, if not the ability to add a freight car to the normal passenger train, so that normal freight services can be continued. I believe that there is room to negotiate with the Commonwealth and A.N.R. on this matter, and I look forward to doing so in the next few weeks.

TEACHER HOUSING

Mr. KENEALLY: Will the Minister of Education say, in response to the increasing dissatisfaction being expressed by teachers, when the Government intends to honour its promise to reduce rents on Teacher Housing Authority homes? What action has the Government taken to avoid rent inequalities and the maintenance problems in remote areas referred to by the Teachers Salaries Board?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: One might equally say, what did the previous Government do towards this problem? I am just pointing out there are two sides to the argument. The honourable member may recall that recently Judge Olsson brought down an award for teachers in remote country areas, covering six different isolated areas. That award was not arrived at unilaterally by the Teachers Salaries Tribunal; it was, in fact, a consent award. The Minister and his officers considered this matter in depth, particularly with a view to helping teachers in remote areas to gain additional salary awards in order to compensate in some way for the inconvenience which they doubtless suffer. I have travelled extensively through the outback regions involved, and have seen the problems confronting them.

That is one area where we considered rents for those people in remote areas. However, teachers are housed in a wide variety of homes owned by the Teacher Housing Authority, which inherited these when it was formed. There is an across the board request from teaching staff in these houses for quite a substantial rent reduction. They feel that they are entitled to a rent reduction, because they are comparing their rentals with those paid by the Australian National Railways people, for example, who are on a very low subsidised rental. The salary differential, too, may be considered, but A.N.R. is no longer a State authority. They are also comparing their rentals with rentals for police homes and those occupied by people employed by other Government authorities.

These problems and a wide range of other factors are currently being considered by the Government. The report that I am anticipating from the Teacher Housing Authority is nearly completed but not yet to hand. I put a few questions to the Teacher Housing Authority, one of which was why, for example, the Teacher Housing Authority should be paying some \$30 000 or \$35 000 for a house from the South Australian Housing Trust when, in fact, it could equally well be negotiating privately for the purchase of the land and the construction of the homes for, say, \$20 000, as in one case I know about in Mount Gambier. There is quite a substantial difference between the cost price of the homes and the price paid by the T.H.A.

That is just one aspect, but the fact remains that teachers could in fact be paying substantially a higher rental for Teacher Housing Authority homes than they

would be paying if they were leasing homes from private sources. A very wide range of issues has to be considered. If necessary, the whole *modus operandi* of the Teacher Housing Authority will be revised.

I felt that I would rather make a decision based on extensive information than arrive at a very quick *ad hoc* decision that there should be a reduction in rentals right across the board. Some people are more advantaged in the rural metropolitan areas than are others in, for example, remote rural areas, where they still have not had rent cuts. I cannot promise that there will be an across the board equal cut in rentals, but I promise that we will continue to look at the matter. I expect to be able to report on the matter in the reasonably near future.

MURRAY WATER

Mr. GLAZBROOK: Can the Minister of Water Resources say what progress has been made to date in relation to the amendments proposed to the River Murray Waters Agreement which will give greater control to the River Murray Commission on the quality of water?

The Hon. P. B. ARNOLD: I believe that this question will be of concern to every member of this House, and it was of real concern to the former Government. On 22 October a meeting of Ministers was held in Melbourne to discuss the progress or otherwise of amendments to the River Murray Waters Agreement. On that occasion, agreement was not reached with the three States. Victoria indicated that it wished to have a Ministerial council to oversee the operations of the River Murray Commission. However, following that meeting, within a week there was an indication from the Victorian Government that it was prepared to proceed with the proposed amendments to the River Murray Waters Agreement, but at the same time it reserved the right to pursue its requirement for a Ministerial council.

This responsibility for preparing the draft amendments was left in the hands of the Federal Minister for National Development. Shortly after that time there was a change of Ministerial responsibilities in Canberra, and on 8 January I wrote to the incoming Minister for National Development, Senator Carrick, offering the services of the South Australian Parliamentary Counsel if the Parliamentary Counsel in Canberra was over-committed.

This was in line with the offer made by the member for Hartley in 1975, and again in 1978; I renewed that offer on 8 January. On 25 February (this week), I received a reply from Senator Carrick, as follows:

Your offer of assistance is gratefully acknowledged, but I am now in a position to inform you of progress in this matter. Work is well advanced in the Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's office on the first draft of the new agreement. I understand it will be ready next month for comment by policy and legal advisers of the three States.

So, hopefully, we will receive the draft from the Commonwealth. The Minister proceeds to ask that we treat the matter as one of urgency. I can indicate to the House that South Australia will treat it with the highest priority. I trust that it will be treated in the same way by the other two States involved, and that the draft agreement will soon be ready to present to the Parliaments concerned.

ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: Will the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs confirm or deny that shortly after the last election

he, together with other senior South Australian Ministers, had a meeting with the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Senator Chaney, and that at the meeting Senator Chaney advised that both he and the Commonwealth Government were in agreement with the general principles of the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Bill prepared by the former South Australian Labor Government? Is it a fact that at that meeting Senator Chaney said that he expected to be consulted about any proposals that would indicate a significant departure from the principles of the Bill prepared by the Labor Party?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: That is an interesting question in view of the fact that the meeting to which I assume the honourable member refers was less of a meeting than an informal luncheon at a city restaurant that was attended by, I think, only four people: Senator Chaney and Ministers K. T. Griffin, J. Adamson and H. Allison.

The Hon. R. G. Payne: Are you saying you haven't seen the Minister?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: It was less a structured meeting than a formal invitation to attend a luncheon to discuss a few matters of mutual interest. While I cannot remember precisely what was discussed (there was no specific item on the agenda), I think it would be patently obvious to anyone that, in light of the Federal Government's legislation, which has already been enacted in the Northern Territory and which has served to some extent as a model for both good and bad examples—there are problems associated with it as well as benefits—the Federal Minister would like to be consulted. There is no suggestion, I hope, that he will not be consulted before the draft Bill is introduced by the Government in July, a commitment given by the Premier to the Pitjantjatjara people.

The Federal Government has, by its exemplary legislation in the Northern Territory, told the people of Australia what it liked at that stage. Legal opinions from Federal and State authorities (and by "authorities" I mean judiciary members of high repute) indicate that both sets of legislation—that enacted by the Federal Government and the proposed legislation which was in the hands of the previous Government—do have their problems. The first one is the definition of Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku. One legal opinion is that, by definition, unless any person negotiating with the Anangu Pitjantjatjaraku, under the South Australian legislation, is able to isolate and identify every single member of the 1 500 Pitjantjatjara people, it is possible that an agreement of any sort would not—

The Hon. R. G. Payne: It is a pretty far out one, though, isn't it?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: That is just a start; that is the first one. The rest of the objections vary in substance, but there are some quite important ones. I point out that the former Government's own Crown Solicitor has tendered an opinion, which is at variance with the recommendations contained in that previously submitted legislation. We will consult a number of people before the legislation goes through. I would still like to know how the table was bugged when four Ministers were eavesdropped on when meeting in a small, quiet, city cafe.

NATIONAL PARKS

Mr. OSWALD: In view of the fact that members have been told more than once that a police officer is to be seconded to the National Parks and Wildlife Division to support law enforcement activities, can the Minister of Environment say when some positive action is to be taken on this matter, as the inspection section has been working

under extreme difficulty for a considerable time?

The Hon. D. C. WOTTON: I thank the honourable member for asking his question. I agree that there has been a lot of concern about the difficult circumstances under which the inspection section of the National Parks and Wildlife Division has been working for some time. The matter has previously been raised on numerous occasions in this House. I am pleased to tell the honourable member that we are now taking positive action. Following meetings between officers of the Police Department and the National Parks and Wildlife Division, I have now discussed this matter in some detail with the Commissioner of Police. It has been recommended to me that the best solution would be to retain a retired senior police officer on a consultant basis, while at the same time proceeding to fill the position of a permanent senior inspector in the division.

I can now report that arrangements are in hand for Mr. S. Tobin, a previous Assistant Commissioner of Police, to commence work in the division from next week. Mr. Tobin is already familiar with the work done in the division, as he has previously reported to the former Labor Government on a possible organisation structure for law enforcement activities. I expect that Mr. Tobin will work with the division substantially full-time during the next three to four months and will be involved in day-to-day activities in the inspection section. He will also assist with the recruitment of a suitable permanent officer who will head the inspection group.

After this time, Mr. Tobin will continue his association with the division on a part-time basis and will provide guidance and assistance, and an opportunity for close liaison between officers of the division and the Police Department. I appreciate the assistance given by the Commissioner of Police in this matter. As I mentioned earlier, the Commissioner and I had many discussions about it. I am pleased that he has offered continuing co-operation to the division. I am sure that the appointment of Mr. Tobin on this basis will do a great deal to help the division.

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS

Mr. McRAE: Will the Minister of Education say whether he or his department were aware in advance of the visit, earlier this week, of the Public Accounts Committee to the Banksia Park Primary School? If so, were the principal, staff and South Australian Institute of Teachers informed of the nature of the visit and the reason for the questions relating to hours being worked by teachers at the school?

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Yes, I was aware of the visits. I received a letter from the Chairman of the committee, who sought my personal commission. I contacted the President of the South Australian Institute of Teachers (Mr. Gregory) yesterday and apologised for my not having offered him the courtesy of letting him know that the committee wanted to visit only four schools in the metropolitan area with a view to looking at the way in which schools in South Australia were administered. I do not think there is anything sinister in a committee, represented by members on both sides of the House, doing precisely that.

The principals of the schools were notified. The schools involved were Camden Primary School, Norwood High School, and Banksia Park, and I think that Campbelltown is yet to be visited. Three out of the four schools have already been visited. There was nothing sinister in it. I understand that the President of the institute is reasonably

satisfied now that he knows the basis for the visits, and he is in close collaboration, too, with the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee regarding the final visit.

TEACHER SALARIES

Mr. BECKER: Can the Minister of Education say whether there have been any delays and problems in paying teachers and ancillary staff their salaries on time and, if there have been, can he say why? I understand that problems are still occurring within the Education Department's pay-roll section, particularly dealing with the new computer system. I have been informed that the South Australian Institute of Teachers has had to assist teachers and ancillary staff by lending them money, pending payment of their salaries.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: This is not an unusual situation, particularly at this time of the year. When teachers are appointed to schools across the State (many of them rather belatedly), the computers have to be programmed in order to pay salaries, and a large number of teachers are appointed after the initial pay period has been programmed. I believe that there is possibly some slight under-staffing in the pay-roll section at certain times of the year, but I do not know whether that applies throughout the entire year. I assure the honourable member that, if there is any delay currently in the receipt of pay by members of the Education Department staff, I know that those involved in the computer section, the pay-roll section, are extremely conscientious. People like Neil Baylis and Jane Falahey spent several hours on many nights over the past two or three weeks programming the computer with the express purpose of ensuring that as few people as possible were inconvenienced. I am not sure whether the honourable member said that the Institute of Teachers was helping out the staff members, but every school principal has access to funds from which he can borrow *pro tem* a sum which he can then lend to the teacher who has not received his or her pay to help him or her out until the regular pay cheque arrives.

AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Hon. J. D. CORCORAN: Will the Minister of Education reconsider the reply he gave to the Deputy Leader earlier today in connection with the case currently before the court regarding whether the disbursement of money to non-government schools is constitutional or otherwise? As I understand the situation, if the case currently before the court succeeds, the responsibility for the disbursement of this money to non-government schools will fall directly on the States; that is the alternative, and I believe that the Minister would accept that my assumption is correct. I direct my question to him simply because I believe that it is vital that a contingency plan ought to be known at this stage, and certainly some contact should be made with the Commonwealth Government so that the State will know whether the money currently provided by the Commonwealth will be forthcoming in the event of that challenge before the court being upheld.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: If I gave the impression when answering the Deputy Leader earlier that the Education Department and I were treating this matter rather lightly, the converse is true.

The Hon. J. D. Wright: Look at *Hansard* tomorrow.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: Well, this will correct it, won't it, Jack?

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable Minister, when referring to another honourable member in the Chamber, must use the name of the honourable member's district.

The Hon. H. ALLISON: The member for Adelaide will read the corrected version in *Hansard* tomorrow. My Government realises the extreme gravity of the situation should that Supreme Court appeal be upheld. To that extent the South Australian Government has joined itself, as I believe other State Governments have, with that action. That is the extent to which we consider it to be serious; we are joined to the action. Obviously, since we have gone to that extent, members of the department are looking into contingency plans. The option ahead of us is not pleasant and for that reason we are opposing the matter currently before the Supreme Court.

We will continue to examine the future possibilities, and I suppose the extreme situation would be that we would have to be looking to receiving substantial numbers of people from private schools back into the State school organisation. That is one possibility. That is something with which we can probably cope. However, many other possibilities are being considered currently. I would not like to pre-empt anything that might happen in the courts.

PUBLICITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Mr. ASHENDEN: Can the Premier state the present status of the Publicity and Design Services Division of his department? The Government has adopted the admirable policy of letting contracts out to—

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member not to comment.

Mr. ASHENDEN: —(I am sorry, Sir) competitive tender, and I ask whether this now applies to public relations and publicity services?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: The operation of the Publicity and Design Services Division of the Premier's Department has given the Government and me some concern since we have been in office. Detailed inquiries have twice been made by officers of Treasury, the Public Service Board and the Premier's Department into the activities of this branch. Discussions have been held between the Director-General of the Premier's Department and the Manager of the Publicity and Design Services Division.

As a result of that, Cabinet has now made a decision to change the role of the Publicity and Design Services Division to a servicing function which will require the services of up to six of the present staff complement of 23 of a total establishment of 28. No retrenchments will be made. The remaining 17 staff members will be transferred to operating departments in the interests of greater efficiency, and the Publicity Section, which the Publicity and Design Services Division will now become, will be located in accommodation in the Premier's Department floors.

The new corporate role of the Publicity Section will involve establishing guidelines in publicity and promotional matters; operating as a consultant to departments; in briefing private advertising companies; and in maintaining a resource register, including advertising agencies, promotional firms, printers, designers, photographers, and so on.

The reasons behind the Government's decision are quite simple and they are two. First, as a matter of policy this Government will not service its own requirements where the private sector can effectively and economically perform the work required. We do not countenance the previous Government's approach, which was to compete

for business, often unfairly, with its own citizens.

The second reason is an even more cogent one. It relates to the cost benefit of the work performed, and the work performed by the Publicity and Design Services Division at the request of Government departments was only 15 per cent of all Government publicity and design work; the remaining 85 per cent has been in recent times already let to the private sector or performed within departments because various Government departments chose not to use the services of the Publicity and Design Services Division.

The fact is that, with the existing establishment, the Government was forced to meet a fixed annual net cost of about \$570 000 regardless of the volume of work directed to the P.D.S. by other departments. A situation in which 23 people (up to 28 in the establishment) are employed at a net annual cost of \$570 000 to perform only 15 per cent of the total work available and put out is totally unacceptable, and the Government has decided to contract work to the private sector at a greater cost efficiency, so that from now on all such projects will be put out to competitive tendering.

I repeat that the Publicity and Design Services Division staff will not be retrenched; they will be transferred into other sections and there will be a role for what will become the Publicity Section of the Premier's Department in an advisory role to all other departments.

MINISTERS' REPLIES

Mr. MILLHOUSE: Will the Premier himself be, and will he ensure that his Ministers, especially the Chief Secretary, are, in future more responsive to those who either write to them or want to have a meeting with them? Since this Government came into office, I have noticed that the time between writing to Ministers and getting a full reply has lengthened considerably compared with the previous Government.

The Hon. W. E. Chapman: Some Ministers.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: No, I must say all Ministers. I have had a number of complaints from others about the inaccessibility of Ministers to the public. I give briefly two examples of this, in case it is thought I am talking at large. The first is an extract from a letter I have had from a Mr. David Lane of Naracoorte. He wrote to me in January, enclosing a copy of a letter he had sent to the Premier. I replied in February and asked whether he had had a reply. In his letter dated 22 February, he says:

As yet I have had no reply from David Tonkin—which I think is pathetic. I did send a copy to Allan Rodda and received a reply about two weeks later stating that he would follow the matter up.

The letter concerns preference to unionists. The letter continues:

I did ring him and he told me that he thought the "preference" to unionists clause had been abolished within the Public Service. I asked him then if it had, then why are advertisements requiring that preference will be given to unionists when applying for advertised positions with councils. He did not reply.

The other example is a matter I mentioned in the Address in Reply debate last Tuesday evening, and I think both the Premier and the Chief Secretary were too busy to listen to what I had to say.

The SPEAKER: Order! Comments of that nature are completely unnecessary.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: I beg your pardon, Sir. I complained then on behalf of members of the Fire Brigade about the point-blank refusal of the Chief Secretary, who

is their Minister, after all, to see them to discuss the report which has been put in. I also complained about the refusal, in a pompously worded letter of the Premier, when they appealed to him from the Chief Secretary to see them. I am making an inspection of the Fire Brigade headquarters tomorrow and I would like to be able to tell—

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member sought leave to make a brief explanation. I have already drawn his attention to the fact that he has been commenting. I would ask him to contain the explanation to within normal limits.

Mr. MILLHOUSE: That is the other example. I hope that by giving it I will prompt either one or other gentleman to be prepared to see the Fire Brigade officers about this matter. I put the question to the Premier: will he and his officers be more responsive in future?

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: The member for Mitcham knows very well, or perhaps he has forgotten, that circumstances occur in which it is not possible to see people at the time that they request an appointment, and other arrangements have to be made.

Mr. Millhouse: You just point blank refused the Fire Brigade people.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: Yesterday, someone asked to see the Premier when I was in detailed conference on important matters with departmental heads. It was impossible to see the person who so requested. I understand that he, outside this House, made a great deal of fuss and bother about the refusal of the Premier to see him. That, I have no doubt, he will spread far and wide. The honourable member for Mitcham would do well not to listen to such examples.

I also refer to something that was drawn to my attention concerning a letter which the member for Mitcham alleges he has not received from me in answer to a question of his about Moore's. I took the trouble to investigate that matter. I found that the said letter was delivered in the member's pigeon-hole in this House in thoroughly good time. He should have it now and he should have received it long before the debate. Whether or not he has received it is up to him, but I do know that it was brought to this House and delivered to his pigeon-hole. If he does not look in his pigeon-hole all that often, because he is not here as often as he might be, I have no control over that. I will investigate the matter he has raised in relation to the Fire Brigade and the Chief Secretary.

Mr. Millhouse: You ought to know about it, without having to investigate it.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. D. O. TONKIN: I thought the object of the question was that the member for Mitcham was asking me to investigate this allegation that the Chief Secretary refused to see the South Australian Fire Brigade, but perhaps he was not. Perhaps he does not know what he is asking. I will go into that matter and I will give a reply to the member for Mitcham in due course.

At 3.12 p.m., the bells having been rung:

The SPEAKER: Call on the business of the day.

ART GALLERY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. D. C. WOTTON (Minister of Environment): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The object of the Bill is to increase the membership of the Art Gallery Board from seven to nine. It is felt that the membership of the board should be increased so as to allow for a more diverse range of skills and expertise, particularly in the fields of business administration and finance. The majority of the interstate art gallery boards have nine or more members.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 provides for the commencement of the Act on a day to be proclaimed. Clause 3 provides that the board is to be constituted of nine members. Clause 4 increases the quorum of the board from three members to five, in accordance with the current general practice.

Mr. BANNON secured the adjournment of the debate.

SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second reading.

The Hon. E. R. GOLDSWORTHY (Deputy Premier): I move:

That this Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is designed, first, to remove a possible ambiguity in the wording of section 13a of the Supreme Court Act and provide unequivocally that a judge of the Supreme Court must retire on reaching the age of 70 years. Secondly, the Bill deals with the authority of a judge to complete the hearing of proceedings that are part-heard at the time of his resignation or retirement. At present, a judge who retires at the age of 70 years is empowered to complete the hearing and determination of proceedings that were part-heard at the time of his retirement. However, this principle does not extend to a judge who resigns before attaining that age. The last three judges to leave the court all resigned before reaching the age of retirement. It would be unfortunate if a litigant were forced to relitigate a matter simply because a former judge who had resigned lacked the authority to complete the hearing and determination of a matter which he had commenced to hear before his resignation. The present Bill is designed to overcome this problem.

Clause 1 is formal. Clause 2 amends section 13a of the principal Act. Subsection (1) is redrafted to remove obsolete material. New subsection (3) provides that a former judge may complete the hearing and determination of proceedings part-heard by him before his retirement or resignation.

Mr. BANNON secured the adjournment of the debate.

CANNED FRUITS MARKETING BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 27 February. Page 1306.)

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD (Salisbury): I rise to continue the remarks I was making last night on this Bill. I advise members who were not present in the Chamber then that the Opposition is, in fact, supporting the Bill. Therefore, the comments I make now should be taken in that context. To commence today's remarks, I have been asked by some members to clarify the situation regarding what are pool markets or equalisation markets in the industry.

There is some doubt as to which areas are pool markets. I think, from reading one of the Federal Parliament speeches, that there seems to be one market that enters into a category all of its own. That has not been referred to in the second reading debate here. Equalisation or pool

markets, as I understand them, subject to correction by the Minister of Agriculture, include the United Kingdom, Ireland, Scandinavia, Japan and, of course, the Australian market itself. The non-pool or non-equalisation markets are the subject, by and large, of free trade situations between the Australian producers. They can decide prices and conditions of sale in whatever manner they see fit.

There is, however, one particularly interesting market and I would like clarification from the Minister as to what exactly is intended at this stage. I quote from the second reading speech of the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Minister assisting the Minister for Primary Industry in the Federal Parliament, in which he said:

Canners will be free to produce in excess of pool quotas, but such excess production may be sold only to non-pool markets or to pool markets after all quota production has been sold.

He continued:

However, in regard to sales to Canada, it is envisaged that defined percentage shares will be set for each canner.

I would like some explanation or clarification as to where Canada fits into the scheme of things. Is it an equalisation market or a pool market? It appears not to be. If it is not a pool market, why have special arrangements been set? No doubt there is a very good reason for that, but what is the reason? That would provide the background information we need in considering this Bill.

One of the other things I found a little disturbing perhaps was that we had been advised that the purpose of this Bill was to promote the industry, and to promote domestic and export sales. I think that is a very worthwhile thing; if the Riverland producers in this State can achieve new export markets, it must mean more financial benefit to the State as a whole. However, I am concerned about a statement made by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in its paper *Situation and Outlook 1980*, in regard to canned fruits and the relative strength of the domestic market to the export market. No doubt it will concern all members of the House. The following comment is made:

In the long run, as Australian producers face increased competitive pressures on export markets, the industry is likely to continue to contract and to further orient production to domestic requirements.

Given that one of the powers of the corporation will be for the promotion of sales overseas, I certainly hope that it will take an optimistic attitude, that there are markets to win and growth opportunities in the export field, and not just simply maintain previous levels. I recall that I mentioned how much growth has taken place in the canned fruits market to Japan.

One of the reasons speculated by various authorities on why there are pressures on the export market is the other exporting countries around the world. It is interesting to note the support that Governments in other parts of the world give to their canned fruit industry. Perhaps we should be considering other areas of support, in addition to the very good support given by the previous State Government to the canning industry here. I will comment on that later this afternoon.

I quote two examples: the Californian fruit industry and the Italian canned fruit industry. In 1977, the Californian State Legislature passed legislation to provide for subsidised freight rates to apply for canned peaches produced by the Californian industry, thus giving it a significant cost advantage over canned fruits and canned peaches from this country. California is much closer to the Canadian market than we are, and it now has an added freight advantage over what our producers would have. The suggestion is that we could consider extra freight subsidies.

The other interesting example was the Italian market. The European Economic Community decided to offer the Italian pear industry production subsidies to help reduce the cost of the wholesale level of Italian canned pears, thereby making those products more cost competitive than were canned pears from other countries in the world. I do not think that is as good a form of assistance as was achieved in California. Nevertheless, it would obviously have a cost advantage. I hope that the corporation that will be set up will constantly monitor the types of Government assistance that have been offered in other parts of the world and report to the Federal and State Governments on the way in which that support has been given, the effect of that support, and whether or not similar support should be offered to the Australian industry to help it compete on more favourable terms.

A point with which I will deal briefly is the selection of pool markets. As I have mentioned, there are small-range markets that become equalisational pool markets. It is anticipated that the corporation will be able to change that selection of countries (increase it or reduce it) only with the unanimous consent of all the canneries involved. If, for example, a new market is established in an area, that cannot become an equalisation pool market without all the canneries agreeing.

I remind honourable members that if it did become an equalisation market there would be set percentages; each producer in Australia would be given a percentage of the market for its own sales up to a quota level, and only beyond the quota level, if the demand exceeded all the quotas, would there be a free trading arrangement. One thing that worried me a little about that is what would happen if one cannery, out of stubborn mindedness, decided to veto the proposition against the overwhelming wishes of all the other canneries involved. Perhaps that is an unrealistic situation, but, I think, maybe not. Given that the transience of the Victorian Government resulted in the removal of the licensing arrangements from the Bill, it may well be that, similarly, a Victorian producer could decide that he did not want a certain market to come into the equalisation arrangement or vice versa, and at some future time he could decide to release the market from the equalisation pool arrangement. I would be interested to hear comments from the Minister on that aspect.

Last night I turned my attention to other areas of the canned fruit and vegetable industry, including the canned tomato area. I mentioned that a deputation had gone to the Minister's department, and I will not go any further on that—

The Hon. W. E. Chapman: Except that this Bill deals specifically with—

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: I am aware of that. I just want to make a reference to the fact that there is a total absence of the word "tomato" from the Bill. Given the state of the market garden industry in this State, it could well be that the Department of Agriculture, the Minister and the Federal Ministers could decide to offer some support.

The Hon. W. E. Chapman: That's a great thought, but why don't you stick to the Bill?

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will have an opportunity to reply later in the debate.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am merely indicating that Government support for the canned fruit and canned vegetable industries is a very necessary thing, and that it is able to stabilise the agricultural industry and to offer benefits to the whole community. I am suggesting that an extension could lead from this to this other area. I believe that we would be able to compete with imported products in that sphere that entirely dominate the tomato canning industry. If we could replace

that, surely it would be a good thing, and I cannot see that the Minister would object to that. I also know, for example, that the citrus industry is facing problems similar to those which were faced in respect of deciduous fruits, which are the subject of the Bill, and I would be interested in any comments on what future changes may take place in that area. Whilst that is beyond the ambit of the Bill, I think some of these points need following up at some later time; certainly I propose to follow them up, and I would like the Minister to make reference to them at some stage.

The Opposition supports this Bill. We believe it is of advantage to the producers and the economy, and it certainly has advantages for the consumer. The implication may be that at certain times prices may be higher on the domestic level, and I am concerned about the price differential, but we believe that, if the corporation adequately provides for recording price differentials each year, the general public will be able to monitor them. Certainly the public will be assured of a consistency of supply of canned fruit of the deciduous variety, which of itself must be considered a benefit. There will not be a shortage which has existed with regard to some of these fruits over the years at various times, and in fact there will be a maintenance of steady price growth, with no leaps or falls as took place under the price cutting wars. Also, the regional area where the South Australia deciduous fruits industry is based must benefit, because this will provide market support to that area, which otherwise might well have gone under had this sort of protection not been offered. This highlights the need for Government support in certain aspects of the economy at any time. Anyone who suggests that the Government should not be involved in the economy, that it should not be involved in maintenance and support programmes at any level of the primary, secondary or tertiary sectors, is being naive and is indicating that he has no real concern for the economy as a whole or, indeed, for the people of this country in their respective regions or in total.

It is with pleasure that I support this Bill. I hope that it goes through the other place with the same degree of support and that it can be put into effect as soon as possible. I understand that the starting date is to be this year, and I hope to see the industry develop from that point.

Mr. SLATER (Gilles): I support the Bill. As stated by the Minister in his second reading speech, the Bill is complementary legislation introduced by the Commonwealth and other States for the purpose of setting up a marketing scheme for certain canned fruits produced in Australia. Basically, the legislation sets up the Australian Canned Fruits Corporation, with power to manage and control the orderly marketing of canned fruits for local and export consumption.

I am aware, of course, as are most members, that the industry has suffered some difficulties in past years because of the vagaries of excess production of fruit, together with the decline of export markets for Australian canned fruits. This has had some significant effect on the Riverland area of this State. Members may be aware of the significant assistance given by the South Australian Government to the canning industry in recent years in that area. As Chairman of the Industries Development Committee at that time, I recall the detailed and complex considerations given by that committee to Riverland Fruit Products Co-operative Limited and the favourable consideration that the committee gave, in the first instance by way of a Government guarantee, to enable the State Bank of South Australia to advance funds to allow Riverland Fruit Products to transfer the condiments

section of Jon Preserving Company Limited from Woodville Gardens to Berri. This was part of a rationalisation move within the canned fruit industry, and it allowed the Riverland to strengthen the future prospects of the Riverland co-operative.

In addition, on a later occasion the South Australian Development Corporation also provided a loan of \$1 000 000 to Riverland Fruit Products, and at the same time gave a Government guarantee of \$4 000 000 to assist the transfer operations of Henry Jones, the IXL Company, of more than 60 per cent of its manufacturing operations from Port Melbourne to Berri. Both of these proposals were supported by the Industries Development Committee, and it recommended their approval. Further, a grant was made under the Establishment Payments Scheme, and of course the criteria under that scheme was to provide grants in relation to additional employment, relocation costs, and regional significance.

The proposal that the Industries Development Committee had before it at that time was recommended, and a grant was made to the Riverland Co-operative Limited under that scheme. This gives the lie to some of the comments made at that time that the Government gave little support to private industry. In respect of the canning industry, the Government gave every possible assistance, not only in the interests of the Riverland cannery, but of the local community in the Riverland and the public generally.

Arising from the deliberations of the South Australian Development Corporation and the Industries Development Committee, we found that the most appropriate way to raise finance for the operation was to establish Riverland Fruit Products Investment Proprietary Limited, with a \$1 000 000 paid up capital subscribed by the South Australian Development Corporation, and borrowings of \$4 000 000 were made available to Riverland to finance expansion. That is the reference I made previously in my remarks. I believe that this legislation will assist in providing an orderly and controlled market for some of the Riverland canned fruit products. I believe it will further enhance the possibility of its viability.

The Hon. W. E. CHAPMAN (Minister of Agriculture): The Government appreciates the support extended by the Opposition to this Bill. It is encouraging to see honourable members taking the adjournment on matters of importance, such as this and the two other rural industry Bills that have been before the House this week.

The member for Salisbury raised matters which are clearly outside the ambit of this Bill. He raised, in particular, a matter involving the funding of this practice, as indeed he did when speaking to the Wheat Marketing Bill last evening. I point out to him that if it were not for the control of inflation in this country by the present Federal Government, and Commonwealth legislation that we are complementing in this measure, then our canning organisations in Australia would not be able to compete on world markets.

As a result of our inflation rate's being kept in recent years to its comparatively low levels (when compared to countries such as Canada, U.S.A and U.K., where inflation is running, in some cases, up to 16 per cent), we can be a competitor in the open market. With orderly marketing within our own nation we can recover sales for pears, peaches, and apricots, as indeed similar recovery of sales has been achieved in other like products, not the least of which is wine.

It ought to be appreciated by the member for Salisbury that those ingredients are paramount to the success required by our canning industry in its efforts to export

surplus fruits from this country. The Bill incorporates legislation embracing those three fruits. It does not set out to cover tomatoes, beans and other products referred to by the member for Salisbury. I note the point he made with respect to those other vegetables, but they are irrelevant to the subject now before the Chair.

Before this Bill was introduced, the Government's policy in relation to industry consultation was carried out. The single cannery in this State involved and directly affected (indeed, assisted by the legislation before the House) was consulted. So, too, were representatives of the three fruit industries involved. I think it is fair to say that, as a result of the careful and explicit consultation that has taken place between the Government and the industry (and, indeed, the public at large) with respect to the Bills that have been brought forward to date, the Government has been able to not only enjoy public support for what is being done but to enjoy the support of the Opposition in this place.

Efforts so far demonstrate that the Government has done what it said it was going to do before it entered Government. Indeed, in Opposition it said that, on gaining Government, it would not interfere with industry, would not dictate or direct legislation that affected or was likely to affect industry without industry's expressed desire, or without justification for so doing. In line with that policy, we have enjoyed speedy passage of the many Bills that have been introduced in the relatively short period we have been in office.

The member for Salisbury last night raised several questions that I believe are relevant and that it is fair for me to answer. The first was regarding production of exotic bottled and canned products, to which I have made some reference. For his benefit, and that of the House generally, quotas for each canning are set for prescribed products, the three fruits I mentioned, for which there is an equalisation pool: (a) for consumption in Australia; (b) for delivery to a place in the equalisation market outside Australia; and (c) for delivery to a ship or aircraft for export from Australia to the place in the equalisation market. For products or markets not set by the corporation (and that is the other wide area to which he was drawing the attention of the House), canners can request permission to produce products exempted by the corporation, or to supply export markets outside the prescribed markets. In those cases, the corporation does not acquire the production, and financing and sales are the responsibility of the canner and the marketer.

An example of this is a product called "peach pie"; the honourable member may have heard of it. It is produced by our Riverland Fruit Products Co-operative. The honourable member also raised last evening, and in his remarks this afternoon, a question related to licensing. Victoria opposed the licensing of canners in that State because it contended that licensing of canners without the imposition of production quotas was, in fact, worthless; that the two go hand-in-hand.

Growers in Victoria were violently opposed to production quotas, which made licensing (in the opinion of the Victorian Government) not feasible. South Australian growers and Riverland Fruit Products were in favour of the licensing of canners if all States had complementary legislation to that effect. However, with these provisions not being included in the Acts of the other States, South Australian growers could see that there was little value to South Australia in being the only State with licensing provisions.

I think the honourable member and others will appreciate that, if we are to jockey a Bill through this Parliament that is designed to complement Common-

wealth legislation, it would be ludicrous to suggest, after its agreement in principle, and after its intent and content were agreed to with the respective neighbouring States, that in this place we would fool around and seek to amend it, or to introduce other material that had not been agreed to by the respective States. The fact that the Opposition has agreed to support the Bill should, in itself, be support for the Bill's passage in its present form, perhaps with the exception of a technical or incidental amendment that does not affect the overall intent of the Bill. The canned fruit industry in South Australia does not see the inclusion of licensing as essential to the effective operation of the new legislative arrangements. The high capital cost of establishing a further large cannery would work against the entry of companies into the industry. This cannery is to be the only one of its kind in South Australia, and it is reasonable to conclude that it will not be under competition from other similar facilities.

Finally, the honourable member's reference to the system of marketing was worthy of following up. He raised this matter last night in several parts of his address. Accordingly, a note was taken this morning from *Hansard* and followed up, and it was found that the equalisation payments to approved export markets and Australian markets are designed to provide canners and their grower members with adequate returns for their operations. These markets have been selected because they are the markets that give the best returns. Should the profitability of any market fall, the Marketing Advisory Committee can recommend a change to the prescribed markets involved. It will be important that the grower representative on the corporation keep a close watch on those developments so that markets that return low profits are not retained or tolerated within the pool. Those canners who elect to sell in markets outside the equalisation pool will be answerable to their own grower members. If the returns from those markets are too low to warrant exploration, I imagine they will hear from it at that level.

It is not necessary for me to further justify the need for this measure; I do not know that it would be in the interests of the industry or of this House to further furnish the Parliament with historic, current, or what might be future trends relating to this industry at this stage of the debate. Members will have an opportunity to speak and ask questions during the Committee stage, and I will be happy to answer any questions. I support the speedy passage of the Bill and express appreciation to those members who have spoken today.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Clauses 1 to 10 passed.

Clause 11—"Unauthorised dealings with canned fruits."

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: I believe that the Minister did not quite understand what I said previously, and I would like to clarify the situation. The Opposition supports this Bill because it will help the industry and also because it is complementary to other State and Federal legislation. It was not our intention to introduce any amendments, because that would be quite illogical.

The Hon. W. E. Chapman: I received a message to that effect.

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: I wanted to clarify the situation and have it recorded in *Hansard*, so that the Opposition's position will be quite clear. The problem areas will have to be examined on a national level in the years ahead.

Clause passed.

Clause 12—"Insurance reimbursement rate."

Mr. LYNN ARNOLD: This clause refers to financing of the arrangements, and I wish to clarify the Minister's comments. I spoke in some detail, in regard to a previous

Bill relating to marketing, about Government financing and the likely trends of financing; however, at no stage in my remarks last night or today did I raise any question about the need or the level of Government finance that would be anticipated for canned fruits in the years ahead. The Minister answered a question that was not asked. Neither did I refer to the level of inflation applying in this industry in the years ahead. The Minister seemed to be implying that I had made those comments in relation to the Bill. The information from the bureau indicates that the bureau does not consider that the present Federal policy will be successful, but that is another point, which I have not made prior to this.

Clause passed.

Remaining clauses (13 to 25) and title passed.

Bill read a third time and passed.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 20 February. Page 1115.)

Mr. BANNON (Leader of the Opposition): This Bill comes before the House after two months of total confusion in the area of retail shopping development. It has involved the Government in indecisiveness and, I suggest, considerable incompetence. It has involved confusion on the part of traders, both those who wish to develop, expand and extend their business and those traders in smaller businesses who are at present struggling to survive and make a living.

It has also involved confusion to residents of areas threatened by wholesale retail development, through the clearing of large areas of space and the building of new shopping centres. Resident action groups have been extremely concerned and confused over the last two or three months. Local government bodies have also been confused about their precise powers and lack of power in the face of applications and complaints from residents and developers. This situation must be cleared up. We must take a step back, call a halt to proceedings, and look at this situation in clear, cold and sober assessment, with full consultation with everyone affected by this situation.

This measure is another example of indecision by the Government. In the first 5½ months of the Government's term, the public, rather than believing that the Government should be quietly allowed to get on with establishing itself and building experience in public administration, feels that it has been betrayed through the Government's promises and the way in which it has jumped into many issues without proper discussion, consultation or understanding.

I rise to speak in this debate because this is a matter of great importance to many people in the community, not all of them supporters of my Party. Many of those people are reconsidering their attitudes in view of the Government's handling of this issue over the past two months. My colleague, the member for Mitchell, who is my Party's representative in this House on development matters—and indeed carries with him the experience gained when he held the portfolio of planning and development—understands this area thoroughly and will be looking at the legislation in some detail. Indeed, he will be proposing important amendments to a measure that at present is totally unacceptable to the Opposition.

I would like to put this Bill in its context by tracing the history of how it has come before this House, and the reasons why it is totally inadequate in what it seeks to do. I

have already mentioned the Government's indecision. I believe the group that has been most affected by this indecision in recent weeks is the group of small businessmen. Retailers and people who are not employers of large numbers of people and who do not generate large amounts of income collectively represent the large bulk of private business activity in this State. This group of people can rightly feel that it has been betrayed by a Government that campaigned vigorously and indeed was strongly supported by them. They have been let down over this particular issue. Indeed, the Government when in Opposition appealed to this very group for support and made enormous promises to it. Now the Government has betrayed this group in the first few months of its administration. This group of people have good reason to be extremely worried about the situation that has developed.

Shop trading and retail development are two areas that highlight this situation most of all. There have been other examples of the Government's failure to make decisions and get on with the job. These other examples have affected private enterprise in this State. For example, prior to the election the then Opposition made a number of statements about the retention of the Bank of Adelaide, its rescue, and the way in which a Liberal Government would, to quote the words of the Premier, "support the retention of the Bank of Adelaide as the only trading bank with headquarters in South Australia."

The Hon. D. C. Wotton interjecting:

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is out of order. I hope the Leader will link up his remarks.

Mr. BANNON: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will link up my remarks because I am talking about the way in which this Government has affected and indeed betrayed the private sector which it tried to elicit support from, and did get support from, at the time of the last election. Take any area of private enterprise: while the Government made promises, they were not fulfilled. One of those promises was to save the Bank of Adelaide, which was being done by the then incumbent Labor Government. However, that promise was reneged on after only a month of office. There have been various other examples, and one that classically illustrates the way small traders have been betrayed by this Government is the decision to buy the Moore's building. The Government stepped in over the top of a private developer, who had extensive plans of retail advancement. Its decision stifled and indeed drove near to bankruptcy many small traders. This Bill covers that type of situation as well.

It can be clearly seen what is happening in the case of the Moore's decision at the moment. There has been a major loss of trade in that retail area, and a loss of confidence, because the Moore's retail outlet has been taken over by the Government for use as courtrooms. It is that type of intervention that is being strongly resented by many small traders in the community. Therefore, this area must be treated seriously indeed. This Government has attacked free enterprise. After two months of indecision, this Bill is a poor attempt to somehow rescue the situation; it does not go far enough.

The Government's handling of the shopping centre issue is consistent with the insensitive way it has behaved since taking office. In 1978, the then Labor Government amended the Planning and Development Act through section 36c, which allows some control of shopping centre development. That section provided that the planning authority, local government, or the State Planning Authority, could not deal with an application for shopping centre approval if the area concerned was greater than 2 000 square metres or if the proposed development was

within 100 metres of the boundary of an allotment that already contained a shop. In those circumstances an application had to be referred to the Minister. It was made between 16 March 1978 (which is about the time the Bill was passed) and 31 December 1979. An attempt was made to put some power of discretion into the hands of the Minister in relation to shopping centre development.

However, it has been said that that was not adequate. Indeed, the Opposition is prepared to say that perhaps that amendment did not go far enough. The Opposition is attempting to remedy that situation through this Bill and action it proposes to take in another place. Section 36c was due to expire on 31 December 1979. It was the one and the only protection available at that stage, and at least the Minister could authorise an application to proceed and let it be considered by the State Planning Authority. However, the Minister had to be satisfied that the proposal conformed to the purposes of the development for a particular area, that traffic matters were properly taken into account, that transport and traffic works were taken into account, and that the proposal was not likely to have a detrimental effect on the development of, or result in, diminution of use by the public of shops or community facilities. That provided a control at a centralised level over the development of shopping centres, although not as strongly as some would want.

When the present Government came into office, it was advised that a report was being prepared on shopping centre development which had been commissioned by the former Minister. That paper became available at the end of last year when the present Government was in office. It was clear that that paper should be discussed at large in the community and that consultation would have to take place among various groups as to whether it posed a solution to the problem or whether further investigation should be undertaken, or its terms of reference extended. Because the Government had just come to office and had not fully apprised itself of the situation one would have thought that it would see that, at least in section 36c, some sort of control should be retained, pending perhaps an investigation of either stiffer controls or a complete lifting of all controls.

The opportunity was there in the course of the Budget session last year to extend the operation of that section beyond 31 December, as clearly the major considerations that had to be taken into account in deciding future long-term policies in relation to shopping development could not be made at that time. Unfortunately, the Government did not do so, and I suppose that that was in line with its free market philosophy, which, incidentally, is a selective philosophy, as the Moore's example clearly indicates. When it does not suit the Government, it can throw that over and intervene in the private sector, override a retail development scheme, and acquire something for its own purposes. In line with its general philosophy, the Government was standing by. It opted out of even that control under section 36c.

Once that control lapsed, the applications came in apace. The onus was thrown right back on local government. The situation that had already been building up over the previous two or three years was left completely open and virtually unregulated. It was as a result of this that, during January 1980, various demands for a moratorium on shopping centre development came from groups such as the Local Government Association, various retail groups, and residents' organisations. It was interesting, though, that the Opposition was well aware of the problem prior to calls during January for a moratorium by the organisations to which I have referred. On 26 December the Hon. John Cornwall (Labor spokesman on

planning) called for an inquiry into the whole issue of the needs of retail trading in South Australia, an inquiry that went beyond the one that had already been set in train by the previous Government, the findings of which had just been published.

It was interesting to see that Mr. Hullick, the Secretary of the Local Government Association, was saying on 8 January that developers of shopping centres should have to make an impact study on the effects of new shops, and that such a study should be necessary before lodging planning applications. Business men (and this was in an article in the *News*) were urging a Government study for each new shopping centre application. The association made clear that it believed that this issue of shopping centres would become a serious community and political issue of the 1980's, as indeed it has. The next day, following that call, we saw the Deputy President of the Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce writing in a letter to the *Advertiser*:

The task of stopping the over-shopping plight cannot be left to the market forces. Big business greed will do to the retail businesses exactly what happened to service stations. The testimony of the big business greed is the number of service stations closed down, in a lot of cases at the cost of the small businessman's life savings.

Particularly with regard to service stations, I point out that there is a lot of difference between a controlled and orderly closing down of oversupply of a certain type of outlet (as was done under the previous Government) and a lifting of control or failure to institute control, which meant that people were driven out of business through bankruptcy or by other means. I have already said that, at the end of December, a broad inquiry was called for by the Hon. John Cornwall. The response from the Minister was, unfortunately, not to go very much into the merits of it but to attack Mr. Cornwall for raising the matter and suggesting that he was unaware of his Party's own policy, referring, if one reads the article, to the fact that we had set up a committee of inquiry. This ignored the fact that what Mr. Cornwall was calling for was an inquiry that would embrace the wider issues which had become apparent over the previous six months and which were being raised by residents' associations and other groups.

The basic fact is that, while the original inquiry paper that the Minister constantly refers to is adequate as far as it goes, clearly a number of other issues ought to be looked at and taken into account, such as the effect on existing employment of retail shopping centre development; environment impact in areas not just in the immediate surrounds of the retail shopping development; the effect on energy consumption; the social effects; and a number of other issues which were not fully considered or capable of being considered in the terms of reference of the earlier inquiry. Therefore, a broad inquiry was called for, the Minister rejected that, and s.36c lapsed.

On 18 January, the Hon. John Cornwall called for a moratorium while the inquiry was being held. This call for a moratorium was taken up in particular by Mr. Hullick of the Local Government Association and Mr. R. E. Paddick, Executive Director of the South Australian Mixed Business Association. In respect of the latter gentleman, one would assume that he would be the executive director of one of those groups or organisations that was overjoyed (so we were told) at the coming into office of the Tonkin Liberal Government. Unfortunately, their hopes in respect of that Government's ability to assist them and to improve their lot in the community have been severely dashed, not least by the way in which it has handled this issue. Mr. Hullick, in calling for a halt in shop development, is quoted in the *Advertiser* as saying:

Everyone in society would agree with the need for development controls. But they also want to see development take place.

I would make the point in passing that neither the Labor Party nor any other responsible group in our community can say that all shopping development everywhere at all times is out of order or socially or environmentally damaging. Indeed, the very fact that there is a demand for those types of centres, that people enjoy shopping in them, indicates that they do have a place in the community. The argument is not about whether they shall exist anywhere at any time but about how one decides where they should go, how soon they should go there, and what would be the surrounding effects. That is what we believe legislation should be aimed at covering. Mr. Hullick also said:

The role of government, both State and local, is to find a balance, and at the moment there is absolutely no balance between the two ideals. The powers of local government on shopping development should be strongly spelt out. One of our concerns is that a developer should be able to have some certainty about what he can do.

Indeed, he should. Mr. Hullick continued:

But he should not be able to impose his will on a community, which is virtually what is happening at the moment.

That is really the crux of the problem. There is just not sufficient control to prevent a whole community being disrupted by a particular development proposal being put into effect, and that is what legislation should be aimed at. To say that a Government should get out of the way of business and leave those areas open to free market forces is completely ignoring the situation in a modern, complex, mixed economy. As Mr. Hullick says, both State and local government has a role to play in order to protect people within the community, to protect our social environment in the community. The balance between that sort of protection from government and the interplay of free market forces is very much what the political debate is about at the moment.

Unfortunately, the ideological commitment of the present Government in office is simply to opt out where it can. It is beginning to realise that eventually it will have to intervene, but in the meantime much damage is being done to many small people in the community. Mr. Paddick, who is the Executive Director of the South Australian Mixed Business Association, also referred to a moratorium on shopping schemes, when he said:

We have told the Minister that we would like to see councils conduct referendums of their residents before land is rezoned for industrial or commercial uses. What is happening is that councils are acting willy-nilly, and rezoning and not giving residents a chance or opportunity to have any say in the matter at all.

This concern, in other words, as is the concern of many others, was that there should be a pause, a halt, a time to consider and reconsider the direction of such development. It is interesting to trace the further development of this controversy.

The day after those statements were issued by Mr. Hullick and Mr. Paddick, the *Advertiser*, in an editorial, supported the call for a moratorium, as follows:

If competition is good for us, then financial casualties are a lesser consideration, perhaps. But the trend is causing environmental casualties as well. A moratorium now would allow time for a searching appraisal.

That, indeed, is what we are suggesting. The Minister responded to those statements and comments by describing a moratorium as drastic. He is reported as follows:

The main objective was the Government's promise to deregulate industry in the community as much as possible, whilst still having regard for protecting the rights of everyone in the community.

That is the real nub of the problem. The main objective of deregulating as much as possible has overridden the protection that people in the community have a right to expect. Community planning is absolutely vital in the complexities of modern society, and any Government which sets about simply deregulating for the sake of it, trying to remove any kinds of controls, is leaving the community open to total disintegration.

The final chapter of this sorry story occurred in the course of the Norwood by-election. The Minister had been withstanding any calls for action, whether legislative or whatever, until it became an issue in the by-election. Norwood traders were up in arms about the situation. Their businesses were in jeopardy because of the number of shopping development proposals in their area. Naturally, they took the opportunity of a by-election, and the political argument surrounding it, to make their point very loudly heard. It turned out that they were wise to do so, because it got the Government running immediately to somehow try to put out the bushfire.

It was enormously embarrassing for the Government to find that in this instance, and with an issue such as the Moore's store acquisition, the very people who had been their greatest supporters in the previous election had turned against them in the course of a short few months. It was most embarrassing. Immediate action was taken to try to do something about it. They were lucky, indeed, that there was a by-election. I suspect that, if there had not been a political situation on which they could hang their demands, we would still be waiting for the Government to do something. It was only at the last minute, on the eve of the election, that the Minister announced the measures that he has now put before the House. He said:

I want to make it clear that it [the decision to curb development] was not as a result of the telegram from the Norwood Traders Association.

I do not think he could have fooled many people at the time. The President of the Norwood Traders Association replied in the *Advertiser* the following day as follows:

The State Government's interim legislation to control shopping centre development was just a cover-up job . . . I am asking for an immediate moratorium on retail trade developments until orderly planning has been done.

In other words, even those measures that had been hastily cobbled together and announced by the Minister at the last moment were not satisfactory and were recognised for what they were—a piece of political expediency at the last minute to try to get out of an embarrassing situation.

The Government's response was not only poor politics, an obvious and fairly transparent attempt to influence the election, but it was also an ineffective response, as even those who were involved in the situation could see. I make those points very strongly indeed, because in this House on 19 February the Minister, aided by an interjection from the Minister of Health, accused the Opposition of playing politics over this matter.

I remind the Minister that this whole debate surrounding retail shopping development, in terms of inquiries and of a suggested moratorium, was generated by this Opposition and its spokesmen many weeks preceding its becoming an election issue, and resulting in the response that the Minister took. If somebody was playing politics, I think it should lie fairly and squarely at the feet of the Minister, who, confronted with a telegram from the Norwood traders, turned up at their meeting on the election eve, carrying in attendance the Liberal candidate

for Norwood. Indeed, our candidate for Norwood was there, too, at the invitation of the traders, as was the Hon. John Cornwall, who was representing me, again at the invitation of the traders.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: So was our candidate there by invitation of the traders.

Mr. BANNON: That is right. The Minister was responding to that invitation, and he turned up at the meeting, as did the Minister of Agriculture. I do not know specifically what role he had to play or what the traders thought he could contribute. Whether there was going to be some agricultural development on the wastelands that were being cleared for these shopping centres, I do not know, but he was there anyway, as well.

It was interesting that they were there at the meeting. They were there, and yet we, by our presence on invitation, were accused of playing politics in this matter, which is clearly a ridiculous claim. This is an issue which we follow and in which we have been involved for a considerable time. I suggest that the meeting was something of a disaster for the Minister. Obviously, he was in great difficulty in satisfactorily responding to questions asked by the traders at that meeting. Among other things, he managed to indicate that he was not quite clear of the distinction between the State Planning Authority and the Planning Appeal Board, and he hastily left the meeting with the Liberal candidate for Norwood in tow, before it had finished, leaving the hapless Minister of Agriculture to sit it out and somehow try to placate the traders. Nonetheless, he introduced some unsatisfactory measures, which are now before this House.

It may well be (indeed, we would argue) that circumstances have altered since 1978, such that the provisions of section 36c (the attempt at that time to introduce at least some modified control) may not be adequate to protect the community. Unfortunately, the Government refuses to consider these changed conditions. It is wedded to development at all costs to society, and indeed that might mean in the short term that there are jobs involved, for instance, in construction or something of that nature. However, in the long term it can mean a far greater loss in terms of employment, and quality of life. This is why we are suggesting that a limited-time moratorium should be called.

We are suggesting, in other words, a double-edged strategy: that a moratorium be imposed, that it have specific time limits, a short duration of six months (indeed, in another place a Bill has been moved to that effect), and that the moratorium be applied to give us a breathing space to enable us to have a look at this matter in all its aspects and implications.

It will not affect those developments already approved; they can go ahead. However, for the next six months we will call a halt and, while we call a halt, let us have a full inquiry. It was clear that the Government was not going to do anything in this area. It is not terribly interested. It sits pat on the inadequate inquiry that has already been conducted on those somewhat limited terms of reference. So, again in another place action has had to be taken by the Opposition to initiate a Select Committee to investigate the issue thoroughly. As has been said, that probably is not the best way to handle a problem with such wide ramifications and such technical implications.

It would be far better if this House was presented with a full and comprehensive report at which it could look, but that seems to be the only way open to us in the light of the Government's inactivity. We suggest that this legislation is a cobbled together, hasty, half-hearted attempt somehow to stifle the major concern and criticism that is abroad in the community on this issue. It is not good enough. We

intend to try to amend it substantially, and we hope the Government will reconsider its position and introduce the moratorium that is so widely supported throughout the community.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE (Mitchell): I regret that I must, on behalf of the Opposition, oppose this Bill. This action would not have been necessary, as the Minister would know, if he had listened to the mounting swell of opinion on this matter that has been available to him.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: Did you listen to it?

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I will deal with that, and I am pleased that the Minister raised that matter. He might learn something. Indeed, he might even get a lesson in humility. I will try to demonstrate to him that in no way do I claim to be so knowledgeable in this matter that I cannot commiserate with him in the position in which he finds himself, because that is the tenor of the remarks that I intend to make.

There have been repeated calls by the Opposition, the Mixed Business Association and, as my Leader said, by the Local Government Association, large numbers of local retailers organisations, and great numbers of residents who are involved in residents' action committees, and so on. Every one of those bodies has been making calls and requests to the Minister. They have called on him to drop his stated aim to try to legislate in the manner that we are discussing here today.

As a test of the statements I have been making, I give an example of the kind of opinion expressed through the media and no doubt by direct approaches to the Minister in the form of letters and telegrams from organisations other than those already mentioned by my Leader. In an article in the *Community Courier* by Alf D'Sylva, a headline read, "Shop legislation—toothless bite". That was the response to the Minister's proposal that has now appeared before us as a Bill. That response came from the South Road Association spokesman, Murray Kuhlmann, who described the Government's interim legislation to control shops outside shopping zones in that manner. It is a toothless bite, in the opinion of someone who is vitally concerned in this matter of shop development in South Australia.

Mr. Kuhlmann went on to say, "The Minister's statement has no restraint whatsoever." He said that no developer would go ahead in an area which is not already zoned and which does not guarantee profitability. A good deal more is expressed in this article, and it sets out the viewpoint of a large body of people in the community who are directly concerned with what the Minister does in this area.

The Bill before us sets a time block on the development time scale that applies in relation to shop development, particularly of a major nature. To borrow a much-used phrase of the Premier, I am amazed that this kind of legislation would appear in this House from a Government calling itself a Liberal Government and professing to espouse principles of free enterprise. Nevertheless, as members well know, the Bill is here and it is our job to look at it. I cannot understand why the Minister is unable to realise, leaving the merits of the proposal aside, the effects that this Bill could have, if passed, on the plans of developers in relation to the planning time, the leadup, the organising of capital, the arranging of contracts, and so on. We will have 10 months delay, because there is no way that any proposal is going to get anywhere until 31 December.

That is just one point to which the Minister does not appear to have given sufficient consideration. Contrast that with our proposal in another place, which recognises

the difficulty that this sort of delay can impose on people who have a perfect right to engage in development activities, which the State would not necessarily be opposed to, as well as the attendant employment involved in such activities. Contrast the Minister's proposal with that which we came forward with, as the Opposition, in another place. I realise that I cannot refer in great detail to this matter as it is under consideration in another place. However, I point out that we are talking about a six-month period as against a longer period proposed by the Minister. That is just one aspect of it. I cannot avoid pointing out, as my Leader did, that, by a strange coincidence, the date proposed for the Bill to come into effect—should this legislation become law—is 15 February.

In relation to the date of the by-election in Norwood, I suppose one could say that it is just a coincidence, but I am afraid I do not put that connotation on it at all, and I am sure many other people do not think this, either. There is one other small aspect of that, and I simply cannot resist mentioning it, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I am sure that you will know why: I spent a long time as Minister being regaled by those who are now on the Government benches about the fact that never, never in this House would a Liberal Party be happy about retrospective legislation. This occurred time and time again. It did not matter whether the discussion was on swine compensation, road traffic matters, or whatever. The mere mention of the word "retrospectivity" led to paranoia amongst Liberal members. As is often stated in this place, things are not the same when they are different.

Mr. Becker: It depends on what the legislation is.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I have had confirmation of what I am saying. I said earlier that I commiserate with the Minister. However, in 1978 we had probably the best Minister of Planning this State has ever had, or is ever likely to have. He was a definite loss to the people of South Australia (and that would not be the case if the member for Henley Beach lost his seat). He was a loss to this Parliament, a view shared by many people outside this House. I can say that without any doubt whatsoever. That Minister, Mr. Hugh Hudson, had the perspicacity to foresee the very situation that was about to arise. At a time when nobody was paying much attention to this matter, he got legislation amended in the form that we now have been using for nearly two years in relation to section 36c of the Planning and Development Act.

As any responsible Minister would do, he organised a group to obtain information on the topic generally and make it available so that a future course could be taken in this matter. I am sure the present Minister would agree with me that what Mr. Hudson did was right and proper, and I have no doubt that the Minister supported it at the time. What has now happened is that the Minister has been overtaken by events, which have gone faster than anyone could have foreseen. The Minister by way of interjection said, "What did you do about it?" (referring to the fact that for a short period I was the Minister of planning). I can tell the Minister what I did (and if he is honest he will say what he is doing). I spent two months learning what the portfolio was all about. I can see the Minister smiling so I know he is inclined to agree with the points that I have made so far. He will be thinking of the trouble he had when he took over. It is all very well to stand in Opposition as he did and make comments without Government experience. He now has to wear the hat of Minister, and that is a vastly different game. The electors made the decision, and I cannot blame him for that, although I blame some of the electors; I think they will learn their lesson.

When I became aware of the situation, I spoke to the head of the department about the report, which I was anxiously awaiting. I will be quite frank about that. I had no special God-given gift in the matter, I did not have any—

Mr. Becker: Brains.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I would never have thought the member for Hanson would raise the question of brains, in view of his lack of them. The fact is that I served as a Minister for four years and did not get into too much trouble. If the honourable member is honest he will be the first to admit that. Apparently, I had the rudiments, anyway, even if I did not have the amount of brains that he says I should have had. I am trying to show the House that this is not an easy area. The difficulty about planning is that it is very easy (and this is what I tell the Minister I learnt when I was associated with the department) to picture in one's mind what ought to happen in relation to, say, shopping development in this State.

It is a vastly different thing to get that translated into something which will be, first, easy to understand, which will be, secondly, incapable of being misinterpreted, and, which will have, thirdly, a consistency of interpretation by whatever authority the job is given to. In a nutshell, I think I have not done too badly there, and I guess that, if John Mant, the former head of the department, ever reads this speech, he may think he taught the Minister something, because it was a topic we often discussed.

Mr. Randall: How were you going to solve it?

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I think a few years ago we had a member here who was called the Murray Magpie, and I do not know why someone else would try so hard for that title. I apologise for replying to the interjection, Sir, because I did not mean to.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I suggest that the honourable member should not pursue that line.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: The member for Henley Beach seems to think that if he can interject enough that will make up for the speeches he is not allowed to make, because he is only a back-bencher.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing here about making speeches. I ask the honourable member to refer to the matter under discussion.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I think the matter will be best served by the member's not speaking on this subject. What I have been trying to show the House (and I am sure the Minister up to now has gone along with me) is that we are faced with a difficult area and it would be fair now if we canvassed why he did what he has done—that is, bring the Bill into the House. I am perfectly willing to say that I did not envy his being in that position, because I was in it, as I have pointed out; only by the grace of God and the unwill of the electors, it did not catch up with me. It has caught up with the Minister.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: You can't blame God for that.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I am not blaming God: I offer thanks to Him. I want the Minister to understand that I know he was in an awkward spot, and many others on this side know that. What we are quarrelling with is the action taken to handle the awkward spot. We are not saying it is the Minister's fault that all of this happened. My Leader did not say that when he spoke. He said there was a period of time when things happened, and what he was complaining about, as he had every right to do, was what step had been proposed to provide a panacea to the problem that had arisen. I also agree with my Leader that this is not the way to do it.

We have the situation in which people are affected generally, whether they are developing inside or outside, or proposing development inside or outside, zoned

shopping centres. In support of that, I point out that the working paper that has been prepared, together with its appendices, covers all aspects of this whole question. One only needs to look at the titles on page 2. They talk about problems with the current system, not problems with one area or another. They refer to problems with the current system, and lack of clarity and certainty; the lack of suitable policies of development standards; policy proposals; control of development within and outside designated centres; and so on. These are the sorts of matter to which the Leader has referred with respect to arterial roads, traffic requirements, or what have you. Why does the Minister not admit that there is a general problem. I am prepared to say that I had some part in it.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: I haven't said anything yet.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I was the Minister for a while. The Minister did say something through his actions in the matter. As the Leader pointed out, he got panicky, there was the pressure of the by-election, and someone probably rang him and said, "For God's sake move or Frank will lose." He thought about what he could do, and I daresay he consulted other Ministers to get out of this dilemma. He probably said, "I know, we slam on a block there and we can sort it out later." That is not the way to handle this matter; that is the point I am trying to make. It should be accepted that the whole area has become a miasma. Ask anybody in local government how they like the Planning and Development Act.

Mr. Mathwin interjecting:

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: The member for Glenelg must be deaf, because I have pointed out that it is really no individual's fault—the game got away from the umpire. That is all that has happened. Nobody meant it to happen.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: How did you like being umpire?

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I think I enjoyed it as much as the Minister appears to be enjoying it at times. The Minister is not enjoying being where he is at the moment. That is clear from what has happened publicly during the past two or three weeks, and what is happening now. I can understand the Minister having to put on a brave face, as I often did when I was sitting on the other side. I do not quarrel with the fact that the Minister has to do that—it is his job. I have some difficulty because I am unable to refer in any detail to the counter-proposal the Opposition has put forward. We have on file (and members have seen them) proposals which I argue will deal with this dilemma in a way better than the Minister proposes in the legislation he has brought into the House.

I hope that, when the Minister attempts to reply (because that is all it can be, an attempt), he will consider the implication of a break for that long in employment in the building industry. We heard the Premier say today that things are looking up a bit in the housing industry. He actually used the same phrase that I used five months ago when I pointed out that a housing industry spokesman had told me, "It has bottomed out now; we are on the way up." Apparently, we are still on the bottom, because the same words are being used five months later.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope the honourable member will link his remarks to the Bill.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I think I am, because we are talking about shopping developments, and no shops will be successful if houses are not built near them. I do not propose to go any further off course than to say that. I say that to try to implement this for such a period and on a one-piece basis is wrong. I am trying to think of an analogy. It seems to me that the Minister is like a householder who finds he has two leaking taps and who is not happy about his water rates. He fixes one tap, then sits

down in an armchair and says, "I have no problem now," while the water is running out of the other tap.

What is needed is a proper examination of the whole scene. That cannot be done over a very long period for the reasons I have been giving with respect to the legislation the Minister is putting before us—it needs to be done in a relatively short time. The period must be long enough to do something sensible (we all agree with that), but it must be no longer than absolutely necessary. That is vital, for the reasons I have already outlined: the welfare of the building industry, employment of the people in it, welfare of the State, of developers, entrepreneurs, and so on. Thus, the period is too long.

Another thing that bugs me about putting forward long-time arrangements is that there is then less pressure on the Minister concerned and on departmental officers associated with it that he may need to be working with (outside consultative bodies, and so on) to come up with the policy direction needed. This is an important matter; that is clear. We have heard the Leader point out how many people are involved, how many are affected, how many are already suffering, and how many more people can suffer. They are mainly small business people, people who are battling to make their way and who need the assistance and clarity in this matter that will provide a proper balance in the development area.

I am not canvassing the details, because I do not believe that we are talking about details in this Bill at all: we are talking about a concept and a way to approach a problem. It would not matter if we were talking about how many more roads we were going to build; the same principles would still apply. Someone has to take some action. That means that the Minister has to put the pressure on. He has already made one mistake regarding the time span that he has applied to the arrangement in this Bill.

Mr. Mathwin: Two Ministers too late!

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: It is pleasing to hear from the member for Glenelg that these days nothing seems to be wrong at what used to be called McNally. It was very strange—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the Bill about McNally, and the honourable member for Glenelg is out of order for interjecting.

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: There are other speakers on our side who will canvass the area with which I have been dealing, perhaps in more detail with respect to certain aspects. My aim was to try to put before the House an honest appraisal. I said that it could have caught up with me if we had not had an election. It is bad luck for the Minister: we had an election, and it caught up with him. I said that it was no-one's fault that it grew like Topsy, and that an earlier Minister had the brains to foresee that a difficulty was arising. He did something sensible about it, and work was under way at least to try to put into one document details of some of the problems and proposals. All that has been done.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: Do you admit that the problem was there while you were the Minister?

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: I would say that the problem was growing. If the Minister were a little more charitable, he would recognise that as quite an admission. I knew from things that were being said to me shortly after I became the Minister that I ought to make sure that the report was proceeding, and I did that.

The Hon. D. C. Wotton: That is the discussion paper?

The Hon. R. G. PAYNE: Yes. In the discussion paper reference is made to the Retail Consultative Committee, and perhaps when the Minister closes the debate he can tell the House whether he received any advice from that committee before he introduced the Bill. That committee

was established generally to be of assistance to the Government and the Minister on these very matters and, at the same time, to provide a general vehicle for all relevant parties to be involved in these matters. I believe I have clearly indicated to the Government the reasons why I oppose the Bill and my commiseration with the Minister that he is in trouble over this matter.

Mr. O'NEILL (Florey): I give qualified support to the Bill. I understand that the Opposition will be moving an amendment later to try to stiffen it up, but it is encouraging to see that the Government is going to do something to try to clean up the mess that has accrued over the years.

I am happy about that, because there are a number of areas of concern arising from this situation, not the least of which is its impact on my constituents, small traders in my district, the trade union movement, and the population in general. The situation is a logical outcome of the so-called free enterprise system, although we are seeing a remarkable deviation from that system in the way of controls and assistance that the Government wants to provide. One of the most amazing things that occurred recently was the about-face of the President of the Retail Traders Association, who was so voluble before the September election in his support of the present Government, when he was saying that it would protect the small business man. There are a lot of small business men in South Australia, particularly in the metropolitan area, who are finally becoming aware that the Liberal Party does not give a damn about small business men and that members of that Party are in Parliament merely to do a job on behalf of big business.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member is not linking his remarks to the Bill. I suggest that he confine his remarks to the matter before the House.

Mr. O'NEILL: I want to drive home the danger of the uncontrolled building of large supermarkets by large national and multi-national chains. These large companies tell Liberal Governments, both Federal and State, what they want. Liberal members of Parliament then try to oblige. Because of the problem that confronts the Liberal Party in getting into power without the support of small business people and other ordinary people in the community, it naturally finds itself in a dilemma, and has to find its way out. It is our job to draw attention to the Government's dilemma and try to improve the position of the small people in the community.

The impact on my constituents is shown by the fact that in my area there are a number of profitable and serviceable small units scattered around the district which meet the needs of the people, and particularly old people, who are within walking distance and do not need public transport or have to cross main arterial roads. These small traders fear for their existence. The businesses of these small traders will be completely destroyed; they will not be able to sell their businesses or recoup the money invested, so they will suffer a loss.

Perhaps some members of the Government would say, "Well, that is the system. The Liberal Party is a free enterprise Party. If you can't swim, you sink. The big fish eat the little fish." Members on this side are a little more compassionate, and we can see the problems arising from the so-called free enterprise system. Living as we do in a mixed economy, we appreciate the need for people to be able to operate small businesses, which play an important part in the Australian economy, and the need to support those businesses. The real problem that confronts us is the drive for the maximisation of profit by the large chain stores in this country.

An example of this is the article by the member for Rocky River in today's *News* headed "Profits, 'elixir' of the economy". I suggest that the honourable member should acquaint himself with a book that I shall now refer to. This book, entitled *The American Food Scandal—Why You Can't Eat Well on What You Earn* by William Robbins, sums up much more succinctly than I could, the present situation in Australia. Perhaps people could be forgiven for not waking up to this situation in the past, particularly if they swallowed the free enterprise legend. This book was published in 1974. Although the Parliamentary Library did not have it when I first asked, the library obtained it for me. Apparently, there are only about two copies in Australia. If members read it they will see why. I could be wrong, but it seems to me that this book was kept out of Australia through some sort of covert political censorship. I will refer to only one chapter tonight, but some of the others comment on the monopolisation or the creation of oligopolies in food production, distribution and retailing. Some of the other interesting chapters are "The politics of food", "Let them eat cancer", and "Of milk and money". The chapter that I will quote from is headed, "Super Prices in the Supermarket". At page 126 it says:

All the power that is concentrated in the food industry confronts the American shopper at the supermarket door. "Australian" can be substituted for "American", because a lot of the supermarkets that operate in this country are controlled from the United States. A glance at "Who's who" in the business world will soon verify that. The book continues:

Among the stages through which food passes before dropping into the shopper's basket, the retail industry is the most powerful and closely knit in its web of mutual interests. It is even strong enough to protect consumers from the depredations of processors, such as the profiteering of the big four cereal manufacturers.

But it is not the business of the supermarket to protect consumers. It profits best, in fact, when it protects least. For after the processor has added on all its advertising and promotion bills and, particularly in the highly concentrated food groups, its inflated profits and the toll of creeping inefficiencies, the retailer steps in to take his markup. And that markup is inflated by the excessive costs that precede it.

The retailer's markup has gradually risen over the years since the early days of the supermarkets from about 12.5 per cent to well over 20 per cent.

I point out to the House that this book was written in 1974 and was researched during the 1960's. We are about 15 to 20 years behind the United States, so we have reached this situation in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The book continues:

Obviously, 20 per cent of a shelf full of cereals billed to the store for \$300 is more than 20 per cent of the \$200 or so that the shelf load would have cost if all the inflators were taken out. The supermarket's purchasing agent might, and often does, try to obtain for his stores a consideration that his smaller competitors cannot get in the form of an under-the-table rebate or "promotion" allowance to fatten profits, but he has no interest in cutting the cereal industry's general pricing structure. Quite the contrary.

Overpricing by the processor, in fact, has augmented another form of supermarket profits. It puts an umbrella over the store's own profiteering in its private-label merchandise. While the supermarket normally enjoys a markup of nearly 22 per cent for the highly advertised brands, it can undersell them by a few cents on each item and still enjoy a gross margin of nearly 25 per cent on its store-brand groceries.

Why should the retailer meddle with a good thing? The store chains, in fact, far from showing any inclination to

protect the consumer, have a long and lurid history of victimising shoppers, and they are adding to that record every day with new and ingenious devices.

They run through the whole litany of restraint-of-trade laws, from price wars waged by a chain seeking to monopolise local markets to collusion to avoid profit-cutting competition on prices. They also include practices within the stores ranging from the devious but legal to outrageous deception.

Like the processing industry, the retail chains have gained their power by the merger route. In fact, had it not been for mergers, the growth of their market power would have been so slow as to pose no monopoly threat, or at least to push the threat far into the future. Local and regional chains, which still often do quite well in the shadow of the giants, could have held the growth of the big national chains within reasonable bounds. But the growth of smaller local and regional chains has tended, instead, to feed the merger appetites of the supermarket giants. For the small chains usually parallel the life spans of their founders and, particularly when they do well, fall sooner or later into the hands of a national retail company.

Until recently the price wars had been mainly a phenomenon of the earlier days of the merger trend. In a price war, there may have been some consumers who benefited but it was never a sign of free competition. The murderous struggles have usually been started by dominant companies that cut prices below cost over a wide range of goods, knowing that their companies could offset local losses by gouging customers in other areas.

And even in the price-war zones, any benefits in the form of low-cost foods could only be temporary. They would not have been started, the National Commission on Food Marketing noted, had not the prospect of monopolistic pricing promised higher profits for the aggressor companies. I seek leave to continue my remarks later.

Leave granted; debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. M. M. WILSON (Minister of Transport): I move:

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. BECKER (Hanson): We have heard much lately of Opposition members denigrating the Murdoch press and the credibility within various organisations. I have in my possession a letter dated 7 January 1979 from the Australian Labor Party Hindmarsh Federal Electorate Council, which reads:

The Hindmarsh Federal Electorate Council of the Australian Labor Party is sponsoring an ethnic festival, planned to be held on Sunday 9 March 1980 at the Richmond Oval.

In advertising the festival, we will be distributing a special Hindmarsh edition of the *Labor Herald* throughout the Federal electorate (over 40 000 houses and flats) in February. We write to you seeking your support for the festival in the form of an advert in this edition of the *Herald*. There are two proposals for your consideration, one in the form of a list of advertisers, wishing the ethnic festival well (approximately one inch by one column—cost \$10)—pretty expensive—

the second is for a block advert, copy to be supplied by the advertiser—cost \$15 per column inch.

Your participation would at one time provide cheap advertising, and give an indication of your support of the 1980 ethnic festival. I do hope you will join with us in this undertaking. Our closing date for copy is 28 January next.

Looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

I am advised that this Festival is to take place on 2 March, and banners and hoardings around the area are advertising an ethnic fair at Richmond. On the banners, there is no reference to the Australian Labor Party. A report in the *Labor Herald* of February 1980 states:

A "thank you" to Don Dunstan from Adelaide ethnic groups is being organised at the Richmond Oval on Sunday 2 March. This ethnic fair follows a successful fair staged last year at the West Parklands. This year there will be dancing, singing, music, food and drink from midday to 6 p.m.

There is no indication of the cost. The report continues:

Richmond Oval is in Milner Street, Richmond. To mark the event, Hindmarsh A.L.P. Federal Electorate Council will be publishing an ethnic cookbook (for sale at \$2). Past and present Philips League players, mixed with a few Parliamentarians, will provide a soccer match during the afternoon.

That gives members an idea of the lengths to which the Party opposite will go to draw in the community without letting it know exactly what is happening. Members opposite talk about credibility in advertising, and so on, but the Australian Labor Party has much for which to answer in that type of promotion. There is no doubt that it is using ethnic people (and no-one has really been able to tell me what "ethnic" really means) under the guise of a festival in order to prop up its campaign in the Hindmarsh electorate.

The point has been made strongly by certain people in the Labor Party about the attitude of the Murdoch press during the last State election. It is only fair that I read to the House a letter that appeared in the February 1980 issue of the Labor Party paper, the *Herald*, that sums up the whole situation. Having investigated certain allegations made in other States, one finds that the Murdoch press is not as biased as the Labor Party claims it is in South Australia.

Mr. Whitten: I'm pleased that you read that; you'll really get educated.

Mr. BECKER: I make it a great habit of using the Parliamentary Library. I pick up all sorts of snippets on what is happening in other political organisations. That is how one learns the tricks of the trade. As I have already said, the Australian Democrats do not trust people with beards. Let us hear what the Labor Party says in relation to Mr. Murdoch, as follows:

The recent campaign by the Party to condemn the Murdoch press, both in the week-long boycott of the *News* and in the three articles critical of Murdoch in the *Herald* (December 1979), show a fundamental misunderstanding of political power in a modern society in which certain individuals can exercise a greater degree of mass persuasion than others.

The articles which appeared in the *Herald* realised the power of the Murdoch press but then proceeded to object to that situation. This achieves nothing because Murdoch's position is intractable. As long as Murdoch supports the Liberal Party, that Party is more likely to govern, and the Liberals will consequently be reluctant to interfere with media ownership.

The Liberal Party is in power at both the State and Federal levels. They are happy with Murdoch and will not touch him. Thus, the premise upon which to approach Murdoch is an intractable force. Murdoch is a national problem and must be countered at this level. However, any action of protest by the Labor Party is ineffectual for the A.L.P. at this level has become the natural Opposition Party. . . . In short, the Labor Party has been a failure. The Labor Party cannot control

Murdoch from this position.

If we fight Murdoch we will remain in Opposition, for the Murdoch press can mean the difference between Opposition and Government: whether we like this or not, we are hardly in a position to change it, when Murdoch and the Liberals control the lives and minds of the swinging voters.

This is the real crunch:

Neville Wran is Premier of New South Wales because he is aware of the above situation. The Murdoch press in N.S.W. supports Wran. The Wran Government has given Murdoch preferential treatment in its business dealings.

That is a nice sort of indictment by a contributor to the Labor Party paper, namely, that Mr. Murdoch has been given preferential treatment in his business dealings.

Mr. Slater: That is a letter to the editor.

Mr. BECKER: That is correct. This is not Labor Party policy; I realise that. However, it is the opinion of a supporter of the Party.

An honourable member: He's entitled to it.

Mr. BECKER: Of course he is, and I compliment him for having the courage of his convictions to put in the paper what is obviously the truth. However, if I wrote a letter to the *Herald* it would not get published, especially if I was trying to correct some of the ridiculous insinuations that have been made in there in the 10 years that I have been in politics, including something in the December issue.

The whole point is that Murdoch has very strongly supported the Labor Party in New South Wales to such a degree that in the suburbs where he controls suburban newspapers he has made it very plain in certain Liberal-held electorates before the last New South Wales election where the people should put their No. 1 vote. We did not hear any whingeing or complaining by the Liberal Party in New South Wales about Murdoch's effort. I have been over there, and I can confirm that. Packer did not support them, either.

As this correspondence points out to the Labor Party, it is no good kicking this one and that one. Members opposite have done their Party more harm than good in continually attacking Murdoch over the whole issue. This correspondence states:

Murdoch's support must be sought, not his animosity.

Fight Murdoch, and the Party will remain in Opposition. In a battle between Murdoch and the A.L.P., Murdoch is always the winner because he has a far greater capacity to influence public opinion. Concessions should be made to Murdoch in return for his support, as is the case in New South Wales. This gives us an indication of how people in the Labor Party think. Fancy stating that concessions should be made to Murdoch in return for his support! The report continues:

This may sound unpleasant but one must consider the benefits which can accrue by use of such an expedient. If Murdoch is courted and he gives his support to the Party, then this could be suitably recognised, but in addition the bulk of legislation would otherwise derive from the A.L.P. platform. . . . Let us not forget that Rupert Murdoch at Melbourne Grammar was an avowed socialist (much to the consternation of his colleagues).

Here we have somebody who has the courage of his convictions and it is to the editor's credit that he has printed it. People in general believe that this is the situation. I do not go along with courting Murdoch and offering him concessions, and so on. The Labor Party has fallen for the three-card trick in blaming its defeat at the last election totally on the Murdoch press.

Mr. HAMILTON (Albert Park): I take up the matter of the evasiveness of the Minister of Transport in reply to my

question on 21 February in relation to the reduction in railway services on the Pinnaroo and Murray Lands lines. The last part of my question was as follows:

Also, it would be instructive for members to learn what consultation was engaged in with the relevant unions.

Consultation was promised, but did it take place?

The Minister, in my view, deliberately evaded answering this question. I have been informed that the relevant unions were not consulted, contrary to the promises made by the Minister and the stated policy of the Government that it would consult with trade union movements.

So much for the pleas that were made in this House yesterday, asking the trade union movement to assist the Government in the motor car industry. On the one hand, they make the plea for the trade union movement to assist when it suits them but, when the boot is on the other foot, they totally ignore the trade union movement and expect it to come on-side with the Government. The Government clearly has to rethink its position if it is going to get some support or assistance from the trade union movement in matters that are clearly causing the Government concern. The Government has failed to live up to the undertakings given to the trade union movement, and one might say here and now that this is yet another of the promises broken since this Government has been in power.

Secondly, I refer to a question asked of the Minister of Transport on 21 February by the member for Mawson. The question related to improved timetabling and booking procedures, perhaps involving a centralised computer system, on the *Overland* service from Adelaide to Melbourne. The member for Mawson asked particularly about the ticketing aspect, and said:

... many people, once aboard the train, find that seats have been double-booked, and it is confusing to have them relocated in some other section of the train. It would be to our benefit to make this representation to the Federal Minister.

I point out to the Minister of Transport that some years ago, I think in 1976, the Australian Railways Union took up this matter with respect to computerised ticket systems because it was found in those days that members of the travelling public who went into the Adelaide railway station to book their tickets and accommodation could not obtain the required accommodation and had to go to the Tourist Bureau. As a consequence the railways lost patronage, because many people chose another mode of transport.

Mr. Schmidt: Why didn't Mr. Virgo do something about it?

Mr. HAMILTON: Maybe because the Federal Government would not agree. Perhaps the honourable member should check that matter out. The Minister replied to the question asked by the member for Mawson, as follows:

They have 42 Questions on Notice for me to answer, so they have no questions left to ask me.

Indeed, many members on this side have many questions to ask about the railway industry and I, for one, will pursue that matter to the utmost of my ability.

The Hon. M. M. Wilson: The point I was making was that once a question is on notice it cannot be asked.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes. The Minister also said that the member for Mawson had mentioned "computerised train control (C.T.C.)", but that was not my understanding at all: the question related to a computerised ticketing system. The Minister further stated:

... I shall be pleased to take up that matter with the A.N.R., but I doubt whether the commission would be prepared to go to the expense of centralised train control.

Such control is, in fact, operating between Adelaide and

Bordertown. Obviously, the Minister either misunderstood the question—

The Hon. M. M. Wilson: We have trouble at Serviceton, though, don't we?

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes, sure; but obviously the Minister misunderstood the question, or he is grossly incompetent and does not know what he is talking about.

I do not have time to refer fully to a lengthy document I have received relating to tourism. However, perhaps the Minister could also take up this matter with the A.N.R. Commission, because it concerns members on this side. I have received from a member of the union of which I was President a letter dated 28 January 1980, addressed to Mr. N. N. Gazzard, Executive Director of Railways of Australia. It states:

I would like to draw to your attention the irregularities that are occurring on the *Indian Pacific*, i.e. passenger bookings and the closing down of cars.

An example of the passenger bookings occurred on 24/1/80 (Pirie to Sydney). Couple X were booked into car 11, berths 21 and 22 ex Perth on 22/1/80. On arrival at Port Pirie they were advised that owing to their bookings they were to be moved into car 12 into different compartments, as a lady and child Y were to occupy their cabin from Port Pirie to Sydney. Gent X was transferred to car 12 berth 24 and lady X was transferred to car 12 berth 22. Couple X has purchased their tickets (ticket Nos. 2849 and 2850) at the Sydney booking office on 23/7/79. They were two adult returns. Lady Y and child purchased their tickets from Wellington, New Zealand, on 8/11/79 (ticket Nos. 8294 and 8295); both were singles. This certainly does not do any good for the image of Australia and tourism when we have these sorts of problems. To me this seems to be a big breakdown in the booking system. This is also only one example. It is occurring regularly.

The other matter being the closing down of cars on trains which was brought to my attention on Saturday 26/1/80. These cars are being closed down a week in advance. On Saturday 26/1/80 cars 4, 5 and 12 were closed down ex Sydney. Each car had previously had passengers booked into them and subsequently these passengers were transferred to other cars; thus three conductors travelled passenger Sydney to Port Pirie to work the *Indian Pacific* back to Sydney on 28/1/80.

On approaching the booking clerk in Sydney on 26/1/80, I asked if there was any chance of purchasing an economy class single from Sydney to Adelaide on Saturday 26/1/80. I was advised that there was no vacancies on the *Indian Pacific* for that day.

I find this type of practice damaging to the future of the passenger service as a means of transport to the public as a whole, where passengers are told that there are no vacancies when vacancies do exist.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Mallee.

Mr. LEWIS (Mallee): I rise to address myself to a serious matter that is in some part in support of the remarks made by the member for Fisher recently. I wish to draw the attention of the House to a disaster that occurred in another part of South Australia on the same day as the fire in the Hills, a week ago yesterday. There were three fires, the major part of which was in the Coonalpyn-Tintinara area. They burnt out 25 000 acres or about 10 000 hectares. For those who do not understand, I say that is 100 sq. km. For members opposite, not many of whom are present, that represents about seven metropolitan electoral districts in average size. The people who are able in normal circumstances to get their living from farms that they own in that area are no longer able to do

so, or are partially impaired in their capacity to do so. Some farms have been completely burnt out. Hundreds of miles of fencing has gone. If it had not been for the fact that they are well organised and, as I have said in my Address in Reply speech, self-reliant and determined to survive in that harsh environment, the damage and devastation would have been very much greater than it was on that occasion. I pay respect, as did the member for Fisher, to the competent, absolutely essential, and outstanding job that the volunteers in the Country Fire Service do in ensuring the survival of their communities whenever they are confronted with the problem of fires.

I must remark on how it is believed the fire started. I went this morning to the spot where it is fairly evident the fire did start by virtue of the incomplete combustion at that point. It is in some partially cleared land due west of Coonalpyn by some kilometres, in the middle of a farm and due north of the conservaton park. It seems to me, as it seems to them, that the fires started because a single wire earth return (swear) line supplying electricity through that locality was suspended over too great a span, was slack, and as the ambient heat in the atmosphere on that day was so great the metal of which the wire is comprised expanded and in expanding lowered itself only a matter of six inches into the top of a tree which had previously been inadequately lopped, and accordingly arced out, causing the blaze.

One can see where the blaze spread down one side of the tree, yet the other side seems hardly scorched. For some reason, the Electricity Trust of South Australia does not have, in my opinion (and in the opinion of most people in my electorate who are involved), a realistic policy regarding the removal of vegetation likely to cause damage either to the lines and the power supply in the event of a storm, or vegetation likely to cause damage by virtue of the phenomenon to which I have just referred, namely, that the wire expands in the heat, sags, contacts the vegetation, strikes an arc and a fire begins. It not only happened in that location, but local people believe it also happened in another location nearby where yet another fire began and burnt out an area (and I am not sure of this), certainly more than of one metropolitan electorate in size. I believe that that policy needs to be reviewed and that all vegetation, whether native or exotic, should be removed completely from beneath and beside wires carrying electricity anywhere in the State.

Mr. Gunn: Are you sure the conservationists haven't been causing the trust trouble with this policy?

Mr. LEWIS: I believe they have been. If they want to see the survival of natural vegetation, they must be made aware that the processes to which I have referred inevitably produce a major conflagration at high temperatures in the middle of summer, thus destroying natural vegetation. They should set about protecting vegetation, not only in the ways I have suggested but in the way Mr. Lloyd Johns, Director of the Country Fire Services, recently suggested.

I wonder when section 28 of the Act relating to the provision of fire services will be proclaimed so that the extension of those services can be considered, with the South Australian Fire Brigade, by local communities, which must decide whether they want fire brigade or C.F.S. services in these localities.

I think that the conservationists have caused the Electricity Trust some problems in their mistaken belief that they are doing the right thing by the natural flora and, in some cases, the fauna that they think depends upon it. They should also ensure that there are adequate fire breaks around those parks, not only to ensure that no fire can come from the park on to private land adjacent to it but also that no fire can get from private land into that park. Once a fire gets going in national parks, because of the way in which the ecosystem is presently managed, it is a disaster; you cannot stop it. There is no access, and no means of providing that access. The fuel layer is complete and continuous and the conflagration is more than any human being can possibly endure when trying to get near enough to control it.

It does not serve the purpose of conservation at all for people to be as ignorant, indifferent and pigheaded as has been the case so often in the past.

Also, I would like to encourage the Government to consider ways in which compensation might be given to private citizens who provide, in the case of such conflagrations (these major disasters), services to fire fighters by taking their aircraft aloft in the same way as on that same day a helicopter (a much better piece of apparatus) was used by the Director of the C.F.S. in the Hills fires. An aircraft is invaluable to see where the blaze is going, what the fuel layer is like, and what prospects there are of stopping the blaze at any point in its path and preventing a disaster. This information obtained from the air also assists farmers in releasing their stock from any paddocks in which they may be trapped in the path of the fire.

Furthermore, since so many farmers now have in their tractors and farm vehicles C.B. radio, which in their own communities they have learned to use on one or two channels (this is unknown to other people; it is just useful local information) in their localities to contain or control fires, C.F.S. units in those localities should be subsidised to buy sufficiently strong C.B. radios to include in their equipment. The C.F.S. could then hear what is being said, and this would reduce the overload on VHF frequencies.

Finally, I would like to lay the lie to some of the remarks that I have heard from the honourable member opposite. He said that the Government failed to support trade unions and failed to consult them in one instance, and then in another instance said that trade unions were requested by the Government to give assistance. It is regrettable that the honourable member has used a label for a huge organisation, the trade union movement, pretending that that is a homogeneous organisation that is run by people who consult one another. We know that that is not so. I have never seen unions consult business or the general public when they decide to do things. If the honourable member wants to refer to unions in that context, as one organisation, I point out that when unions have demarcation disputes they do not consult the general public whom they affect.

The SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

Motion carried.

At 5.27 p.m. the House adjourned until Tuesday 4 March at 2 p.m.